

**EMERSON'S LESSONS ON
THE OLD TESTAMENT,
BEING A PART OF A
BIBLICAL OUTLINE**

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Emerson's Lessons on the Old Testament, Being a Part of a Biblical Outline by Joseph Emerson

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JOSEPH EMERSON

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Explanations and Remarks.

The letters *a*, *m*, *z*, are used to signify the first, middle or last part of a verse.

When a chapter is referred to, at the beginning of a paragraph, the questions that follow, if without particular reference, are to be answered from that chapter. In these the verse is sometimes referred to.

In the maps, the situation of towns is known by the position of the initial letter of their names. In a single instance, (Bethel,) the initial alone is inserted.

P R E F A C E .

INFINITELY momentous are the truths of the bible. The knowledge of these is no less important. They are nothing to us, except as they are known. It is the knowledge of God, of Christ, of salvation. Nay it is salvation. When properly received, it is salvation. "This is life eternal," says the Savior, "to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." To know the bible, is to know God and Christ; and without the bible, God and Christ are never known. "This knowledge is equally important for all; and infinitely important for every one."

The scriptures, then, must be studied. Without study, they cannot be known. They must be diligently, devoutly, perseveringly studied. To understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God, we must seek it as silver; we must search for it, as for hid treasure. In this noble study, every one should engage to the utmost; and to the utmost should help his brother, his neighbor, and all around him; that all may grow up together to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

In this blessed and stupendous work, many thousands and hundreds of thousands are now engaged; and, more delightful still, thousands are added from week to week. Hail the day, in which we live! Thrice hail! the happier days to come. Blessed, blessed are our eyes and ears in what we see, in what we hear; not only to witness the increasing multitudes, that have joined the sacred band, but also the increasing skill and concert and efficacy, with which they act. How much more blessed is the eye of faith, that sees these multitudes still further multiplied; this concert still more intimate and harmonious; and these improvements still further improved—sees the holy oracles living in every heart, and glowing in every eye.

Brethren in Jesus, lovers, learners, teachers of the bible, doers of the word, well may you exclaim, while you anticipate still higher joys, well may you now exclaim, in view of your present labors,

" My heart, my hands, my ears, my tongue,
Here's joyful work for you."

Happy parents! happy teachers! most delightful is your task, to feed, to guide the blood-bought lambs, that Jesus has died to redeem from the lion's rage. While they return you the smiles of grateful love, and the homage of their sincere respect, may you find it more blessed to give, than they to receive; and may you find each of them your joy and crown in heaven, to reflect upon you forever, the Savior's smile.

Most gladly would I share and aid in this labor of love. Most gladly would I bring an offering, however small, to advance the glorious enterprise. As such, let me presume to lay this little work at the feet of your blessed Master. I trust, you will regard it with candor, and bestow upon it, all that consideration, to which it may seem entitled. More than this, I cannot ask. I can by no means desire, that better helps should give place to this. Use it just so far, as on the whole, it may appear suited to promote the knowledge of the scriptures, and the salvation of souls.

This Outline contains about half of the author's Union Catechism,* with much additional matter upon the Old Testament; extending also through the New Testament.

It is hoped, that the improvements are in some measure correspondent to the long and abundant labors, that the present work has cost the author; that it will be found much easier to be acquired, remembered and applied to use, and much more beneficial, as conducive to mental improvement, and preparatory to future studies.

It may be proper to mention the object and structure of this work a little more particularly.

1. It is *practical*. It is designed to furnish the tender mind with the most important lessons of wisdom and knowledge, from the infinite

* This Catechism has been before the public, with a good share of approbation, for ten years.

Fountain, to prepare the young immortal for the greatest usefulness and felicity on earth and in heaven.

2. It is *historical*. This feature is the grand characteristic of its structure. Such is the plan, that God has followed in giving us the bible; the plan, that the great Edwards has adopted in his most excellent work on redemption; a plan of divine instruction, that we can by no means, hope to improve.

In this Outline, an attempt is made, as far as may be, to draw a luminous and pleasing thread of history from the creation, to the close of the holy record.

The study of chronology is so important to the understanding of history, and of almost every thing else, that it can hardly be commenced too early. Still it is so dry and unlovely in its nature, so peculiarly uninviting to children, that a very small portion of this science must suffice for beginners. Such a portion is here offered with the hope, that it may not be found tedious on the one hand, nor too defective on the other; but prove a most important foundation, on which to erect the temple of knowledge.

To render attention to this subject as easy and interesting and useful as possible, I have divided the whole time, except a few years at the close, into 15 natural periods, limited by some great and interesting events. These limits of periods may be regarded as the stupendous hinges upon which states and kingdoms and empires and the destinies of the world, have been turning since the beginning of time. We are not to think it strange, that these periods should differ exceedingly in length, as well as in character.

3. This Outline is *biblical*. Directly or indirectly, the instructions are almost wholly drawn from the bible, and are in fact to be taken immediately from the bible itself. In general, the pupil must actually consult the sacred page for the instruction he is to gain. Every word of this work is designed to exhibit, explain, illustrate or enforce the lively oracles.

4. It is *catechetical*. The vast advantage of this mode of instruction is obvious to reason, and confirmed by scripture, and by the experience of ages.

