

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

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CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

“AND Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were ended.”

It is not too much to say that one of the very grandest and most comprehensive sections in the divine volume now lies open before us and claims our prayerful attention.

It takes in the whole range of God's dealings with Israel from first to last, and presents a most solemn record of their grievous sin and of divine wrath and judgment. But, blessed be God, it begins and ends with Him; and this is full of deepest and richest blessing for the soul. If it were not so, if we had only the melancholy story of man's ways, we should be completely overwhelmed; but in this magnificent song, as indeed in the entire volume, we begin with God and we end with God. This tranquilizes the spirit most blessedly, and enables us, in calm and holy confidence, to pursue the history of man, to see everything going to pieces in his hands, and to mark the actings of the enemy in opposition to the counsels and purposes of God.

We can afford to see the complete failure and ruin of the creature, in every shape and form, because we know and are assured that God will be God in spite of everything. He will have the upper hand in the end, and then all will be – must be right. God shall be all in all, and there shall be neither enemy nor evil occurrent throughout that vast universe of bliss of which our adorable Lord Christ shall be the central sun forever. But we must turn to the song.

“Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.”

Heaven and earth are summoned to hearken to this magnificent outpouring. Its range is commensurate with its vast moral importance.

“My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass; because I will publish the name of the Lord; ascribe ye greatness unto our God.”

Here lies the solid, the imperishable foundation of everything. Come what may, the name of our God shall stand forever. No power of earth or hell can possibly countervail the divine purpose, or hinder the outshining of the divine glory. What sweet rest this gives the heart in the midst of this dark, sorrowful, sin-stricken world, and in the face of the apparently successful schemes of the enemy!

Our refuge, our resource, our sweet relief and solace, are found in the name of the Lord our God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Truly the publication of that blessed name must ever be as the refreshing dew and tender rain falling upon the heart. This is, of a truth, the divine and heavenly doctrine on which the soul can feed, and by which it is sustained, at all times, and under all circumstances.

- **“He is the Rock”** – not merely a rock.

There is, there can be, no other Rock but Himself. Eternal and universal homage to His glorious name!

- **“His work is perfect;”** – not a single flaw in aught that comes from His blessed hand; all bears the stamp of absolute perfection. This will be made manifest to all created intelligences by and by. It is manifest to faith now, and is a spring of divine consolation to all true believers. The very thought of it distills as the dew upon the thirsty soul.

- **“For all His ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is He.”**

Infidels may cavil and sneer; they may, in their fancied wisdom, try to pick holes in the divine actings; but their folly shall be manifest to all. **“Let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, ‘That Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged.’** “

God must have the upper hand in the end. Let men beware how they presume to call in question the sayings and doings of the only true, the only wise, and the almighty God.

There is something uncommonly fine in the opening notes of this song. It gives the sweetest rest to the heart to know that however man, and even the people of God, may fail and come to ruin, yet we have to do with One who abideth faithful and cannot deny Himself, whose ways are absolutely perfect, and who, when the enemy has done his very utmost, and brought all his malignant designs to a head, shall glorify Himself, and bring in universal and everlasting blessedness.

True, He has to execute judgment upon man’s ways. He is constrained to take down the rod of discipline and use it, at times, with terrible severity upon His own people. He is perfectly intolerant of evil in those who bear His holy name. All this comes out, with special solemnity in the song before us.

Israel’s ways are exposed and dealt with unsparingly; nothing is allowed to pass; all is set forth with holy precision and faithfulness. Thus we read, **“They have corrupted themselves; their spot is not the spot of His children; they are a perverse and crooked generation. Do ye thus requite the Lord, a foolish people and unwise? is not He thy Father that hath bought thee? hath He not made thee, and established thee?”**

Here we have the first note of reproof in this song, but no sooner has it fallen on the ear than it is followed by a most precious outpouring of testimony to the goodness, loving-kindness, faithfulness, and tender mercy of the Lord, the Elohim of Israel, and the Most High, or Elion of all the earth.

“Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee; when the Most High [God’s millennial title] divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.”

What a glorious fact is here unfolded to our view! a fact but little understood or taken account of by the nations of the earth.

How little do men consider that, in the original settlement of the great national boundaries, the Most High had direct reference to **“the children of Israel”!** Yet thus it was, and the reader should seek to grasp this grand and intensely interesting fact.

When we look at geography and history from a divine stand-point, we find that Canaan and the seed of Jacob are God’s center. Yes; Canaan, a little strip of land lying along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, with an area of eleven thousand square miles, (about a third of the extent of Ireland,) is the center of God’s geography, and the twelve tribes of Israel are the central object of God’s history. How little have geographers and historians thought of this!

