

Birth of Moses to Exodus

28.—The Birth of Moses [B.C. *1500]

1. In Egypt the posterity of Jacob rapidly increased, and soon became a great people. In the mean time other kings arose, who knew not Joseph, and, seeing how great the Israelites had become, began to fear them; so they oppressed the children of Jacob, put heavy burdens upon them; and finally ordered the Egyptian midwives to cast into the Nile all the male children that would be born among the Hebrews.

2. One of the Hebrew women bore a son, whom she loved most tenderly. For three months she hid him; but, finding it impossible to conceal him any longer, she made a basket of bulrushes, and, smearing it with pitch, laid the child in it, and placed the basket among the sedges by the bank of the river. Then she sent his sister to watch what would come to pass.

3. By the direction of God, Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to wash herself, and, seeing the basket, sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it and saw the child, she knew it belonged to one of the Hebrew women. The sister approaching, Pharaoh's daughter sent her to bring a nurse. She ran and brought the mother. Pharaoh's daughter gave her the child to nurse, and, when he was grown up, adopted him, calling him *Moses*, that is, *saved from the waters*.

4. Moses was a figure of Jesus Christ. Moses was saved from the river: Jesus, from Herod. Moses, when young, was wise in words and powerful in deeds; so also Christ, who, at the age of twelve, was the wonder of priests and doctors. Moses divided the waters of the sea; Christ calmed the winds and the storms. Moses led the way to the Promised Land; Christ is the way to heaven.

5. Moses, amid great miracles, gave the Old Law to the Jews; Christ with the most stupendous miracles, gave the New Law to the world. Moses abolished idolatry among the Jews; Christ, in the world. Moses gave civil liberty to the Jews; Christ, spiritual liberty to mankind.

6. Moses fasted forty days on the mountain; Christ fasted forty days in the desert. Moses descended from the mountain with his face transfigured; Christ was transfigured on the mountain. In the desert, Moses fed the people with manna; Christ feeds the

world with His own body and blood. Moses confirmed the Old Law with the blood of bullocks; Christ sealed the New Law with His own blood.

29.—THE CALL OF MOSES.

1. When Moses attained his fortieth year he resolved to share the miseries of his people. By his vigorous defense of the Hebrews against the cruelty of the Egyptians, he incurred the displeasure of the king, who resolved to put him to death; but Moses fled to Madian, in Arabia, where he lived for forty years, tending the flocks of his father-in-law, Jethro, a priest of that country.

2. One day, when Moses had led his flock to the mountain of Horeb, God appeared to him in the midst of a *burning bush*. Moses was much astonished that the bush was not consumed, and approached to see what it could mean; but God commanded him to stand still and take off his shoes, for the place was holy. At the voice of God, Moses fell on his face.

3. Then God told him how He had seen the afflictions of the Hebrews, and that He was about to deliver them; besides, He had chosen him to lead the people out of Egypt. At first Moses objected, alleging his weakness and slowness of speech; but God promised to be with him, and gave him Aaron, his brother, as spokesman.

4. Then Moses returned to Egypt, and Aaron with him, and, assembling the people of Israel, Aaron spoke to them all the Lord had commanded. When Moses had wrought miracles, before the people, they believed and adored God.

30.—The Ten Plagues of Egypt.

1. Moses and Aaron were both about eighty years of age when they first presented themselves before Pharaoh and commanded him to let the Israelites go into the desert to sacrifice to the Lord. But Pharaoh refused, and commanded the Israelites to be oppressed more and more. Their tasks were also increased.

2. Again Moses and Aaron presented themselves before Pharaoh. At the command of God, Aaron cast his rod before the king, and immediately it was changed into a serpent. Pharaoh only the more hardened his heart and would not let the people go. Then God sent ten plagues upon Pharaoh and his people.

3. For the first, Aaron struck the Nile with his rod, and its waters were changed into blood, and corrupted. After

seven days he again stretched his hand over the waters of Egypt, and there came up frogs that covered the whole land. Then, in turn, the dust of the earth was turned into flies and insects that tormented both man and beast.

