

THE MAN WHO WAS A GIANT FOR GOD

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: For he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." Hebrews 11:24-26.

At crucial times in history God has always prepared leaders to call the people back to Him. The men whom He has chosen were not always recognized leaders in worldly affairs. Often they were poor and insignificant, but they were rich in faith.

One of the greatest leaders in the history of the world was Moses. He was highly favored in being born into a home in which God was known, honored and obeyed. Because of Pharaoh's decree that all the male children should be destroyed, his parents sought to conceal him. Due to divine providence, and through the love and shrewdness of his mother, Moses was consigned to an ark, which was placed among the bulrushes on the Nile River near the place where the daughter of Pharaoh went frequently, and committed into the keeping of the eternal God Whom she confidently believed would protect him.

A sister, Miriam, stood afar off and watched to see the outcome of this remarkable venture of faith. Presently Moses was discovered by the daughter of Pharaoh, whose pagan heart was drawn to the babe to such an extent that he was adopted into the family of the royal house. Miriam, Moses' sister, arranged for their mother to become his nurse, and it seems that he remained in her care long enough to be led to place his trust in God. We know very little about Moses' early youth and young manhood at Pharaoh's court. He was educated as a prince, and "instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." Thus he received the best training that was available, which was necessary for him to cope with the problems of his future life and position.

Moses was reared as a prince and educated to the last degree of knowledge that then was attainable. With a mind peculiarly fitted to receive education, he apparently stood upon the threshold of all the things that men most desire in this world. There was nothing that wealth could give that he could not have for the asking. There was nothing in pleasure that was not accessible to him. There was nothing in position, honor and government that was not open to him.

After forty years of living in luxury and enjoying the best advantages that Egypt could provide, Moses, motivated by faith in God, chose to identify himself and to cast his lot with his own people rather than to stay in Pharaoh's court. This decision was both a protest against the oppressive policy of Pharaoh and an espousal of the cause of the slaves. For him the momentous hour had come. His education was completed; his powers were fully matured; his hour of decision and destiny had come and he was at the forks of the road. He had to decide whether he would identify himself with the suffering race, whose cause was the cause of righteousness and mercy, or continue with their oppressors, with whom in upbringing and position he was already associated. In this choice Moses did not act rashly or inadvisedly.

Crises always come. They made black the skies of Israel's sojourn in Egypt and gave Moses a platform on which to stand to emancipate his people from the house of bondage to the land of freedom. What one does in a crisis reveals his true character. The national crisis into which Moses was thrust revealed that he was a stalwart giant, not a puny pigmy; a man of vision, not a man of short-sightedness; a man who was sacrificial, not an indolent; a man of creative ingenuity, not a slave of circumstances. He regarded life as an

entrustment, and not as an evasion. He turned imponderable obstacles into vehicles of victory. He lighted a night of pessimism with a torch of genuine optimism. He was directed by faith, and not by fear. He refused to lounge on beds of ease, and chose to sacrifice himself on the cross of service. He lifted the dread of his day by the dream of a better tomorrow.

Moses chose to sacrifice himself on the cross of service. He was no time-saver; he was a servant of all time. He did not follow the dictates of popularity; he chose the course of principle. Pleasure was not his objective; high purpose was his destined goal. Ease did not appeal to him; the emancipation of his people passionately possessed him. Treasures on earth did not interest him; laying up treasures in heaven gladdened his heart. He did not follow the road of least resistance because he knew that "the road of least resistance makes crooked rivers and crooked men." He sacrificed social luxury for sacrificial living.

He refused treasure; he refused pleasure; he refused leisure. His example is one of the most extraordinary accounts of deliberate renunciation in the annals of all time. His choice showed his low estimate of the worldly, and his high estimate of the spiritual. His choice went contrary to the desires which men have usually cherished through the ages. He sacrificed the things for which men sacrifice themselves. High position and glittering prospects held no charm for him.

Moses forsook royalty for the privilege of fellowship with a nation of broken-spirited, cowering, crouching slaves. He forsook wealth and cast his lot with a poverty-stricken people. He sacrificed himself upon the altar of service for their liberation, emancipation and salvation. The idolatrous Egyptians laughed at his incredulous dreams and scoffed at his visionary undertaking. To the Egyptians, gold was power; to Moses, it was trash. To them, life was having something to live on; with Moses, life was having something to live for. He sided with the weak minority instead of the powerful majority. He despised ease, and gloried in a hard task. Showing ingenuity, he refused to be enslaved by circumstances.

