

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

“THEREFORE thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep His charge, and His statutes, and His judgments, and His commandments, alway. And know ye this day; for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisements of the Lord your God, His greatness, His mighty hand, and His stretched-out arm, and His miracles, and His acts, which He did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land; and what He did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots; how He made the water of the Red Sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the Lord hath destroyed them unto this day; and what He did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place; and what He did unto Dathan and Abiram, the Sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben; how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession, in the midst of all Israel; but your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which He did.”

Moses felt it to be of the very highest importance that all the mighty acts of the Lord should be kept prominently before the hearts of the people, and deeply engraved on the tablets of their memory. The poor human mind is vagrant, and the heart volatile, and notwithstanding all that Israel had seen of the solemn judgments of God upon Egypt and upon Pharaoh, they were in danger of forgetting them, and losing the impression which they were designed and eminently fitted to make upon them.

It may be we feel disposed to wonder how Israel could ever forget the impressive scenes of their history in Egypt from first to last – the descent of their fathers thither as a mere handful, their steady growth and progress as a people, spite of formidable difficulties and hindrances, so that from the insignificant few, they had become, by the good hand of their God upon them, as the stars of Heaven for multitude.

And then those ten plagues upon the land of Egypt! How full of awful solemnity! how preeminently calculated to impress the heart with a sense of the mighty power of God, the utter impotency and insignificance of man, in all his boasted wisdom, strength, and glory, and the egregious folly of his attempting to set himself up against the almighty God! What was all the power of Pharaoh and of Egypt in the presence of the Lord God of Israel? In one hour all was plunged into hopeless ruin and destruction. All the chariots of Egypt, all the pomp and glory, the valor and might, of that ancient and far-famed nation – all was overwhelmed in the depths of the sea.

And why? Because they had presumed to meddle with the Israel of God; they had dared to set themselves in opposition to the eternal purpose and counsel of the Most High. They sought to crush those on whom He had set His love. He had sworn to bless the seed of Abraham, and no power of earth or hell could possibly annul His oath. Pharaoh, in his pride and hardness of heart, attempted to countervail the divine actings, but he only meddled to his own destruction. His land was shaken to its very center, and himself and his mighty army overthrown in the Red Sea, a solemn example to all who should ever attempt to stand in the way of the Lord's purpose to bless the seed of Abraham His friend.

Nor was it merely what the Lord had done to Egypt and to Pharaoh that the people were called to remember, but also what He had done amongst themselves. How soul-subduing the judgment on Dathan and Abiram and their households! How awful the thought of the earth opening her mouth and swallowing them up! And for what? For their rebellion against the divine appointment.

In the history given in Numbers, Korah, the Levite, is the prominent character; but here, he is omitted, and the two Reubenites are named – two members of the congregation, because Moses is seeking to act on the whole body of the people by setting before them the terrible consequence of self-will in two of their number-two ordinary members, as we should say, and not merely a privileged Levite. In a word, then, whether the attention was called to the divine actings without or within, abroad or at home, it was all for the purpose of impressing their hearts and minds with a deep sense of the moral importance of obedience.

This was the one grand aim of all the rehearsals, all the comments, all the exhortations, of the faithful servant of God who was so soon to be removed from their midst. For this, he ranges over their history for centuries, culling, grouping, commenting, taking up this fact and omitting that, as guided by the Spirit of God.

- The journey down to Egypt,
- The sojourn there,
- The heavy judgments upon the self-willed Pharaoh,
- The exodus,
- The passage through the sea,
- The scenes in the wilderness, and specially
- The awful fate of the two rebellious Reubenites.

All is brought to bear, with marvelous force and clearness, upon the conscience of the people, in order to strengthen the basis of the Lord's claim upon their unqualified obedience to His holy commandments.

“Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it; and that ye may prolong your days in the land, which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey.”

Let the reader note the beautiful moral link between those two clauses:

- **“keep all the commandments”**
- **“that ye may be strong.”**

There is great strength gained by unreserved obedience to the Word of God. It will not do to pick and choose. We are prone to this – prone to take up certain commandments and precepts which suit ourselves; but this is really self-will.

