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**Our Pulpit.**

**The Story of Moses.**

No. 3.

**HIS EDUCATION.**  
 SERMON PREACHED BY

REV. A. J. MOWATT.

In St. Paul's Church, Fredericton, Sunday evening Jan. 20th 1889.

"And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians."—ACTS VII. 22.

A week ago, you will remember, we left Moses in the arms of his mother to be nursed as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He was three months old. Tonight we are to follow his career, as well as we can, up to the time when he was grown up, the time when his education may be said to have been completed, stretching over a period of perhaps twenty-five or thirty years, and all we have to guide us are a very few fragmentary notices, such as that of the text. Moses himself could have given us the whole story of those interesting years of his life, but he has almost nothing to say about it—a few commonplace remarks. To him perhaps there seemed to be so little to say that was worth the saying, or something may have sealed his lips. Oh the silences of Scripture—they have their meaning and their teaching as well as what is written! We have chapters and chapters, almost whole books, of uninteresting names; and then when it comes to the youth of Moses and Christ, there is scarcely a word, and we wonder why it is. Only this has Moses to say about the period of his life we are to speak of tonight, and it seems so meagre and unsatisfactory: "And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses, and said, Because I drew him out of the water."

I. HIS MOTHER'S TEACHING.

I am to speak specially tonight of the education of Moses, and I begin with that of his good mother, because it was first in time and importance. It was the foundation of his scholarship, and did more towards his making than all he learned at the schools and colleges of Egypt. The few tender years he was at home with his mother, gave his mind an impress, his character a shape, his life a trend, that held to him, and kept him throughout all the future of his career. He could never get away from it; indeed, I suppose, he never wanted to get away from it.

A good and wise mother can teach her child very early, and we have every reason to believe that the mother of Moses was a superior woman, one of the best of mothers. She was a woman of earnest piety, strong faith, sanctified shrewdness and commonsense. It is very evident, I think, that Moses owed more to his mother than to his father. The Word of God speaks of her faith, but not of his. It was his mother's faith that saved him, his mother's ingenuity that contrived the ark, his mother's piety and prayers that inspired him to be what he afterwards became, in a word, his mother's goodness and giftedness that made him. It may be a trite remark to say, that, had it not been for his mother, the world would never have heard of Moses, but there is a meaning to it in his case, and in many another case, that is profoundly true.

At the time we speak of she could not have been young. She had, as a mother, both years and experience on her side. Moses was her third and last child, and she was therefore in a position to do her best for him. And then the "wags" would give her a leisure to devote herself to him as she had not been able to do to her elder children. I do not mean to say that she had neglected the training of Miriam and Aaron any more than that of Moses. It does not appear that she had. Still, we can understand, I think, how she would be able to do even better for her third child, than she had been able to do for her first and second, well as she had done for them.

But, you ask perhaps, what a mother can do for a child's training at so early an age. And yet even at three months, and earlier, a child's true education begins. Wise Solomon says: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," and the original of the passage brings out the idea that this training is to begin at the very month of his way, at the very budding of his consciousness. And then our Lord directs us to bring our children when they are very young to Him, not merely when they are somewhat grown, but when they are, as Luke has it, babes, infants, little children.

The education of a child is a complex process; it is its physical, mental, moral and religious development, and from the day of its birth almost, its education, in this broad sense, may begin and be car-

ried forward, step by step, very gradually indeed, but with more or less results, towards its completeness. So soon you find the mother talking to her child as she is doing for it, telling it of her love for it and its interest to her, as if it understood all about it, and you and I think all such baby-talk absurdly silly. But it comes natural to the mother to do it, and every mother does it, and more than we think and know, it may help to waken up its budding intelligence, develop its embryonic powers of mind and heart. A mother's kiss, the touch of her hand, her tones of voice, her way of doing for it, the prayer she breathes for it, may somehow so early kindle up its love and trust, the spirit of reverence and devotion, and all its life after, it may carry with it the sacred impress of its christian mother's training, even though it may have been deprived of her when it was still a child.

