

MOSES CALLED TO SERVICE

– *JULY 20. – EXODUS 3:1-14. –*

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

– **Matthew 5:8.**

MOSES was forty years old when he fled from Pharaoh, discouraged. He was eighty years old when God called him to be the leader of Israel. The first forty years of his life were an ordinary schooling, the last forty a special schooling in meekness. He was now ready for service at exactly the time when God wished to use him. So thoroughly discouraged had he become that he who was ready to lead the hosts of Israel without a special Divine commission and authorization was now so distrustful of himself that even when called of the Lord he apologized, pleading his unfitness, etc. He did not realize that he had only then become fit.

So it is with some of God's children today. They little realize the importance of the lesson of meekness – submission – teachableness. He who learns this lesson is getting the most important preparation for Divine service. "The Lord resisteth the proud, but showeth grace to the humble" – the meek, the teachable, the submissive. The Apostle, on the strength of this principle, urges the Church, saying, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God" – submit yourselves to whatever God's providence shall bring to you in life's experiences – "that He may exalt you in due time" – after He shall have made you ready for the exaltation and for the service He wishes you to perform. – I Peter 5:6.

Moses was tending Jethro's flocks, and perhaps considering how wise it was that forty years before he had been unsuccessful in arousing his brethren to flee out of Egypt. He could see now, in the light of maturer years, what a herculean task he would have had as

their leader. He could see with maturer years the dangers and the difficulties of the wilderness journey. He could better understand the difficulties that would have attended his people in attempting to take possession of the land of Canaan – how they would have been resisted by the inhabitants of the land, more experienced than they in warfare, etc. Quite possibly he philosophized upon the folly of human ambitions, and concluded that the people unready to be delivered had been as wise or wiser than himself in remaining rather in bondage.

THE BURNING BUSH CONSUMED NOT

Thus meditating, while his flocks pastured on the mountainside, Moses caught sight of something most unusual. A bush was afire, yet it was not consumed. The longer he gazed, the more curious he became, until he resolved to investigate. He approached the bush. From it came a voice, declaring the phenomenon to be a manifestation of God's presence and power. Moses obeyed the command that he should take off his sandals, because it was holy ground, by reason of the presence of the Angel of the Lord. Moses covered his face in reverence, while he hearkened to the Divine message.

God's message portrayed to Moses' mind the foundation for his hopes and those of the Israelites. The statement, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob," brought to this instructed man of God a clear understanding of what was signified by this experience. By it God reminded him of the special Covenant which He had made with Abraham, and had renewed with Isaac, and confirmed to Jacob for an everlasting covenant. Thus Moses was assured that God had not forgotten the good things which He had promised. Thus his faith and hope must have been re-established. He learned that God's time had come for the deliverance of the Israelites and for their attaining the Land of

Promise – Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey – *i.e.*, very rich, very productive.

If during those forty years, and perhaps before, Moses had time and again wondered whether God really cared for the Israelites and why He permitted them to be oppressed by the Egyptians, he now had God's own assurance that He did know it and that He did care, with the intimation that for some good reason He had all these years waited, and had withheld help which He at any time had been able to give, and that He had a purpose in so [R5262 : page 189] withholding. The Lord's explanation of the matter closed with an invitation to Moses to now be His servant, and messenger and mouthpiece to Pharaoh, calling upon him to liberate the captive Israelites.

"CERTAINLY I WILL BE WITH THEE"

Then Moses, who forty years before was full of confidence and courage, and ready to lead the Israelites, but who now was lacking in self-confidence, replied to the Lord: "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" This meant, Lord, surely you know that I am a failure; with all the educational advantages that I had, I am fit for nothing better than to be a sheep-tender; Lord, surely there must be some one much more competent than I for the leadership of Israel, else I fear that my people will never get out of Egypt.

God's reply was: "Surely I will be with thee." I shall not expect you to do this of yourself. I realize that it is a great task, a mighty work, but "I will be with thee." By way of making the matter forceful, the Lord declared not only that Moses should lead forth the people, but that they should come to that very mountain, "the mount of God" – and worship Him there.

