

Christadelphian Expositor

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Christadelphian Expositor

The Christadelphian Expositor

A Verse by Verse Commentary Upon the Scriptures

Editorial

Dear Reader,

This issue of *The Christadelphian Expositor* completes our treatment of Numbers, and commences our exposition of *The Book of Deuteronomy*.

This number of *The Expositor* provides introductory comments to Deuteronomy. Readers will find these helpful to the better understanding of the book as a whole. The Analysis can likewise assist to the better understanding of any verse as providing the position and background of it. Study in depth will assist in developing the power of the Word in our lives.

We have divided the copy into two parts so as to separate the last of Numbers from the beginning of Deuteronomy. This will be found more convenient for those who desire to bind the copies into a book, and so make a permanent record of Numbers. It can then



DEUTERONOMY

THE
CHRISTADELPHIAN
EXPOSITOR



A VERSE-BY-VERSE EXPOSITION

OF THE SCRIPTURES

by

H. P. Mansfield

Logos Publications, 9 West Beach Road, West Beach,
South Australia 5024.

Introduction

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY — DIVINE FAITHFULNESS — IN DISCIPLINING AND DELIVERING

THE SETTING AND TITLE OF DEUTERONOMY

In our introduction of the Book of Numbers, we listed the five books of Moses on the basis of spiritual numerics. Combined they are called *The Pentateuch*, from *Pente* "five"; and each one provides a step in the developing programme of grace as extended by Yahweh to fallen man.

As a whole, they present a parable of salvation, which can be viewed from the standpoint of God or of man. Considered from the former, they reveal the following order of development:

Genesis: sets forth Divine Authority and Power — in creating, punishing and selecting.

Exodus: reveals Divine Mercy — in choosing and delivering.

Leviticus: proclaims Divine Holiness — by separating and sanctifying.

Numbers: manifests Divine Goodness and Severity — in providing and judging.

Deuteronomy: unfolds Divine Faithfulness in disciplining and establishing.

Considered from this view point, the five books of the Law typically set forth five necessary steps to Salvation. They begin with a recognition of Yahweh's Authority and Power; they move on to record His Mercy, they emphasise the need of His Holiness, they show the inevitability of His Goodness and Severity, they culminate in the revelation of His Faithfulness in Disciplining and Establishing His People.

The same five books considered from the human standpoint exhibit the following five steps of Divine Grace:

Genesis: records Ruin and Divine Selection

Exodus: shows the need of Separation.

Leviticus: inducts into Fellowship with Yahweh.

Numbers: sets forth Divine Grace in His Providence.

Deuteronomy: reveals the Attainment of Hope.

These are five steps that man must take to ensure Salvation. He must recognise the fallen state of human nature, and the need of Redemption from such. This will lead him to separation through the waters of Baptism,

and to Fellowship with Yahweh. Submitting to Divine guidance and providence, he will ultimately attain to that which has been set before him as a matter of hope.

Though these five books spell out the principles of Divine Grace on the background of Israelitish history, they have important lessons to teach all who would come unto Yahweh in Truth.

In the Parable of the Pentateuch, Genesis represents the *Book of Beginnings*; Exodus sets forth a *Pattern of Redemption*; Leviticus lays down the principles of *Fellowship through Sanctification*; Numbers types the *Trial of Faith*; Deuteronomy, which records the final preparations for entering the land, reveals the consummation of the wilderness wanderings in the *Attainment of Hope*.

All Yahweh's saints, or separated ones, must submit to discipline, if they would attain unto the hope set before them. Discipline helps to mould a character, and fit it for the Kingdom of God. Even the Lord Jesus Christ had to submit to such. Of Him it is recorded: "though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8).