4. In quick succession there followed a murrain amongst the cattle, and boils and swellings upon man and beast. For the seventh plague, God sent thunder and hail, and lightning running along the ground. After this was added the plague of locusts to eat up what the hail had spared; and, at last, impenetrable darkness covered the land.

But Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go as the Lord commanded; so God struck him with tenth plague more terrible than all the rest.

31.—Departure from Egypt.

1. Before God sent His tenth plague He wished to prepare the Israelites for it. Each family was therefore commanded by Moses and Aaron to prepare a lamb without blemish, and on the fourteenth day of the month to sacrifice it, and to sprinkle their door-posts with its blood. They were further required to roast the lamb at the fire, and whilst, with unleavened bread and wild lettuce, they eat its flesh, to stand with their loins girt and staves in their hands. The Israelites did all they were commanded.

2. About the middle of the night, the angel of the Lord struck all the first-born of Egypt, even from the first-born of Pharaoh to the humblest of the land: no family escaped. But the angel, seeing the blood on the door-posts of the Israelites, spared them.

3. When Pharaoh saw this, he rose up and, calling Moses and Aaron, commanded them to go forth and to take the Israelites with them. The Egyptians also pressed them to go, fearing lest all would die. The Israelites went forth from Egypt, two hundred and fifteen years after Jacob had gone thither, to the number of six hundred thousand men, besides women and children. They carried with them the bones of Joseph.

4. The paschal lamb was a figure of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who was offered on the cross. By His blood we also are marked and delivered from eternal death. The deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt is also a figure of man's delivery from the bondage of sin and hell.

32.—Passage of the Red Sea.

1. God became the guide of the Israelites, leading them on their way by a cloud in the day and a pillar of fire in the night. In a few days they came to the Red Sea. Meanwhile Pharaoh repented that he had let the Israelites go, and resolved to gather together his horses

and chariots and pursue them. When the Israelites saw the Egyptians behind them and the sea before them, they were seized with great fear. But Moses encouraged them, and assured them the Lord would fight for them.

2. The cloud that had gone before the Israelites now went behind them, and become a wall of separation between the Egyptians and the Israelites. On the side of the former it was dark, but on the side of the latter it shone with a clear light. Thus the two armies were separated during the night. By command of God, Moses stretched forth his rod over the sea, and the waters were divided, rising as a wall to the right and to the left.

3. During the night the Israelites passed through on dry land. In the morning the Egyptians also followed, but, at the command of God, Moses again stretched forth his rod over the sea, and the waters returned to their place—Pharaoh and his whole army, his chariots and his horsemen, were swallowed up, so that not a single person escaped.

4. The cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night were a figure of Jesus Christ. He is the light, in which those who walk will not perish. The Red Sea is also a figure of Baptism, since we must all receive it if we will enter heaven.

33.—Manna in the Desert.

1. When the Israelites came into the desert they could find no bread; then they began to murmur against Moses, and to wish for the flesh-pots of Egypt. God promised them flesh to the full, and, in the morning, bread. In the evening there came into the camp an immense number of quails, which were easily caught; and in the morning the desert was covered with small white seeds that appeared like hoar-frost. When the Israelites saw this they cried out **MAN-HU!** THAT IS, *WHAT IS THIS?*

2. Then Moses told them it was the bread which the Lord had sent them. They were commanded to gather as much as each one needed. The people did so, and found the taste thereof like fine flour mixed with honey.

3. For forty years God fed the Israelites with this bread, which was afterwards called *mannā*. It fell no more after they came into the land of Canaan.

This manna was preeminently a figure of the Sacrament of the Altar In which Jesus Christ gives Himself under the appearance of bread and wine.

4. Some time after this there was a scarcity of water, and the Israelites began again to murmur. God told Moses to take his rod, and to go to Mount Horeb and strike the rock. He did so, and immediately there came forth water in such abundance that the people quenched their thirst and were satisfied.