5. It is *referential*. For answers to most of the questions, the pupil is referred to scripture. The advantage of having printed questions for this purpose, is very great. Of this, surely no one can doubt, who has had good questions, and used them skilfully. Probably the chief objections have arisen from using bad questions, and using them badly. Extemporaneous questions should indeed be copiously intermingled; but if the pupil has no printed or written questions, there is reason to fear, that most of the instructions will soon be forgotten. Surely the precious word of God should be permanently treasured up in the mind and hid in the heart; and the greatest efforts should be made, that the wicked one may not be able to catch it away. Mat. 13: 19.

While the pupil is employed in ascertaining the answers to referential questions, his mind must be exercised in a manner adapted to improve.

6. This work is *not wholly referential*. A rigid adherence to the reference method, would doubtless be injurious. While, therefore, it is sufficiently followed, to secure its inestimable advantages, other methods are occasionally used, for the sake of other advantages, that could not be otherwise attained.

7. Much exertion has been made to render the questions as *perfect as possible*, with regard to their number, matter, expression and arrangement. Perhaps no species of composition is thought easier, than writing reference questions, while in reality, it may be, that none is more difficult. Hence we may account for the very imperfect success of most writers, who have engaged in this business; and for the fact, that many prefer to teach bible classes, without the aid of printed questions. Surely if these teachers would compose and print questions, that should be tolerably satisfactory to themselves, their instructions might be doubly useful to their pupils. If the questions of this Outline should be found as imperfect, as others, the author will not be able to plead, that he was not most deeply impressed with the difficulty of his task, which for nearly thirty years has engaged so great a share of his labors.

Very special exertions have been made, that the questions should be important, concise, perspicuous and well arranged; that they should clearly and precisely indicate the proper answers; that the answers

should be short; not too easy; not too difficult; nor often consist of mere affirmations or negations; that both questions and answers should be interesting and impressive, as possible. Perhaps no man living can less plead want of experience in the *delightful drudgery* of composing questions, than the writer of these. He would by no means presume, however, that his success has equalled his toils.

8. The Outline is designed for the *second* course of instruction. That a class may be profited to the utmost, it is desirable, that the members should not differ greatly from each other, with regard to mental improvement and acquaintance with the scriptures. Otherwise the same lesson may be too hard for one, and too easy for another; and instructions, scarcely intelligible to some, may be superfluous for others. This Outline is by no means, designed for little children, who know nothing of the bible; much less, for youth, who are well acquainted with it already, except perhaps as a mere review. But it is intended for an intermediate grade. Though by very short lessons, and much explanation and familiar questioning, it might be rendered intelligible and useful to the little child; yet it could be by no means so useful, as a much simpler, shorter, easier course. Such shorter course* may not only be very useful in itself, and even prove his salvation; but it may prepare his mind to pursue this Outline with superior pleasure and advantage. (☞ It seems to be very injudicious for beginners to commence with a course, that will require 15 or 20 or 30 years to finish. To the ardent mind, that is delighted with progress, it must be very tedious and discouraging to proceed so slowly. How few would ever complete the course; and by those who do, how little of the whole instructions will be finally remembered. ☞)

It seems desirable, that the pupil should take at least three distinct surveys of the sacred field of the bible; the first, very general, and then more and more particular. It is thus; that Nature teaches us. In beholding a landscape or a city or a vast building, we see at first, only the grand features or some of the capital outlines. These we then compare, and in some measure, discover and compare their most obvious

* For this course, the Minor Historical Catechism has been used in connection with much familiar conversation. Something a little larger might be still better

and important relations. We next descend to particulars. This general view renders the particulars much more interesting, more easy to be understood in their relations and uses, and more easily retained in memory. For most minds, system is every thing, as far as clear understanding and remembrance are concerned. Without this general view, all we can know of a subject must consist principally of insulated, disjointed particulars, exhibiting nothing of the beauty of proportion, or the loveliness of harmony.

To nothing, do these remarks apply with more force, than to the bible. It reveals the amazing system of the Eternal, relating to his works of creation, providence and grace. It is one stupendous whole. Though all the parts, when considered separately are truly good, yet when viewed together, as one system, *Behold it is very good.* There is a most glorious and enrapturing relation and harmony between the parts. To discover this harmony, we must view parts as related, and constituting one vast whole. Clearly to understand and appreciate any one part, we must know something of the rest.

Do you say, that we must be thorough, we must be perfectly acquainted with one thing, before we proceed to the next? This may seem plausible; but it is fallacious. To know a thing perfectly, we must know it in its relations. But we cannot know its relations, without knowing something of the objects, to which it is related. To see the glories of the first chapter of the bible, and much more of the last, we need to know something of the other parts; and the more we know of the bible in general, the better we shall be prepared to understand and feel the meaning, the beauties and glories of any particular part. This no doubt is one reason, that the best informed Christians are continually discovering new excellences in scriptures, that they have read or pondered a hundred times. Must it not then be much the best way for the pupil to take a general survey of the whole field at first, fix in his mind the capital parts, and gradually fill up the great outline by successive courses of study more and more particular? This Biblical Outline is designed for the second course. In succeeding instructions, however, it may not be equally needful to go through in chronological order.