The fifth book of Moses called *Deuteronomy* is pre-eminently a *Book of Transition*. It is directed to the new generation, which is shortly to enter into its new possession. The wilderness pilgrimage, as recorded in the previous books of Moses, is shortly to give place to the national occupancy of Canaan. The children of Israel are to enter into a new experience, to a new life, in that they are going to have a settled possession, instead of wandering through the wilderness, with assured crops, herds, and produce, instead of gathering the manna each day. They were to eat of the milk, corn, honey, and wine of the Promised Land, instead of experiencing the harsh bitterness, aridness and monotony of the wilderness desert. Finally, it marks the transition to a new revelation of God expressive of His love. This is emphasised throughout the book. The wonderful words of Yahweh are recorded: "Because He loved thy fathers, therefore He chose their seed" (Deut. 4:37); "Yahweh did not set his love upon you, or choose you because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people; but because Yahweh loved you" (Deut. 7:7-8); "Yahweh had a delight in thy fathers to love them" (Deut. 10:15); "Yahweh thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because Yahweh Thy God loved thee" (Deut. 23:5).

To comprehend the full significance of this transition, trace the use of the word "love" in the first five books of the Bible with the aid of a concordance. Notice that there is no such formal declaration of Yahweh's love towards His people, until Deuteronomy is reached. There was love of course. God manifested that quality towards His people from the beginning of Creation. But it was not formally set down as it is in the book of Deuteronomy. This fifth book, therefore, is pre-eminently a book expressive of Yahweh's love to His people.

It is also interesting to note that the first five books of the O.T. parallel the first five books of the N.T. As the fifth book of the Old Testament is transitional, so with the New Testament. It also begins with five historical

books, Matthew to Acts; and there is a striking parallel between the Acts of the Apostles, the fifth book of the new Testament, and Deuteronomy the fifth book of the Old. For Acts, like Deuteronomy, marks a great transition. It reflects the love of Yahweh, as the Gospel message was sent forth into all the world. It records a new generation, the Israel of God in contrast to the Israel of old, about to experience a new inheritance (Eph. 1:18-19).

In addition, there is a striking relation between Deuteronomy and the Acts of the Apostles, which is expressed in the significance of its title. Deuteronomy is from the word *Deuteros Nomos*, signifying "the second giving of the Law." The Acts of the Apostles, records the second offering of the Kingdom of God to the Jewish people. This was in answer to the Lord's prayer. When he was on the cross, He prayed: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do". The incidents recorded in the Acts of the Apostles reveal the answer to that prayer. The preaching of the Apostle provided a final opportunity for the Jewish people to repent and accept their Messiah. Accordingly, the facts concerning his death and resurrection were set before them the second time, as the Apostles took the message from Jerusalem, through Judea, to Samaria, and ultimately to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). As the Book of Deuteronomy concludes with Moses on Nebo, and Joshua ready to invade the land of the Gentiles, so the Acts of the Apostles concludes with Paul having completed his message to the Jewish people in Rome, and ready to proclaim it to the Gentiles. Previously he had found it "necessary" to speak the Word to Jews first. In Antioch, the Apostle Paul had declared: "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you (Jews); but seeing ye put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46). Having completed that mission first in Jerusalem (Acts 22), and finally in Rome (Acts 28:17-28), and the Jews having officially rejected the message, he now "received all (Gentiles or Jews) that came in unto him, preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things that concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:31) as previously they forbade Peter.

The practice of preaching "first" to the Jews was not followed after Paul's imprisonment in Rome; nor is it done today. Why was it so necessary for Paul to speak first to the Jews, before turning to the Gentiles? Because it was a time of transition, and the Lord had requested it in his prayers from the cross. He had pleaded on behalf of the people on the grounds that they "knew not what they did". But once the message had been proclaimed to them the second time, through the Apostles, that excuse was no longer valid. Therefore, the Apostles turned to the Gentiles.

Hence, the Acts of the Apostles, the fifth book of the New Testament, like Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the Old Testament, marks the point of transition.

EXHORTATIONS

The Book of Deuteronomy abounds in exhortations that have application to believers today as they did to the people of Israel about to enter the

land. Paul claims: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition; upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11). In that light the book is of immense importance to believers today. There is an urgency about this message that is applicable to these times. Israel was on the point of entering the land, and we are at the point of history when Christ will shortly return. So, although the book was primarily provided for Israel on the plains of Moab, it is also very much a book of today.