What right have we to select such and such precepts from the Word, and neglect others? None whatever. To do so is, in principle, simply self-will and rebellion. What business has a servant to decide as to which of his master’s commands he will obey? Surely none whatever; each commandment stands clothed with the master’s authority, and therefore claims the servant’s attention; and, we may add, the more implicitly the servant obeys, the more he bends his respectful attention to everyone of his master’s commands, be it ever so trivial, the more does he strengthen himself in his position and grow in his master’s confidence and esteem.

Every master loves and values an obedient, faithful, devoted servant. We all know what a comfort it is to have a servant whom we can trust – one who finds his delight in carrying out our every wish, and who does not require perpetual looking after, but knows his duty and attends to it. Now, ought we not to seek to refresh the heart of our blessed Master, by a loving obedience to all His commandments?

Only think, reader, what a privilege it is to be allowed to give joy to the head of that blessed One who loved us and gave Himself for us. It is something wonderful that poor creatures such as we can in any way refresh the heart of Jesus; yet so it is, blessed be His name. He delights in our keeping His commandments; and assuredly the thought of this should stir our whole moral being, and lead us to study His Word, in order to find out, more and more, what His commandments are, so that we may do them.

We are forcibly reminded, by those words of Moses which we have just quoted, of the apostle’s prayer for **“the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse.”**

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love; in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:9-14).

Making allowance for the difference between the earthly and the heavenly – between Israel and the Church, there is a striking similarity between the words of the lawgiver and the words of the apostle.

Both together are eminently fitted to set forth the beauty and preciousness of a willing-hearted, loving obedience. It is precious to the Father, precious to Christ, precious to the Holy Ghost; and this surely ought to be enough to create and strengthen in our hearts the desire to be filled with the knowledge of His will, that so we might walk worthy of Him to all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

It should lead us to a more diligent study of the Word of God, so that we might be ever finding out more and more of our Lord's mind and will, learning what is well pleasing to Him, and look to Him for grace to do it. Thus should our hearts be kept near to Him, and we should find an ever-deepening interest in searching the Scriptures, not merely to grow in the knowledge of truth, but in the knowledge of God, the knowledge of Christ – the deep, personal, experimental knowledge of all that is treasured up in that blessed One who is the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Oh, may the Spirit of God, by His most precious and powerful ministry, awaken in us a more intense desire to know and to do the will of our blessed Lord and Saviour JESUS Christ, that thus we may refresh His loving heart and be well pleasing to Him in all things.

We must now turn, for a moment, to the lovely picture of the promised land which Moses holds up before the eyes of the people

“For the land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year” (Ver. 10-12).

What a vivid contrast between Egypt and Canaan!

Egypt had no rain from Heaven; it was all human effort there. Not so in the Lord's land; the human foot could do nothing there, nor was there any need, for the blessed rain from Heaven dropped upon it; the Lord Himself cared for it and watered it with the early and latter rain.

The land of Egypt was dependent upon its own resources; the land of Canaan was wholly dependent upon God – upon what came down from Heaven. **“My river is mine own,”** was the language of Egypt; **“the river of God”** was the hope of Canaan. The habit in Egypt was to water with the foot; the habit in Canaan was to look up to Heaven.

We have in the sixty-fifth Psalm a lovely statement of the condition of things in the Lord's land, as viewed by the eye of faith.

“Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it; Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water; Thou preparest them corn, when Thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly; Thou settlest the furrows thereof; Thou makest it soft with showers; Thou blessest the springing thereof.

“Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness, and Thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness; and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing” (Ver. 9-13).

How perfectly beautiful! Only think of God watering the ridges and settling the furrows! think of His stooping down to do the work of a husbandman for His people! Yes, and delighting to do it! It was the joy of His heart to pour His sunbeams and His refreshing showers upon the **“hills and valleys”** of His beloved people. It was refreshing to His spirit, as it was to the praise of His name, to see the vine, the fig-tree, and the olive flourishing, the valleys covered with the golden grain, and the rich pastures covered with flocks of sheep. Thus it should ever have been, and thus it would have been, had Israel only walked in simple obedience to the holy law of God.

“It shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto My commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full” (Ver. 13-15).

Thus the matter stood between the God of Israel and the Israel of God. Nothing could be simpler, nothing more blessed.

It was Israel’s high and holy privilege to love and serve the Lord; it was the Lord’s prerogative to bless and prosper Israel. Happiness and fruitfulness were to be the sure accompaniments of obedience.

The people and their land were wholly dependent upon God. All their supplies were to come down from Heaven; and hence, so long as they walked in loving obedience, the copious showers dropped upon their fields and vineyards, the heavens dropped down the dew, and the earth responded in fruitfulness and blessing.