Moses, remembering his previous failure, was cautious. He inquired what response he should make to the Israelites if he should

tell them that God sent him this time and they should inquire, Who? Which God? What is His name? The Divine answer was that God's name is, "I AM THAT I AM" – the self-existing One. But Moses had become so distrustful of himself that he still could not think of undertaking this great work. He urged that the Egyptians would not let the people go. He felt more and more convinced that their intention was to keep the Israelites as their slaves. Another objection was that the Israelites themselves would not believe that God had really appeared to Moses.

Answering these objections, the Lord gave Moses certain signs, convincing him that he was talking to the Omnipotent One, and assured him that these same signs would be convincing to the Israelites and the Egyptians.

SLOW OF SPEECH AND INCOMPETENT

So meek was Moses that although he fully believed the Lord and trusted His power, he could not realize that even with Divine help he would be successful. It must be God's thought that some one else would be found for so important a work. Moses declared, "I am not eloquent, but am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." Moreover, he was inexperienced as a servant or prophet of the Lord. Surely it must be that the Lord was merely trying him to see whether he would be rash enough to undertake such a matter, but really intending to use some one else. But no! The Lord's answer was, "I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say." – Exod. 4:10,12.

So today the Lord's true people of the Gospel Age are all spirit-begotten, and are all thereby authorized and qualified to be ambassadors for God, to speak the Truth in love, in the name of God, and as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. But to some of us at times it seems impossible to realize how great the honor God has conferred upon us in inviting us to be His agents and mouthpieces in speaking His Message to the world or to the brethren in the

Church. And then when convinced that the Lord will be with us, some are in danger of being too rash and wilful in connection with the matter. While such need no encouragement, doubtless those who, like Moses, need to be encouraged, are in less danger of being injured by the great honor that attaches to the service of God in any capacity.

To the humble ones now, as to Moses of old, God declares: "I will be with thee; I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say." As one lesson is to have no confidence in ourselves or in our own judgment or strength, another important lesson is that we should have every confidence, absolute confidence, in God. Not until this lesson is learned will any be really fit to be God's mouthpieces. In the case of Moses, humility, lack of self-confidence, meekness, had become so pronounced in him during his forty years of training along that line that he prayed the Lord that, even if he should be used, some one else might be the spokesman. God heard his request and granted that he should have his brother Aaron for a companion and mouthpiece, when he would go before Pharaoh to make demands in the name of the Lord.

Nevertheless, Aaron was not the one competent for the great work. He did not have the same schooling that Moses enjoyed. Therefore God appointed that Moses should be as a god, or ruler, to his brother Aaron and that the latter should be as his servant, or mouthpiece, speaking only as authorized by the meek and lowly Moses in whom, because of his meekness, God was reposing the responsibility.

Everything in the Scriptures points us to the fact that humility is a quality most essential to all of the Lord's people who would be used of the Lord in any important or special work for Him. If the followers of the Lord could continually keep this in memory, and would persistently shape their course accordingly, how much they would be used, we may be sure. Any service for the Lord is an

honor; but the more we are permitted to serve, the more will be our blessing in the present life and the greater also will be our reward in the life to come. Let us, therefore, as the Apostle says, humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, that He may exalt us in due time.

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THE REFINER'S FIRE

He sat by a fire of seven-fold heat
As He watched the precious ore,
And closer He bent with a searching gaze,
As He heated it more and more.

He knew He had ore that could stand the test,
And He wanted the finest gold,
To mould as a crown for the King to wear,
Set with gems of a price untold.

So He laid our gold on the burning fire,
Tho' we fain would have said Him, "Nay";
And He watched the dross that we had not seen
As it melted and passed away.

And the gold grew brighter, and yet more bright,
But our eyes were so dim with tears,
We saw but the fire – not the Master's hand –
And questioned with anxious fears.

Yet our gold shone out with a richer glow
As it mirrored a Form above,
That bent o'er the fire, unseen by us,
With a look of ineffable love.

Can we think that it pleases His loving heart
To cause us a moment's pain?
Ah, no! but He saw thro' the present cross
The bliss of eternal gain.

So He waited there with a watchful eye,
With a love that is strong and sure,
And His gold did not suffer a whit more heat
Than was needed to make it pure!

– *Unknown.*