There is much repetition in the book, that is important and valuable. We need to learn over and over again the lessons of God. Repetition in Divine things is important. It is so easy for the mind to wander from the instruction of God. The very nature of flesh makes that inevitable. Hence there is need to learn and relearn the lessons of God. Deuteronomy did that for Israel; and can do so for us.

ITS SIGNIFICANT TITLES

"Deuteronomy", the title of the book is taken from the Greek Septuagint *To Deuteronomion Touto*. The phrase is found in Deut. 17:18: "A copy of this Law" (Deut. 17:18), lit. "*This second law*". The book was given this title because most of it consists of a restatement of the Law by Moses on the eve of the crossing of the Jordan into Canaan. The Greek *Deuteros* signifies *second*, and *nomos* — signifies *Law*. Deuteronomy, therefore, signifies *Second Law*, that is the second giving of the Law. It is not a new Law, but a repetition of the one Law given by Moses.

The Hebrew title, however is *Haddebbharim*, or "the words". This title is derived from the first verse: "These be *the words*." The book is known among the Jews as "*The Book of Reproofs*". They claim that the places mentioned in verse one are related to sites which witnessed the more serious sins of the people. Hence, they see the book as a book of reproofs, with emphasis upon the need of observing the Law in the future. The Law is repeated so that the new generation may be reminded of that which had already been laid down through Moses at Sinai, and which had been confirmed by their acceptance of it. As the observance of the Law had been neglected during the 38 years' wandering (even circumcision had been abandoned) such a restatement was necessary.

THE KEY VERSE OF THE BOOK

The Greek title has been derived from the statement of Deut. 17:18 as noted above. The word "copy" in that place is from the Hebrew word *Mishneh* and signifies "repetition", or "duplicate". Hence, the title of the book as we have it in our Bible is really expressive of a repetition, or duplicate of principles already stated, but which are now presented to the people to ensure that they were not overlooked. There was a need to remind Israel of the purpose of their call out of Egypt, and the book of Deuteronomy accomplishes that. In the words of Stephen, Israel at that time constituted "the Ecclesia (or "called out" community) in the wilder-

ness" (Acts 7:38). Now the time had come to remind it of the purpose of such a calling out of Egypt, and this introduces the Reader to what appears as the key verse of the book. It is the declaration taught the firstborn sons of Israelitish families when explaining the purpose of the national call out of Egypt. In answer to the ceremonial question, usually posed at the celebration of the Passover (but which festival had been ignored for 38 years), "What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which Yahweh our God hath commanded you?" the formal answer was made:

"We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt: and Yahweh brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; and Yahweh shewed signs and wonders great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes; and he brought us out from thence that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He sware unto our Fathers".

That was the purpose of the call out of Egypt, and the repetition of the principles of the Law given at Sinai as incorporated in Deuteronomy. The first generation, perished in the wilderness, because it failed to manifest the purpose of its call out of Egypt (see Jer. 13:11). Now a new generation is ready to bring to consummation the Divine purpose by entering the land, and it is necessary for the people to clearly understand what is required of them.

Hence the Book of Deuteronomy.

Which reveals that the call to separate from the Gentiles is only part of the purpose of God; those responding must be brought into full fellowship with the Father and Son, which is only possible by walking in the Light (1 John 1:5-7).

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The Book of Deuteronomy is an exhortation based on the Law, and reaffirming its principles. This was necessary for the new generation about to enter the land, because for thirty-eight years the Law had been relaxed, the Passover had not been kept, the rite of Circumcision had not been practised, the Sacrifices had not been offered.