But, on the other hand, when Israel forgot the Lord, and forsook His precious commandments, the Heaven became brass and the earth iron; barrenness, desolation, famine, and misery were the melancholy accompaniments of disobedience. How could it be otherwise?

“If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

Now, in all this there is deep, practical instruction for the Church of God. Although we are not under law, we are called to obedience; and as we are enabled, through grace, to yield a loving, hearty obedience, we are blessed in our own spiritual state, our souls are watered, refreshed, and strengthened, and we bring forth the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

Christ, The True Vine

The reader may refer with much profit, in connection with this great practical subject, to the opening of John 15 – a most precious Scripture, and one demanding the earnest attention of every true-hearted child of God.

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without [or apart from] Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples. As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you; continue ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love” (Ver. 1-10).

This weighty passage of Scripture has suffered immensely through theological controversy and religious strife. It is as plain as it is practical, and only needs to be taken as it stands, in its own divine simplicity. If we seek to import into it what does not belong to it, we mar its integrity and miss its true application. In it we have Christ, the true vine, taking the place of Israel, who had become to the Lord the degenerate plant of a strange vine.

The scene of the parable is obviously earth, and not Heaven; we do not think of a vine and a husbandman (*γεωργος*) in Heaven. Besides, our Lord says, **“I am the true vine.”**

The figure is very distinct. It is not the head and the members, but a tree and its branches. Moreover, the subject of the parable is as distinct as the parable itself; it is not eternal life, but fruit-bearing. If this were borne in mind, it would greatly help to an understanding of this much – misunderstood passage of Scripture. In a word, then, we learn from the figure of the vine and its branches that the true secret of fruit-bearing is, to abide in Christ, and the way to abide in Christ is, to keep His precious commandments.

“If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.”

This makes it all so simple. The way to bear fruit in season is, to abide in the love of Christ, and this abiding is proved by our treasuring up His commandments in our hearts and yielding a loving obedience to every one of them. It is not running hither and thither in the mere energy of nature; it is not the excitement of mere fleshly zeal displaying itself in spasmodic efforts after devotedness. No; it is something quite different from all this; it is the calm and holy obedience of the heart – a loving obedience to our own beloved Lord, which refreshes His heart and glorifies His name.

“How blest are they who still abide
Close sheltered by Thy watchful side;
Who life and strength from Thee receive,
And with Thee move and in Thee live.”

Reader, may we apply our hearts diligently to this great subject of fruit-bearing. May we better understand what it is. We are apt to make great mistakes about it.

It is to be feared that much – very much of what passes for fruit would not be accredited in the divine presence. God cannot own any thing as fruit which is not the direct result of abiding in Christ.

- We may earn a great name among our fellows for zeal, energy, and devotedness;
- We may be abundant in labors, in every department of the work;
- We may acquit ourselves as great travelers, great preachers, earnest workers in the vineyard, great philanthropists and moral reformers;
- We may spend a princely fortune in promoting all the great objects of Christian benevolence.

And all the while not produce a single cluster of fruit acceptable to the Father’s heart.

And, on the other hand, it may be our lot to pass the time of our sojourn here in obscurity and retirement from human gaze; we may be little accounted of by the world and the professing church; we may seem to leave but little mark on the sands of time; but if only we abide in Christ, abide in His love, treasure up His precious words in our hearts, and yield ourselves up to a holy and loving obedience to His commandments, then shall our fruit be in season, and our Father will be glorified, and we shall grow in the experimental knowledge of our Lord and Saviour JESUS Christ.

The urgent need of watchfulness and diligence

We shall now look for a moment at the remainder of our chapter, in which Moses, in words of intense earnestness, presses upon the congregation the urgent need of watchfulness and diligence in reference to all the statutes and judgments of the Lord their God.

The beloved and faithful servant of God, and true lover of the people, was unwearied in his efforts to brace them up to that whole-hearted obedience which he knew to be at once the spring of their happiness and their fruitfulness; and just as our blessed Lord warns His disciples by setting before them the solemn judgment of the unfruitful branch, so does Moses warn the people as to the sure and terrible consequences of disobedience.

“Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them.”