They have described countries, and written the history of nations, which, in geographical extent and political importance, far outstrip Palestine and its people, according to human thinking, but which, in God’s account, are as nothing compared with that little strip of land which He deigns to call His own, and which it is His fixed purpose to inherit through the seed of Abraham His friend. *

*** How true it is that God’s thoughts are not man’s thoughts, or His ways as man’s ways! man attaches importance to extensive territories, material strength, pecuniary resources, well-disciplined armies, powerful fleets; God, on the contrary, takes no account of such things; they are to Him as the small dust of the balance.**

“Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth the princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.”

Hence we may see the moral reason why, in selecting a country to be the center of His earthly plans and counsels, the Lord did not select one of vast extent, but a very small and insignificant strip of land, of little account in the thoughts of men. But oh, what importance attaches to that little spot! What principles have been unfolded there! What events have taken place there! What deeds have been done there! what plans and purposes are yet to be wrought out there!

There is not a spot on the face of the earth so interesting to the heart of God as the land of Canaan and the city of Jerusalem. Scripture teems with evidence as to this: we could fill a small volume with proofs. The time is rapidly approaching when living facts will do what the fullest and clearest testimony of Scripture fails to do, namely, convince men that the land of Israel was, is, and ever shall be God's earthly center. All other nations owe their importance, their interest, their place in the pages of inspiration, simply to the fact of their being, in some way or other, connected with the land and people of Israel. How little do historians know or think of this! But surely everyone who loves God ought to know it and ponder it.

We cannot attempt to dwell upon this most important and suggestive fact, but we would ask the reader to give it his serious consideration. He will find it fully developed and strikingly illustrated in the prophetic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

“The Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye” – the most sensitive, delicate part of the human body – “As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them upon her wings;” – to teach them to fly and to keep them from falling – “so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.”

Need we say that the primary application of all this is to Israel? No doubt the Church may learn from it and profit by it, but to apply it to the Church would involve a double mistake, a mistake of the most serious nature; it would involve nothing less than the reducing of the Church from a heavenly to an earthly level, and the most unwarrantable interference with Israel's divinely appointed place and portion.

What, we may lawfully inquire, has the Church of God, the body of Christ, to do with the settlement of the nations of the earth? Nothing whatever. The Church, according to the mind of God, is a stranger on the earth. Her portion, her hope, her home, her inheritance, her all, is heavenly. It would make no difference in the current of this world's history if the Church had never been heard of. Her calling, her walk, her destiny, her whole character and course, her principles and morals, are or ought to be heavenly. The Church has nothing to do with the politics of this world: Her citizenship is in Heaven, from whence she looks for the Saviour. She proves false to her Lord, false to her calling, false to her principles, in so far as she meddles with the affairs of nations. It is her high and holy privilege to be linked and morally identified with a rejected, crucified, risen, and glorified Christ. She has no more to do with the present system of things, or with the current of this world's history, than her glorified Head in the heavens.

“They,” says our Lord Christ, speaking of His people, “are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

This is conclusive. It fixes our position and our path in the most precise and definite way possible. **“As He is, so are we in this world.”** This involves a double truth, namely, our perfect acceptance with God and our complete separation from the world.

We are in the world, but not of it. We have to pass through it as pilgrims and strangers, looking out for the coming of our Lord, the appearing of the Bright and Morning Star. It is no part of our business to interfere with municipal or political matters. We are called and exhorted to obey the powers that be, to pray for all in authority, to pay tribute, and owe no man anything; **“to be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation,”** among whom we are to **“shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.”**

From all this we may gather something of the immense practical importance of **“rightly dividing the word of truth.”** We have but little idea of the injury done, both to the truth of God and to the souls of His people, by confounding Israel with the Church – the earthly and the heavenly. It hinders all progress in the knowledge of Scripture, and mars the integrity of Christian walk and testimony. This may seem a strong statement, but we have seen the truth of it painfully illustrated times without number; and we feel that we cannot too urgently call the attention of the reader to the subject. We have more than once referred to it in the progress of our studies on the Pentateuch, and therefore we shall not further pursue it here, but proceed with our chapter.

At verse 15, we reach a very different note in the song of Moses. Up to this point, we have had before us God and His actings, His purposes, His counsels, His thoughts, His loving interest in His people Israel, His tender, gracious dealings with them. All this is full of deepest, richest blessing. There is, there can be, no drawback here. When we have God and His ways before us, there is no hindrance to the heart’s enjoyment. All is perfection – absolute, divine perfection, and as we dwell upon it, we are filled with wonder, love, and praise.