Moses already had tangible evidence that flesh does not change and the new generation could fail as did its fathers (Num. 21:5-6). He knew that everything depended on the obedience of the people: victory over their foes, possession of Canaan, prosperity in the land, personal and national happiness. So, with all the force of his own ardent feelings, the leader pleaded with the people to observe the principles of God, for he recognised the weakness of human nature (Deut. 31:28-30). It is because of the exhortatory warnings of the book, that it is known among the Jews as *The Book of Reproofs*.

It has had a profound effect in times subsequent to those of Moses. In the days of Josiah, when restoring the Temple, "a book of the Law of Yahweh given by Moses" was found by Hilkiah the Priest, and shown to the King. He was perturbed at the warnings of the book, and the curses pronounced against the nation, if it failed to carry out the requirements of the Law. Moreover, he realised that the state of the people made the nation amenable to such outpouring of judgment as it threatened. He was

moved by the knowledge to institute the greatest reform of all times (2 Chron. 34:14-33). By his efforts the judgments were delayed.

Jeremiah, the prophet contemporary with Josiah, who assisted him greatly in the reformation that he conducted, likewise was greatly impressed by the book of Deuteronomy. His prophecy abounds with citations from it. So much so, indeed, that it forms a bridge between the Law and the New Testament Scriptures.

CITATIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Deuteronomy is frequently quoted in the New Testament. The manner in which this is done assists in the interpretation of the Book. The following are some of the places where the book is cited: Matt. 4:4,7,10; 5:21,27,31,38; 15:4; 18:16; 19:18,19; 22:24,37. Mark 7:10; 10:19; 12:19,29,30. Luke 4:4,8,12; 10:27; 18:20; 20:28; John 8:17. Acts 3:22,23; 7:37. Rom. 7:7; 10:6,7,8,19; 12:19; 13:9. 1 Cor. 9:9; 10:20; Gal. 3:10,13. Eph. 6:2,3. 1 Tim. 5:18; Heb. 10:30; 12:29; James 2:11, etc.

DIVIDING THE BOOK

The Book of Deuteronomy can be divided into two main sections. The first part, chapters 1-11, is Retrospective, or looking back and reflective. The second part chapters 12-34, is Prospective, or looking forward and admonitory.

The Exhortation, for that is what the Book is, called upon the people of Israel to recall, reflect, and resolve.

The first section concludes with the statement of chapter 11:31-32:

"For ye shall pass over Jordan to go in to possess the land which Yahweh your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and shall dwell therein. Ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day".

The next chapter commences with the command:

"These are the statutes and judgments which ye shall observe to do *in the land*".

The first section, *looking backwards* comprises:

- (a) A Review of the Way since Sinai (chs. 1-3).
- (b) A Review of the Law from Sinai (chs. 4-11).

The dividing statement is found in chapter 4:1:

"Now therefore, hearken O Israel, to the statutes and judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which Yahweh God of your fathers giveth you".

Then follows the review of the Law.

The second section (chs. 12-24), looking forward comprises:

- (a) final rules and warnings to Israel before entering their inheritance (chs. 12-30).
- (b) final words and actions of Moses before his death (chs. 31-34).

Here note the natural division that occurs between chapter 30:20 and 31:1. The former reads:

"That thou mayest love Yahweh thy God and that thou mayest obey His voice and that thou mayest cleave unto Him: for He is thy life, and the length of thy days, that thou mayest dwell in the land which Yahweh sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them".