An old man once said, one who had wandered far from the right way, speaking of his christian mother who had died when he was scarcely more than an infant: "A hand is upon my head, upon my few hoary locks; the same hand that used to rest in prayer among the fresh sunny curls of my infancy. And if I am ever saved, it will be by that mother's hand, and my Redeemer's mercy."

Now, we have no means of knowing what opportunities Moses' mother had to teach him the true religion, but one thing is clear, he was somehow taught it. He may have imbibed it as with his mother's milk. There is such a thing as being born again in unconscious infancy, as being a subject of Divine grace from the very dawn of life, and Moses may have been one of those chosen ones. Possibly too, as tradition makes out in its own way, his precocity may have been quite remarkable, and so, much earlier than in the case of other children, he may have been able to take in the truth. And then, possibly, the nursing period may have been prolonged far beyond the two or three years of child life. Before he left his mother for the palace finally, he may have been a boy of six or eight years. Or again, as it is not improbable, he may have been allowed to visit his mother from time to time, and so, in this way, he may have kept touch of the people he belonged to, and never lost sight of, in all his dazzling court experience, the fact, that he was not an Egyptian but a Jew. At all events, his mother's simple pious teaching, the lessons he learned at her knee, stuck fast to him, and did so much towards his making. Much as his foster-mother did for him, his own praying-mother did still more, and when he was far from her arms, dwelling in the light that blazes around the throne, he never forgot her, but felt the gentle mighty influence of her example and teaching drawing him to the faith she loved, and the God she loved, and upward to the Heaven she hoped to go to.

II. UNDER TUTORS AND GOVERNORS.

Like other princes, at an early age, Moses would be put in charge of tutors and governors, who would attend to his education. And it would be of the strictest kind. It is not so pleasant as many imagine to be a prince today or thirty centuries ago. A prince has it harder than a peasant. He has more to learn. He is kept at it as a peasant is not kept at it, and is more under authority. Many a time, I have no doubt, after he went to the palace, Moses would sigh for his mother's humble hut and hunger for her love, and he would wish he could run and throw himself with his bursting heart into her arms. But all that was past, and now he must be a prince, and learn his uninteresting lessons, learn to read and write, learn arithmetic and geometry, learn music and drawing.

The Egyptians at the time seem to have paid much attention to what may be called physical education, gymnastics and athletics. As early as ten a boy had to be put through a course of military drill. He had to learn wrestling, boxing, fencing, riding on horseback, and charioteering. He had to run, and play ball, and jump, and lift. And Moses, as a Prince of Egypt, would have to go through all that, and we know from what occurred later on, that he was up in the use of the sword, and was a strong muscular fellow, who, single-handed, could knock down half a dozen Midian shepherds when they stood in his way.

Then he would learn to read and write. Egypt was the home of letters. At the time they had two forms of writing, the hieroglyphic and hieratic, both of them difficult and tedious to learn, as our scholars find. They had perhaps a thousand characters, and many of them requiring no little drawing-skill to make them at all neatly. To learn the old Egyptian alphabet must have been as hard a task as to learn that of the Chinese today. Among the most ordinary characters were the eagle, which expressed *a*; the owl, *m*; the chicken, *u*; the duck, *sa*; the hawk, the syllable *har*; the vulture, the word *mat*, and so on.

Then arithmetic was known and taught. The Arabic numerals are said to have come from Egypt. Also the multiplication-table, which some of our children find so hard to learn, is believed to have been an Egyptian invention.

They understood fractions, too, for which they had a special notation, making fractions much easier than with us.

Music was also one of the branches taught in Egypt, and no doubt Moses could himself both sing and play well. His musical knowledge he afterwards turned to most excellent account in the sanctuary service, and ever since his day, music has been a power, and has exercised a sweet hallowed influence upon the human soul, in worship.

Such are some of the things Moses would learn, when a boy, at the palace, under his tutors, and no doubt he was an apt scholar, and became quite proficient in some of them, for he had a gifted mind. But we have no particulars that we can lay hands on.