But there is the human side, and here, alas! All is failure and disappointment.

Thus at the fifteenth verse of our chapter we read, **“But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked”** – what a very full and suggestive statement! How vividly it presents, in its brief compass, the moral history of Israel! – **“thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they Him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.”**

There is a solemn voice in all this for the writer and the reader. We are each of us in danger of treading the moral path indicated by the words just quoted. Surrounded on all hands by the rich and varied mercies of God, we are apt to make use of them to nourish a spirit of self-complacency. We make use of the gifts to shut out the Giver. In a word, we, too, like Israel, wax fat and kick – we forget God. We lose the sweet and precious sense of His presence and of His perfect sufficiency, and turn to other objects, as Israel did to false gods.

How often do we forget the Rock that begat us, the God that formed us, the Lord that redeemed us! And all this is so much the more inexcusable in us, inasmuch as our privileges are so much higher than theirs.

We are brought into a relationship and a position of which Israel knew absolutely nothing; our privileges and blessings are of the very highest order; it is our privilege to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ; we are the objects of that perfect love which stopped not short of introducing us into a position in which it can be said of us, **“As He [Christ] is, so are we in this world.”**

Nothing could exceed the blessedness of this; even divine love itself could go no further than this. It is not merely that the love of God has been manifested to us in the gift and the death of His only begotten and well-beloved Son, and in giving us His Spirit, but it has been made perfect with us by placing us in the very same position as that blessed One on the throne of God.

All this is perfectly marvelous. It passeth knowledge. And yet how prone we are to forget the blessed One who has so loved us and wrought for us and blessed us! How often we slip away from Him in the spirit of our minds and the affections of our hearts! It is not merely a question of what the professing church, as a whole, has done, but the very much deeper, closer, more pointed question of what our own wretched hearts are constantly prone to do. We are apt to forget God, and to turn to other objects, to our serious loss and His dishonor.

Would we know how the heart of God feels as to all this? would we form anything like a correct idea of how He resents it? Let us hearken to the burning words addressed to His erring people Israel, the overwhelming strains of the song of Moses. May we have grace to hear them aright, and deeply profit by them.

“And when the Lord saw it, He abhorred them, because of the provoking of His sons and of His daughters. And He said, ‘I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be;’ – alas! alas! a truly deplorable end – “for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked Me to anger with their vanities; and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. For a fire is kindled in Mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and shall set on fire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend Mine arrows upon, them. They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat and with bitter destruction; I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust. The sword without and terror within shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs” (Ver. 19-26).

Here we have a most solemn record of God’s governmental dealings with His people – a record eminently calculated to set forth the awful truth of Hebrews 10:31 – **“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”**

The history of Israel in the past, their condition at present, and what they are yet to pass through in the future – all goes to prove, in the most impressive manner, that “**our God is a consuming fire.**”

- No nation on the face of the earth has ever been called to pass through such severe discipline as the nation of Israel. As the Lord reminds them in those deeply solemn words, “**You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for your iniquities.**”
- No other nation was ever called to occupy the highly privileged place of actual relationship with the Lord. This dignity was reserved for one nation; but the very dignity was the basis of a most solemn responsibility.

If they were called to be His people, they were responsible to conduct themselves in a way worthy of such a wondrous position, or else have to undergo the heaviest chastenings ever endured by any nation under the sun. Men may reason about all this; they may raise all manner of questions as to the moral consistency of a benevolent Being acting according to the terms set forth in verses 22-25 of our chapter.

But all such questions and reasonings must sooner or later be discovered to be utter folly. It is perfectly useless for men to argue against the solemn actings of divine government, or the terrible severity of the discipline exercised toward the chosen people of God. How much wiser and better and safer to be warned by the facts of Israel’s history to flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold upon eternal life and full salvation revealed in the precious Gospel of God!

And then, with regard to the use which Christians should make of the record of His dealings with His earthly people, we are bound to turn it to most profitable account by learning from it the urgent need of walking humbly, watchfully, and faithfully in our high and holy position.

True, we are the possessors of eternal life, the privileged subjects of that magnificent grace which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord; we are members of the body of Christ, temples of the Holy Ghost, and heirs of eternal glory; but does all this afford any warrant for neglecting the warning voice which Israel’s history utters in our ears? are we, because of our incomparably higher privileges, to walk carelessly and despise the wholesome admonitions which Israel’s history supplies? God forbid! Nay, we are bound to give earnest heed to the things which the Holy Ghost has written for our learning.