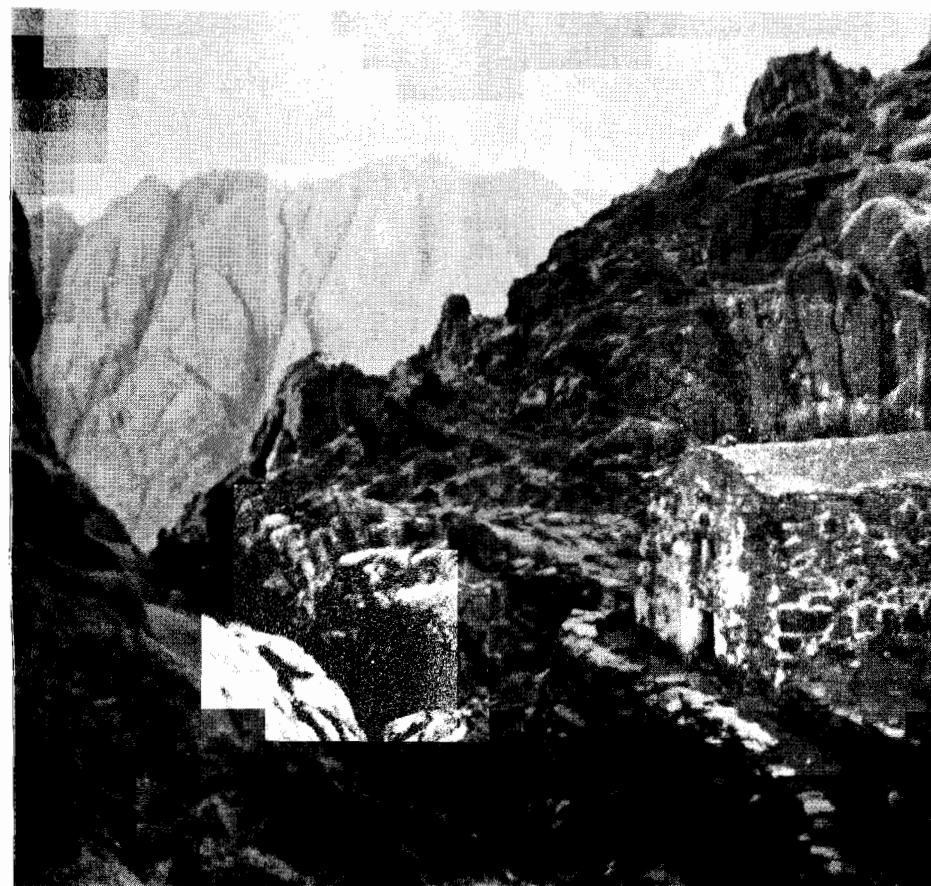
The second sub-section commences with the statement:
"And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel" (Deut. 31:1).

A clearly defined division occurs at that point.

The book can also be divided into five parts:

- Historical: 1:1-4:43.
- Legislative: 4:44-26:19.
- Exhortatory: 27:1-30:20.
- Prophetical: 31:1-33:29.
- Epilogue: 34:1-12.

Notice again, at each dividing point, an appropriate passage separates each sub-section.



The rugged path leading to Mount Sinai, where Moses received the Ten Commandments. The Book of Deuteronomy reiterates the narrative of this event.

DEUTERONOMY:

DIVINE FAITHFULNESS

IN DISCIPLINING AND DELIVERING

Foreword

THEMES

The Book of Deuteronomy lends itself to many spiritually elevating themes. First of all, consider its position in the Bible. It is appropriately placed at the end of Moses' writings. It brings to a completion the Divine progress towards salvation set forth in the plan of The Pentateuch.

In *Genesis* there is *failure* through sin; in *Exodus* there is *deliverance* by "blood" and "power"; in *Leviticus* there is *communion* on the basis of sacrifice; in *Numbers* there is *direction* through the guiding cloud; in *Deuteronomy* there is *inheritance* as the people make ready to enter the land.

The five books of *The Pentateuch*, therefore, reveal appropriate stages to the attainment of national redemption.

Also, in these books, there is the unfolding of Divine attributes. In *Genesis*, Yahweh's *Sovereignty* is made known; In *Exodus* His *Power* is revealed; in *Leviticus*, His *Holiness* is stated; in *Numbers* His contrasting qualities of *Goodness and Severity* are recalled; in *Deuteronomy* His *unfailing Faithfulness* in accomplishing His purpose is demonstrated.

Consider the glorious statement relating to God manifestation based on the first principle declaration of Yahweh: the great *Shema*, recorded in chapter 6:4-5.

