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COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Exodus

by Matthew Henry

To the Students of the Words, Works and Ways of God:

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AN EXPOSITION,
WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,

OF THE SECOND BOOK OF MOSES,

CALLED

EXODUS

Moses (the *servant of the Lord* in writing for him as well as in acting for him — with the pen of God as well as with the rod of God in his hand) having, in the first book of his history, preserved and transmitted the records of the church, while it existed in private families, comes, in this second book, to give us an account of its growth into a great nation; and, as the former furnishes us with the best economics, so this with the best politics. The beginning of the former book shows us how God formed the world for himself; the beginning of this shows us how he formed Israel for himself, and both show forth his praise, ²³⁶²¹Isaiah 43:21. There we have the creation of the world in history, here the redemption of the world in type. The Greek translators called this book *Exodus* (which signifies a *departure* or *going out*) because it begins with the story of the going out of the children of Israel from Egypt. Some allude to the names of this and the foregoing book, and observe that immediately after *Genesis*, which signifies the *beginning* or *original*, follows *Exodus*, which signifies a *departure*; for a time to be born is immediately succeeded by a time to die. No sooner have we made our entrance into the world than we must think of making our exit, and going out of the world. When we begin to live we begin to die. The forming of Israel into a people was a new creation. As the earth was, in the beginning, first fetched from under water, and then beautified and replenished, so Israel was first by an almighty power made to emerge out of Egyptian slavery, and then enriched with God's law and tabernacle. This book gives us,

I. The accomplishment of the promises made before to Abraham (Exodus 1-19), and then,

II. The establishment of the ordinances which were afterwards observed by Israel (Exodus 20-40). Moses, in this book, begins, like Caesar, to write his own Commentaries; nay, a greater, a far greater, than Caesar is here. But henceforward the penman is himself the hero, and gives us the history of those things of which he was himself an eye and ear-witness, *et quorum pars magna fuit* — and in which he bore a conspicuous part. There are more types of Christ in this book than perhaps in any other book of the Old Testament; for Moses wrote of him, ~~4154~~ John 5:46. The way of man's reconciliation to God, and coming into covenant and communion with him by a Mediator, is here variously represented; and it is of great use to us for the illustration of the New Testament, now that we have that to assist us in the explication of the Old.