

people, he enacted more brutal measures. He attempted to prevail upon those who assisted at the birth of the Hebrews' children, to murder all the males as they were born; but in that he was outwitted by the shrewdness of women, who would rather brave his wrath than lend themselves to his diabolical intentions. Then he gave commandment to his people that any boy born in a Hebrew household should be cast into the Nile, which, as the great source of prosperity of the country, had come to be regarded among them with religious reverence. It is not likely, however, that this cruel edict could be long enforced. It does not seem to have existed at the birth of Aaron, who was only three years older than Moses. And it could not have been in operation long after the preservation of Moses, otherwise it would be impossible to account for the large number of the Israelites at the time of the Exodus. But it is to be observed that it did occur just at the time when Moses was born; and that in consequence of its existence, through the efforts made by his parents to preserve his life, the future deliverer of the Hebrews was introduced into the palace of the king's daughter, there to receive a training which helped to fit him for his afterwork. Thus does cruelty outwit itself; and by the very crushing nature of his oppression, the king opened a way into his court for him who was at length to be the emancipator of the race that he was seeking to destroy.

The birth of a babe in a home is commonly a joyous event, but in this case the coming of the little one would create deep anxiety. Under such a savage edict as the king had issued, no mother could rest easy concerning her baby-boy. But God had a large place for Moses to fill, and no device could prevail to take his life before his time came. What double security can excel a mother's instinct and the care of a Heavenly Father? Blessed with these, the babe (Moses) survived the king's attack, and, what is remarkable, did this while dwelling in the palace. This is what one might call bearding the lion in his den. Little did the mother dream, when the princess drew Moses out of the water, that such a royal opportunity awaited him. In the nature of things the opposite would be true. Any one rather than a member of the king's family to find the fated child! How easy and direct a course is now opened to the king! But the Lord had the heart of the princess in His hand, and He turned it in Moses' favor. While Israel was growing in numbers, and preparing for organization as a nation, Moses was being trained up in the palace of her first ruler. Such are the wonderful ways of Providence.

Little did the princess think that she was on an errand of the Almighty that day! "Only a daily walk, only a bath at the river side!"—this is how we express it, little thinking of the outcome, looking for no large and noble opportunity until God thrusts one right in our faces. How true it is that great results come from

little causes! Only a babe in a basket on the Nile; yet this babe is Moses the Lawgiver: only a babe in the manger at Bethlehem; but lo! this is the Christ of God.

B.C. 1491] LESSON VII.

[May 15]

THE CALL OF MOSES.

Ex. 3. 1-12. Gold. Text, Ex. 4. 12.

THE exile of Moses was a necessary part of his training for his great mission. It inured him to hardships; it made him familiar with the wilderness, through which he was afterwards, as the Shepherd of Israel, to guide the nation as a flock; it brought him, in silence and solitude, into closer communion with God. Moreover, Reuel, his father-in-law, was a priest—a descendant of Abraham—one of the faithful patriarchs who, amidst general apostasy, still held fast the knowledge and worship of God. Such a companion and counsellor was of great value to him in ripening his spiritual knowledge and developing his spiritual nature.

During his long exile, Moses was trained for that difficult mission he had tried, in his own strength, to fill forty years before (Exod. 2. 11). Instead of the erratic zeal that then actuated him, he at length became very meek, even above all men on the face of the earth. No man had greater trials, or more occasion for meekness, and no man was profited more by these trials. His backwardness afterwards to undertake his mission was no less remarkable than his previous forwardness. The years of the life of Moses are, curiously, divided into three forties: the first forty he spent as a prince in Pharaoh's court; the second as a shepherd in Midian; the third as a lawgiver in Israel. How changeable is the life of men, especially that of growing, good men! Moses had finished his second forty when he received his commission to bring Israel out of Egypt. Sometimes it is long before God calls His servants out to that work which of old He designed them for, and has been graciously preparing them for. Moses was born to be Israel's deliverer, and yet he did not receive his commission until he was eighty years of age. How many of the ambitious ones of so-day could patiently spend half that time in preparation for some important sphere?

When God appeared at the bush to Moses, He found him employed. He was keeping a flock of sheep near Mount Horeb. This seems a singular employment for a man of his parts, and yet he rests satisfied with it. Life is not all bustle and show. Honest work of any kind and a season for reflection and thanksgiving—this makes good manhood. Humility and contentment are the basis of good character, and a shepherd's life fosters these. Moses has become celebrated for these traits. Where God places us, in His providence, we should abide. Constant change works all sorts of injury. One is continually subject to the risk attending