"Hear O Israel; Yahweh Our God is One Yahweh; and thou shalt love Yahweh Thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might".

That statement declares the essential unity of Deity, as well as His manifestation in a plurality of agents or Mighty Ones. The Israel of God (Gal. 6:16) is invited to share the same wonderful unity with Him (John 17:20-23), and accordingly the Deity superimposed upon himself the prophetic Name of Yahweh, *He who will be*. The name, therefore, signifies: *He who will be our Mighty Ones is He Who will be one in many*. Deity in multiplicity, not Deity in Trinity is the Bible doctrine.

The Hebrew form is Yahweh Elohenu, Elohenu is the plural, Elohim, with the first person possessive plural suffix appended to it, "our *Elohim* or *Mighty Ones*." But the word "one" is from the Hebrew *echad* signifying one in a collective sense. It is not one as an absolute unity as expressive of one individual, but a compound unity comprising a multitude welded together-as one. That is the relationship existing

between Yahweh as supreme and the Elohim, or angelic hosts that “do His commandments hearkening unto the voice of His Word” (Psa. 103:20-21).

The people of Israel were called out of Egypt that they might attain unto a state at fellowship, of unity with the Father. To do so required that they love Him, with all the heart, soul and might. Love is revealed in obedience (2 John 6). Israel was called out of Egypt as “a holy people unto Yahweh”, to glorify His name (Deut. 28:9-10; Jer. 13:11).

This basic truth having been stated, Israel’s relationship to God requires the manifestation of His characteristics and ways by them in the sight of all nations as indicative of what is required for salvation, on the part of all mankind. The Divine purpose thereby is set down in Ch. 6:23.

“And He brought us out from thence, that He might bring us in to give us the land which He sware unto our Fathers”.

The purpose of separation from Egypt was to bring them into relationship with Yahweh so as to glorify His name, and to establish them in the land. The first generation had failed in that regard, but had been replaced by a new generation able to vindicate the Divine Purpose. The statement of Deut. 6:23, therefore, defines an Ecclesia. An Ecclesia is a group of people who have answered the invitation to separate themselves from the way leading to death, and move over to a way of life, dedicating themselves to fulfilling the Divine will and purpose in character and attitude. Such are called to fellowship with the Father with the purpose of inheriting His Kingdom. The purpose is not accomplished by separation; that is merely the means to the stated end: “That He might bring us in”. And the inheritance promised is that which He “sware unto our Fathers”. The application of these things to the called of all ages is made clear in the statement of the Apostle Paul, that the Lord Jesus Christ came “to confirm the promises made unto the Fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy” (Rom. 15:8-9).

Moses, in Deuteronomy 10:12-13, then restates the basic requirements necessary for a people separated unto Yahweh.

“And now Israel, what does Yahweh thy God require of thee, but to fear Yahweh thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him and to serve Yahweh thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; to keep the commandments of Yahweh, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good”.

It was not a mere doctrinal acknowledgment of Deity that would satisfy Yahweh, but a practical manifestation of His characteristics for all to see. The people were called upon to fear, walk, love, serve, and keep Yahweh’s ways and commandments. Accordingly, obedience is the key note of almost every chapter of Deuteronomy. The word “do” occurs over 50 times. And God’s requirements have not changed to the present. Righteousness is not merely a matter of doctrine, of imputation as alleged by some, but needs to be a practical manifestation of the qualities of Christ before it will be acceptable to him. He declared, “he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth

me”. Again, “If a man love me, he will keep my words” (John 14:21-23). Love is exhibited in action, not merely in words. John defined love as such. He wrote: “And this is love, that we walk after His commandments” (2 John 6).

Israel Related To Two Covenants

Finally, the demand made on Israel, is matched by Yahweh’s pledge to fulfil His promises. The covenant Israel had entered into with Yahweh at Sinai, required complete obedience. The people had responded, “all that Yahweh has said, we will do”. The terms of that covenant as expressed in Leviticus 26 warned that the people would experience cursings and punishment if they proved faithless.