Sad progress downward! The heart deceived. This is the beginning of all declension. **“And ye turn aside.”**

The feet are sure to follow the heart. Hence the deep need of keeping the heart with all diligence; it is the citadel of the whole moral being, and so long as it is kept for the Lord, the enemy can gain no advantage; but when once it is surrendered, all is really gone, – there is the turning aside; the secret departure of the heart is proved by the practical ways,- “**other gods**” are served and worshiped.

The descent down along the inclined plane is terribly rapid.

“**And then**” – mark the sure and solemn consequences – “**the Lord’s wrath be kindled against you, and He shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you.**”

What barrenness and desolation there must be when Heaven is shut up! No refreshing showers coming down, no dew-drops falling, no communication between the Heaven and the earth. Alas! how often had Israel tasted the awful reality of this! “**He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.**”

And may we not see in the barren land and the desolate wilderness an apt and striking illustration of a soul out of communion through disobedience to the precious commandments of Christ?

- Such an one has no refreshing communications with Heaven
- No showers coming down
- No unfoldings of the preciousness of Christ to the heart
- No sweet ministrations of an ungrieved Spirit to the soul;
- The Bible seems a sealed book;
- All is dark, dreary, and desolate.

Oh, there cannot be anything more miserable in all this world than a soul in this condition. May the writer and the reader never experience it. May we bend our ears to the fervent exhortations addressed by Moses to the congregation of Israel.

They are most seasonable, most healthful, most needful, in this day of cold indifferentism and positive willfulness. They set before us the divine antidote against the special evils to which the Church of God is exposed at this very hour – an hour critical and solemn beyond all human conception.

“**Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; and thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates, that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.**”

Blessed days! And oh, how ardently the large, loving heart of Moses longed that the people might enjoy many such days! And how simple the condition! Truly nothing could be simpler, nothing more precious.

It was not a heavy yoke laid upon them, but the sweet privilege of treasuring up the precious commandments of the Lord their God in their hearts, and breathing the very atmosphere of His Holy Word.

All was to hinge upon this.

- All the blessings of the land of Canaan
- That goodly, highly favored land,
- A land flowing with milk and honey,
- A land on which the Lord's eyes ever rested in loving interest and tender care
- All its precious fruits,
- All its rare privileges,

Were to be theirs in perpetuity, on the one simple condition of loving obedience to the word of their covenant-God.

“For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to cleave unto Him; then will the Lord drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.”

In a word, sure and certain victory was before them, a most complete overthrow of all enemies and obstacles, a triumphal march into the promised inheritance – all secured to them on the blessed ground of affectionate and reverential obedience to the most precious statutes and judgments that had ever been addressed to the human heart – statutes and judgments everyone of which was but the very voice of their most gracious Deliverer.

“Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours; from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea, shall your coast be. There shall no man be able to stand before you; for the Lord your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as He hath said unto you.”

Here was the divine side of the question. The whole land, in its length, breadth, and fullness, lay before them; they had but to take possession of it, as the free gift of God; it was for them simply to plant the foot, in artless, appropriating faith, upon that fair inheritance which sovereign grace had bestowed upon them.

All this we see made good in the book of Joshua, as we read in chapter 11 – **“So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel, according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war”** (Ver. 23). *

*** No doubt it was in faith that Joshua took – and could take nothing less than – the whole land; but as to actual possession, chapter 13:1 shows there was “yet much land to be possessed.”**

But alas! There was the human side of the question as well as the divine.

Canaan as promised by the Lord and made good by the faith of Joshua was one thing, and Canaan as possessed by Israel was quite another. Hence the vast difference between Joshua and Judges.

- In Joshua, we see the infallible faithfulness of God to His promise;
- in Judges, we see Israel’s miserable failure from the very outset.

God pledged His immutable word that not a man should be able to stand before them, and the sword of Joshua – type of the great Captain of our salvation – made good this pledge in its entry jot and tittle; but the book of Judges records the melancholy fact that Israel failed to drive out the enemy – failed to take possession of the divine grant in all its royal magnificence.

What then? Is the promise of God made of none effect? Nay, verily; but the utter failure of man is made apparent. At Gilgal, the banner of victory floated over the twelve tribes, with their invincible captain at their head; at Bochim, the weepers had to mourn over Israel’s lamentable defeat.

Have we any difficulty in understanding the difference? None whatever.

We see the two things running all through the divine Volume.