Then there is an education of another sort that Moses would enjoy as an inmate of the palace that must have contributed no little towards his accomplishments—the education that comes from constant contact with social refinement, literary taste, the greatest scholars of the age, the wisest men of the time. All that was worth seeing he would see; all that was worth hearing he would hear; all that was worth knowing he would be in the way of knowing. On the palace-walls, where he would play and work and walk, would be sculptured scenes of the past, battles and victories, and his young soul would drink in the story, and it would be an inspiration to the boy who was afterwards to write the story of the world's creation, and the founding of the nations of antiquity.

Sometimes, too, from the palace terraces and balconies he would watch with interest the thronging streets of the city, the long caravans as they trailed by laden with the wealth and worth of all lands, and up and down the river the burdened barges slowly floating, for, at the time, Memphis was a busy city, full of trade, the market of the world. All this, we can easily imagine, would have its influence upon the boy, awaken his interest, stir his soul. He could not be indifferent to it. And sometimes his foster-mother would take him out for a walk or drive through the streets, or for a sail on the river, and would point out to him and explain the many various objects of interest—the temples, the monuments, the noble edifices, the walls and fortresses. Thus would the boy that was destined to do so much for the world grow in knowledge and experience, and have his mind stored for future use.

For nothing was Memphis more famous than for its temples, and Pharaoh's daughter would be a faithful worshipper at the temples of Phthah and Ra, and Moses would be required to go with her. There he would meet processions of priests, clad in white, wearing slippers of the papyrus-plant, and chanting litanies to the gods of Egypt, and he would have to stand aside in reverent attitude while they passed. He would see them offering sacrifices at the altars, burning incense, pouring out libations, and hear them mumbling their many-worded prayers. Sometimes, too, it would be his to see the sacred bull, Apis, as they called him, as he was led along the streets in solemn procession, and the superstitious people come out of their homes to do honor to this incarnation of deity. All this Moses must have been familiar with in his boyhood, and it was not easy to be where he was and what he was, and not be carried away with it, for it was the religion of the land, the national faith.

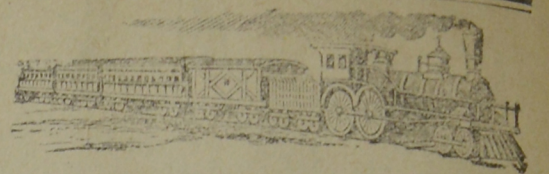
Tradition, of course, is not slow to fill in what sacred scripture leaves out, and tells us some of Moses' boyish pranks when at the palace. Josephus relates, that, one day, Princess Thermuthis brought her clever child, and with a little speech put him in the arms of her father. She wanted him to make the boy his successor in the years to come. The king was greatly taken with the beautiful clever child, and playfully took off his crown and placed it on the head of the boy. Instantly Moses threw it on the floor, and spurned it with his little foot. The sacred scribe, who was sitting by, noticed the child's strange conduct, and cried out to the king to slay him, for this was the child the gods had warned them about who was yet to do so much to tarnish the glory of Egypt. Thermuthis snatched him up, and fled with him, and thus saved him the second time.

All through those early years she proved herself in every respect a true friend, a real foster-mother. From her he received his name, *Moses, drawn out of the water*, a name memorable for the deliverance she had wrought for him; and, all that a loving interest in him could do for him, was done. And she had the satisfaction of seeing him grow up under her fostering care a tall beautiful clever boy. It is said he was unusually tall for his age, and his beauty was so striking that men would stop to admire him, and every one felt he was to be a wonderful man.

III. AT COLLEGE.

There were two famous universities or colleges in Egypt at the time of Moses, one at Heliopolis and the other at Hermopolis. Tradition makes it out that Moses went to Heliopolis to college. It was not far from Memphis. And

Continued on third page.



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 3.10 P. M.—From Fredericton Junction, Vancrover, Bangor, Portland, Boston, and points West; St. Andrew's, St. Stephen, Houlton Woodstock and points north.  
 6.30 P. M.—Express from St. John, and intermediate points.

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