However Israel was not only related to that covenant, but also to the Abrahamic covenant. Yahweh’s faithfulness demanded that that covenant be fulfilled, even though Israel may prove disobedient to the requirements of the Sinai covenant. In Lev. 26:33 He had warned, that, in the event of disobedience, “I will scatter you among the nations, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste” (Lev. 26:33). Nevertheless, He would not entirely abandon them. So a few verses further on He added:

“Then will I remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land” (v. 42).

This promise of hope is also a feature of the Book of Deuteronomy. Consider Chapter 4:40:

“When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, in the latter days thou shalt turn to Yahweh thy God, and shalt be obedient unto His voice; for Yahweh thy God is a merciful God; He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy Fathers which He sware unto them” (Deut. 4:30-31).

Again in Chapter 30:3-5:

“Yahweh thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither Yahweh thy God has scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will Yahweh thy God gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee: Yahweh thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it, and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy Fathers”.

The Abrahamic covenant is irrevocable. God sware to Abraham that He would fulfil it, and He will do so (Gen. 22:16; Gal. 3:8,26-29).

As Moses reveals in the book of Deuteronomy, God will completely restore the people to the land, and will change their hearts, that they might serve Him (Deut. 30:6). Israel will be redeemed on the basis of the Abrahamic covenant as confirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ (Jer. 31:31-34).

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOD’S WORDS

Another theme running through the book of Deuteronomy is the motivating power of the Word of God. If the people hearkened and acted in accordance therewith, all would be well see ch. 5:1; 6:7-10; 11:18-21.

The people are reminded they experienced disaster when they re-

fused to hear and heed God's word (ch. 1:43). They are advised that to hearken, is to live (ch. 4:1; 5:33). They are warned not to add, or diminish from the Word of Yahweh (ch. 4:2), and are instructed that their wisdom was to hear and heed the requirements of the Word (ch. 4:5-6). The nation was about to enter upon the conquest of the Land, a warfare that would bring its warriors face to face with danger; but the people were assured that it would go well with them if they heeded the Word (ch. 4:40; 5:29; 6:24; 7:9-12). Accordingly, they were commanded to teach this Word to their families (ch. 6:6-10; 11:18-19).

The Israelites were taught to recognise in the happenings of everyday life, a practical illustration of Yahweh's moulding influence in them (8:3). In context with that lesson, they were warned against the sin of pride when they enjoyed material prosperity (8:11-14). The reaction that Yahweh desired to see in them was clearly stated (see ch. 10:12,13,16), and they were promised greater blessings if they would hear and heed His instruction and Word (13:17-18).

Many other themes can be derived from a careful reading of the Book of Deuteronomy.

RE-CONFIRMATION OF THE SINAI COVENANT WITH THE NEW GENERATION

The Book of Deuteronomy is not a second Law, but a restating of the one Law. It is not a new covenant that is entered into with the people on the borders of the Promised Land, but the old Sinaitic Covenant re-confirmed with the new generation about to enter the land.

There are some that claim that this is not so, and believe that a new covenant is negotiated at this time. The Schofield Bible is foremost in teaching this, and calls the supposed extra covenant the "Palestinian" covenant. The claim is based upon the wording of chapter 29:1.

"These are the words of the covenant, which Yahweh commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, *beside* the covenant He made with them at Horeb".

Again, in v. 12:

"That thou shouldest enter into covenant with Yahweh Thy God, and into His oath, which Yahweh Thy God maketh with thee this day".

The objection to this interpretation is conclusive. Firstly, the original covenant was confirmed with sacrifice (Exod. 24:8), and Paul in Hebrews cites this covenant as being the one in which the people entered the land under Joshua (see Heb. 8:7-13; 9:18-21). Paul makes reference to "the covenant that Yahweh made with their fathers in the day when He took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt" (Heb. 8:9). This statement does not provide for another covenant and another law for the next generation. Throughout the New Testament, the covenant referred to as "the old covenant" is that which was made and confirmed at Sinai.