Moses had his choice in his day. He made the right one, and thus projected himself into immortality. His personality looms larger as the centuries move away from him. Well has it been said, "There are opportunity breakers. There are opportunity takers. There are opportunity makers." Moses was in the last category. His message and his morals undergird all subsequent human history. The civil governments of the nations, and our systems of jurisprudence, are built upon Moses and his message. His influence is deathless.

Mere existence is not enough. These days call for glorious living. Here are two blind men. Our hearts go out to them. The one is seen daily on a certain street corner eking out a mere living by begging. He is content just to exist. The name of the other is William Braille. He did not sit down on a street corner and mourn his fate. He arose and emancipated the blind of the generations from handicapping disadvantages by working out an alphabet for the blind.

When one passes from the sphere of a mere existence into the realm of glorious living, a revolutionary transformation takes place. For such a soul, the wilderness becomes a paradise, the desert an oasis, the mountain fastness a

rohdodendron dell, the heathen country a high way for the Lord.

While attempting to ameliorate the condition of his people. Moses saw an Egyptian taskmaster cruelly whipping one of the slaves. An altercation arose over this incident, and Moses killed the Egyptian and buried his body in the sand. This rash and hasty action was a clear violation of the sixth commandment. On the following day, when he sought to effect peace between two Hebrews, they turned upon him with a sarcastic taunt which clearly revealed the fact that his having committed murder was known. Upon learning that Pharaoh was seeking his life, Moses fled to Midian where he was taught the wisdom of God.

In Midian Moses dwelt with a priest named Jethro, married his daughter, Zipporah, and worked as a shepherd for forty years. In this capacity he had ample time for meditation and fellowship with God. There, under the silent stars and beneath the majestic canopy of the blue, Moses learned many things about God and God's will for him. It was important that he should learn that only utter dependence upon God could fit him to accomplish the task which was before him.

While Moses was keeping the flocks of Jethro, his attention was arrested by a strange sight. He saw a flame burning in a bush, which was not an uncommon sight. As he looked more closely, he was amazed to see that the bush was not consumed by the fire. That defied any natural explanation, so Moses approached this strange phenomenon in order that he might examine it more closely and discover why it was not being consumed. As Moses approached the bush, God spoke to him and told him to remove his shoes because the ground upon which he was standing was holy. The reason for its being holy was because God was there. Moses removed his shoes from his feet and hid his face in reverence when he became aware of God's presence.

In connection with any great movement, God's method has ever been to select and to use individuals. The call of Moses was simply a call to be an instrument in the accomplishment of God's purpose. God wanted a man through whom He could work, so He called Moses. God never makes a mistake when He calls any person to do a given task. Moses was the agent whom God could use to bring His people out of Egypt. The commission which he received was urgent—"Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh." What a great undertaking that was!

Moses went out to emancipate an enslaved nation. No noblemen were among them. None of them had any prestige. They were without friends in the courts of Egypt. They did not have any money or any well-wishers. They had never tasted the sweet fruits of freedom.

This mission appeared too great for Moses, so he voiced his objections and offered his excuses. Who was he to go into the presence of the king and demand the release of a people whom that king had sworn to exterminate? Perhaps the objections which he offered were prompted by a sense of his own weakness, but Moses should have realized that as God's agent he would have God's power.

Moses gave seven excuses for not doing what God told him to do. These excuses are as follows:

1. Lack of fitness -- "Who am I, that I should go?"
2. Lack of words -- "What shall I say?"
3. Lack of authority -- "They will not believe me."

4. Lack of eloquence -- "I am not eloquent."
5. Lack of special adaptation -- "Send by whom Thou wilt send."
6. Lack of success at first attempt. "Neither has Thou delivered Thy people at all."
7. Lack of acceptance. "The children of Israel have not hearkened unto me."

Moses was encouraged greatly by the assurance which God gave him in the promise, "Certainly I will be with thee." He was assured that God's power and wisdom were at his disposal. What more could Moses ask? It was God's work, it was to be performed by God's power, but Moses was the instrument for doing the work, and the one through whom the power would flow.

Moses made an indelible impression upon the people of his day, and transmitted multitudinous blessings to generations unborn. His life had the stamp of the eternal and divine destiny woven into it.

It was by faith that Moses became such a giant for God. Faith kept him alive. Faith bore him onward. Faith inspired him upward. Faith exalted him gloriously. Faith is not a passive experience, but an active force. It is not something done to us, but something which is done in us. It is not an adornment of life, but it is an ingrowing endowment of character. Faith glorifies God, crowns Christ, honors humanity, produces manhood and womanhood, and secures success.