The higher our privileges, the richer our blessings, the nearer our relationship, the more does it become us, the more solemnly are we bound, to be faithful, and to seek in all things to carry ourselves in such a way as to be well-pleasing to Him who has called us into the very highest and most blessed place that even His perfect love could bestow.

The Lord, in His great goodness, grant that we may, in true purpose of heart, ponder these things in His holy presence, and earnestly seek to serve Him with reverence and godly fear. But we must proceed with our chapter.

At verse 26, we have a point of deepest interest in connection with the history of the divine dealings with Israel.

“I said I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men.” And why did He not? The answer to this question presents a truth of infinite value and importance to Israel – a truth which lies at the very foundation of all their future blessing. No doubt, so far as they are concerned, they deserved to have their remembrance blotted out from among men; but God has His own thoughts and counsels and purposes respecting them; and not only so, but He takes account of the thoughts and actings of the nations in reference to His people.

This comes out with singular force and beauty at verse 27. He condescends to give us His reasons for not obliterating every trace of the sinful and rebellious people – and oh, what a touching reason it is! – **“Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this.”**

Can aught be more affecting than the grace that breathes in these words? God will not permit the nations to behave themselves strangely toward His poor erring people. He will use them as His rod of discipline, but the moment they attempt, in the indulgence of their own bitter animosity, to exceed their appointed limit, He will break the rod in pieces, and make it manifest to all that He Himself is dealing with His beloved though erring people, for their ultimate blessing and His glory. This is a truth of unspeakable preciousness.

It is the fixed purpose of the Lord to teach all the nations of the earth that Israel has a special place in His heart, and a destined place of pre-eminence on the earth. This is beyond all question. The pages of the prophets furnish a body of evidence perfectly unanswerable on the point. If nations forget or oppose, so much the worse for them. It is utterly vain for them to attempt to countervail the divine purpose, for they may rest assured that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will confound every scheme formed against the people of His choice. Men may think, in their pride and folly, that their hand is high, but they will have to learn that God’s hand is higher still.

But our space does not admit of our dwelling upon this deeply interesting subject; we must allow the reader to pursue it for himself, in the light of Holy Scripture. He will find it a most profitable and refreshing study. Most gladly would we accompany him through the precious pages of the prophetic Scriptures, but we must just now confine ourselves to the magnificent song which is in itself a remarkable epitome of the entire teaching on the point – a brief but comprehensive and impressive history of God’s ways with Israel and Israel’s ways with God, from first to last – a history strikingly illustrative of the great principles of grace, law, government, and glory.

At verse 29, we have a very touching appeal.

“O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up? For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.”

There is, there can be, but the one Rock, blessed throughout all ages be His glorious name! – **“For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter; their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.”**

Terrible picture of a people’s moral condition drawn by a master-hand!

Such is the divine estimate of the real state of all those whose rock was not as the Rock of Israel. But a day of vengeance will come. It is delayed in longsuffering mercy, but it will come as sure as there is a God on the throne of Heaven. A day is coming when all those nations which have dealt proudly with Israel shall have to answer at the bar of the Son of Man for their conduct, hear His solemn sentence, and meet His unsparing wrath.

“Is not this laid up in store with Me, and sealed up among My treasures’! To Me belongeth vengeance and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. For the Lord shall judge [vindicate, defend, or avenge] His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.”

Precious grace for Israel by and by – for each, for all, now, who feel and own their need!

“And He shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted; which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink-offerings? let them rise up and help you and be your protection. See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me; I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal;” – wound in governmental wrath, and heal in pardoning grace; all homage to His great and holy name, throughout the everlasting ages! – **“neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand. For I lift up My hand to Heaven, and say, ‘I live forever.’”** – Glory be to God in the highest! Let all created intelligences adore His matchless name! – **“If I whet My glittering sword, and Mine hand take hold on judgment,”** – as it most assuredly will – **“I will render vengeance to Mine enemies, and will reward them that hate Me”** – whoever and wherever they are.

Tremendous sentence for all whom it may concern, for all haters of God – all lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God! – **“I will make Mine arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy.”**

Here we reach the end of the heavy record of judgment, wrath, and vengeance so briefly presented in this song of Moses, but so largely unfolded throughout the prophetic Scriptures. The reader can refer, with much interest and profit, to Ezekiel 38 and 39, where we have the judgment of Gog and Magog, the great northern foe who is to come up, at the end, against the land of Israel, and there meet his ignominious fall and utter destruction.

He may also turn to Joel 3, which opens with words of balm and consolation for the Israel of the future:

“For behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My people and for My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted My land.”

