

and who had himself well nigh forgotten the ways and manners of the great. Fit as he had once appeared for the performance of such a work, unfit he must now seem to the eye of man. But "the Lord seeth not as man seeth." God's appointed way had come, and his servant had been prepared.

Look for a moment at the work Moses was commissioned to do. Look at its difficulty. He had to rouse a people sunk in slavery, to break a yoke which had become firmly fixed, to undo eighty years of oppression. What success could the exile expect with the people who had spurned him when he came to them in his youth and strength? How could he hope that Pharaoh, king of Egypt, would ever listen for a moment to his message? And look at the danger. The king had sought to slay him when his first attempt was made. Would not the hand of every Egyptian be raised against him now?

How then was Moses to face the difficulty and the danger of his errand?

He had a talisman given him which was potent to carry him through it all. This talisman is revealed in our Golden Text: "Certainly I will be with thee." And of its power Moses had just beheld a striking picture. He had seen the dry thorn bush, fit prey, it would seem, for the tiniest flame to feed upon and ultimately to devour. He had seen it stand wrapped in flame, a weird and brilliant sight, yet without one twig injured. Out of this bush came the Voice which spake "Certainly I will be with thee." And his thoughts must have recurred to his own people in the "iron furnace" of Egypt, persecuted, yet not diminished in number, "cast down but not destroyed." How had they been preserved until now? By the presence of God. Here was the talisman which ensured his success.

He did not at first appreciate its full worth. Once he had been too confident in himself. When he "went out unto his brethren and looked on their burdens" the "I" of youthful energy and daring was strong within him. Now it was exactly the reverse. The youthful fire was gone, but another "I" arose to assert itself—the "I" of shrinking unfitness and despondency. "Who am I?" is his answer to the call of God. And although the promise immediately follows, and directs his attention away from himself, yet the "I" is again brought forward: "Behold when I come . . . what shall I say unto them?" See also chap. 4. 1, 10. The man who at last went forth, not in his own strength, but trusting in him who sent him, found all obstacles gradually melt away before his advance.

Here is a lesson (1) for those who hesitate to start in the Christian life; (2) for those

who have started, and (3) for those who have as yet no intention of starting.

*For those who hesitate to start.* "How can I trust in Christ for the forgiveness of my sin? I shall go and do wrong next day," was the despairing utterance of one in whose ear the Gospel call had been sounding. It was the "I" of Moses over again, the thought turned in upon the poor, wretched, helpless self, instead of rising to Him who "who shall save His people from their sins." "Do you think it possible for me to lead a Christian life?" was the sad and anxious question of one whose surroundings seemed greatly against her. The difficulties looked too formidable, the obstacle insurmountable. But the "Certainly I will be with thee" was in this case, grasped, and the talisman did not fail.

*For those who have started.* The life of a Christian can never be one of careless ease. He has a path to tread which is directly contrary to the ways of this world, he has "charge to keep" which is of priceless importance, a work to do of which the issues are eternal. And he must do this in the face of an enemy, cruel, fierce, and threatening. In himself he is utterly insufficient, but the promise will carry him through.

*For those who have as yet no intention of starting.* They have, perhaps, no desire to choose the Lord's path, or keep the Lord's charge, or do the Lord's work. And therefore, they feel no need of the Lord's presence. But there are things before them which they know they must face, and of which they have a secret dread. They know they are not exempt from the common lot of humanity. Their turn will come for trouble, for pain, for sorrow, for death. And they cannot contemplate these without shrinking and fear. Would not a charm, whereby the bitter waters are made sweet, be worth having? Would not a talisman which gives the victory over all evil, be of inestimable value? There is such a one to be had. Make good your claim to the promise: "Certainly I will be with thee," and the talisman is yours.

But how may such a claim be advanced, much less made good? Very simply. God is now calling to those who are afar off. The call comes to them as truly as to Moses. Only his was a call to service, while theirs is to conversion. The voice divine bids them "Turn," "Repent," "Come," and it is the voice of One who for them gave up his only begotten Son. Rom. 8. 32. They who obey that call may claim the promise as surely as Moses did, for there is never a call given but the promise goes with it.

And what will the talisman avail in the hour of trial and suffering? "The bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." "He