Man fails to rise to the height of the divine revelation – fails to take possession of what grace bestows. This is as true in the history of the Church as it was in the history of Israel; – in the New Testament, as well as in the Old, we have Judges as well as Joshua.

Yes, reader, and in the history of each individual member of the Church we see the same thing.

Where is the Christian, beneath the canopy of Heaven, that lives up to the height of his spiritual privileges? where is the child of God who has not to mourn over his humiliating failure in grasping and making good practically the high and holy privileges of his calling of God? But does this make the truth of God of none effect? No; blessed forever be His holy name. His Word holds good in all its divine integrity and eternal stability.

Just as in Israel’s case, the land of promise lay before them in all its fair proportions and divinely given attractions; and not only so, but they could count on the faithfulness and almighty power of God to bring them in and put them in full possession; so with us, we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. There is absolutely no limit to the privileges connected with our standing, and as to our actual enjoyment, it is only a question of faith taking possession of all that God’s sovereign grace has made ours in Christ.

We must never forget that it is the privilege of the Christian to live at the very height of the divine revelation.

There is no excuse for a shallow experience or a low walk. We have no right whatever to say that we cannot realize the fullness of our portion in Christ, that the standard is too high, the privileges are too vast, that we cannot expect to enjoy such marvelous blessings and dignities in our present imperfect state.

All this is downright unbelief, and should be so treated by every true Christian.

The question is, Has the grace of God bestowed the privileges upon us? has the death of Christ made good our title to them? and has the Holy Ghost declared them to be the proper portion of the very feeblest member of the body of Christ? If so – and Scripture declares it is so – why should we not enjoy them? There is no hindrance on the divine side. It is the desire of the heart of God that we should enter into the fullness of our portion in Christ.

Hear the earnest breathing of the inspired apostle on behalf of the saints at Ephesus and of all saints – **“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all”** (Ephesians 1:15-23).

From this marvelous prayer we may learn how earnestly the Spirit of God desires that we should apprehend and enjoy the glorious privileges of the true Christian position. He would ever, by His precious and powerful ministry, keep our hearts up to the mark; but, alas! like Israel, we grieve Him by our sinful unbelief, and rob our own souls of incalculable blessing.

But, all praise to the God of all grace, the Father of glory, the God and Father of our Lord JESUS Christ, He will yet make good every jot and tittle of His most precious truth, both as to His earthly and heavenly people.

Israel shall yet enjoy to the full all the blessings secured to them by the everlasting covenant; and the Church shall yet enter upon the perfect fruition of all that which eternal love and divine counsels have laid up for her in Christ; and not only so, but the blessed Comforter is able and willing to lead the individual believer into the present enjoyment of the hope of God’s glorious calling, and the practical power of that hope, in detaching the heart from present things and separating it to God in true holiness and living devotedness.

May our hearts, beloved Christian reader, long more ardently after the full realization of all this, that thus we may live more as those who are finding their portion and their rest in a risen and glorified Christ. God, in His infinite goodness, grant it, for JESUS Christ's name and glory's sake.

The remaining verses of our chapter close the first division of the 'book of Deuteronomy, which, as the reader will notice, consists of a series of discourses addressed by Moses to the congregation of Israel – memorable discourses, most surely, in whatever way we view them. The closing sentences are, we need hardly say, in perfect keeping with the whole, and breathe the same deep-toned earnestness in reference to the subject of obedience – a subject which, as we have seen, formed the special burden on the heart of the beloved speaker in his affecting farewell addresses to the people.

“Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;” – How pointed and solemn is this! – **“a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day; and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known. And it shall come to pass, when the Lord thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon Mount Gerizim, and the curse upon Mount Ebal. Are they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down, in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champaign over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh? For ye shall pass over Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein. AND YE SHALL OBSERVE TO DO ALL THE STATUTES AND JUDGMENTS WHICH I SET BEFORE YOU THIS DAY”** (Ver. 26-32).

Here we have the summing up of the whole matter.

The blessing is linked on to obedience; the curse, to disobedience. Mount Gerizim stands over against Mount Ebal – fruitfulness and barrenness. We shall see, when we come to chapter 27, that Mount Gerizim and its blessings are entirely passed over. The curses of Mount Ebal fall, with awful distinctness, on Israel's ear, while terrible silence reigns on Mount Gerizim. **“As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse.”**

The blessing of Abraham can only come on those who are on the ground of faith. But more of this by and by.

~ end of chapter 11 ~

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