Thus he will see how perfectly the voices of the prophets harmonize with the song of Moses, and how fully, how clearly, and how unanswerably, in both the one and the other, does the Holy Ghost set forth and establish the grand truth of Israel’s future restoration, supremacy, and glory.

And then, how truly delightful is the closing note of our song! how magnificently it places the top stone upon the whole superstructure!

All the hostile nations are judged, under whatever style or title they appear upon the scene, whether it be Gog and Magog, the Assyrian, or the king of the north – all the foes of Israel shall be confounded and consigned to everlasting perdition, and then this sweet note falls upon the ear – **“REJOICE, O YE NATIONS, WITH HIS PEOPLE; FOR HE WILL AVENGE THE BLOOD OF HIS SERVANTS, AND WILL RENDER VENGEANCE TO HIS ADVERSARIES, AND WILL BE MERCIFUL UNTO HIS LAND AND TO HIS PEOPLE.”**

Here ends this marvelous song, one of the very finest, fullest, and most forcible utterances in the whole volume of God.

It begins and ends with God, and takes in, in its comprehensive range, the history of His earthly people Israel – past, present, and future.

- It shows us the ordering of the nations in direct reference to the divine purpose as to the seed of Abraham.
- It unfolds the final judgment of all those nations that have acted or shall yet act in opposition to the chosen seed; and then,
- When Israel is fully restored and blessed, according to the covenant made with their fathers, the saved nations are summoned to rejoice with them.

How glorious is all this! What a splendid circle of truth is presented to the vision of our souls in the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy! Well may it be said, **“God is the Rock, His work is perfect.”**

Here the heart can rest, in holy tranquillity, come what may. Every thing may go to pieces in man’s hand, all that is merely human may and must issue in hopeless wreck and ruin, but **“the Rock”** shall stand forever, and every **“work”** of the divine Hand shall shine in everlasting perfection to the glory of God and the perfect blessing of His people.

Such, then, is the song of Moses; such its scope, range, and application.

The intelligent reader does not need to be told that the Church of God, the body of Christ, the mystery of which the blessed apostle Paul was made the minister, finds no place in this song.

When Moses wrote this song, the mystery of the Church lay hid in the bosom of God. If we do not see this, we are wholly incompetent to interpret, or even to understand, the Holy Scriptures.

To a simple mind, taught exclusively by Scripture, it is as clear as a sunbeam that the song of Moses has for its thesis the government of God, in connection with Israel and the nations; for its sphere, the earth; and for its center, the land of Canaan.

“And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Hoshea the son of Nun. And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel; and he said unto them, ‘Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life; and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it’ “ (Ver. 44-47).

Thus, from first to last, through every section of this precious book of Deuteronomy, we find Moses, that beloved and most honored servant of God, urging upon the people the solemn duty of implicit, unqualified, hearty obedience to the Word of God. In this lay the precious secret of life, peace, progress, prosperity – all.

They had nothing else to do but obey. Blessed business! Happy, holy duty! May it be ours, beloved reader, in this day of conflict and confusion, in the which man’s will is so fearfully dominant.

The world and the so-called church are rushing on together, with appalling rapidity, along the dark pathway of self-will – a pathway which must end in the blackness of darkness forever. Let us bear this in mind, and earnestly seek to tread the narrow path of simple obedience to all the precious commandments of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus shall our hearts be kept in sweet peace; and although we may seem, to the men of this world, and even to professing Christians, to be odd and narrow-minded, let us not be moved the breadth of a hair from the path indicated by the Word of God.

May the word of Christ dwell in us richly, and the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, until the end. It is very remarkable, and indeed eminently impressive, to find our chapter closing with another reference to the Lord’s governmental dealing with His beloved servant Moses.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses that self-same day” – the very day in which he uttered his song in the ears of the people – “saying, ‘Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession; and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people; because ye trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, because ye sanctified Me not in the midst of the children of Israel. Yet thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel’ “ (Ver. 48-52).

How solemn and soul-subduing is the government of God!

Surely it ought to make the heart tremble at the very thought of disobedience.

If such an eminent servant as Moses was judged for speaking unadvisedly with his lips, what will be the end of those who live from day to day, week to week, month to month, and year to year in deliberate and habitual neglect of the plainest commandments of God, and positive self-willed rejection of His authority?

Oh, for a lowly mind, a broken and contrite heart! This is what God looks for and delights in; it is with such He can make His blessed abode.

“To this man will I look, even to him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word.”

God, in His infinite goodness, grant much of this sweet spirit to each of His beloved children, for Jesus Christ’s sake.

~ end of chapter 32 ~

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