When the covenant was made at that time, covenant sacrifices were offered, and the people were sprinkled with the ratifying blood; but in

Deut. 29 and 30, no such sacrifices or sprinkling mark off the new contract as a separate covenant.

Moreover, the Book of Deuteronomy, as far as the requirements of Law are concerned, differ in no way from the books of Moses that preceded it. The statement of Moses that speaks of a covenant *beside* that which He made with them in Horeb, relates to a renewal of the covenant, not a new, or different one. It was the covenant that was originally confirmed with the nation as recorded in Exodus 24, and into which the people of Israel on the borders of the Promised Land were inducted. As we have noted previously, the Law had now to be reaffirmed with the new generation. Hence, the people had to submit to circumcision, and conform to the requirements of the Sinaitic covenant in all its particulars.

CHRONOLOGY

Period from Creation to the completion of Numbers 2552 10 mths.
Address 1st day 11th month (Deut. 1:3) to say 1st day 12th month.
Plus 30 days mourning for Moses (Deut. 34:8) completing 40 yrs.
wandering (Num. 14:33; 32:13; Josh. 5:6) 1

Israel left Egypt on 14th day of 1st month. At the end of the wanderings, fifteen days were occupied from the mourning of the people for Moses until the Passover in the Land completed the forty years wandering (Josh. 5:10). This inter-rum period was made up as follows:

3 days preparation — Josh. 1:11

3 days spies hid — Josh. 2:16

1 day remove to Jordan — Josh. 3:1.

3 days preparation — Josh. 3:2

10th day 1st month, Israel moved over Jordan preparation (cp. Exod. 12:3) — Josh. 4:19.

14th day Passover slain (Exod. 12:6).

15th day Passover kept* — Josh. 5:10.

This was exactly 40 years to the day from the time they left Egypt. See Josh. 5:6.

* See note on this verse.

THE VALUE OF FEAR

The Book of Deuteronomy has much to say concerning fear. It will be found valuable to gather together the various places where the word occurs as a theme study. In Ch. 6:1-2, Moses sets forth the value of fear: "These are the commandments, the statutes and the judgments, which Yahweh your God commanded to teach you . . . that thou mightest fear Yahweh thy God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command thee".

One of Moses' main purposes in delivering the discourse of Deuteronomy to the people, was to instil this Godly fear into their hearts. For "the fear of Yahweh is the beginning (lit. *firstfruits*) of wisdom" (Prov. 1:7). Deuteronomy instructs that this fear is induced by "hearing" (Deut. 4:10), "doing" (Deut. 5:29), "keeping" (Deut. 6:2), "serving" (Deut. 6:13), and "walking" (Deut. 8:6) in the principles of the Truth.

The fear of Yahweh is not an inarticulate, superstitious awe of the unknown, but a respectful, reverential fear induced by the love for the One who has revealed Himself in His word, and whose goodness is experienced in the lives of all saints. Such a fear will overcome fear of flesh. Therefore, Israel was given repeated exhortations to "fear not what man can do"!

Indeed, this is the key note of the message of Moses in this book (see ch. 1:17, 21, 29; 10:12-20; 13:4,11; 14:23; 17:19; 21:21; 31:6,7,8, cp. vv. 12,13). The earlier generation had been exhorted to "fear not" the faithless report of the spies (ch 1:29); the new generation was urged to fear not Og (ch. 3:2); Joshua was encouraged to fear not the Canaanites (ch. 3:22,28); the people were told to fear not the nations (ch. 7:18-21); true Israelites were taught to fear not false prophets (ch. 18:22); the Israelitish warriors were commanded to fear not when opposed by numerically greater forces (ch. 20:1,3,8);

There are repeated laments at the lack of fear on the part of the people (ch. 5:29).

In ch. 11:25; 28:10, the people are told that if they feared Yahweh, the nations in turn would fear them. Faith was needed to see through to the point of that exhortation, and to instil a healthy fear in the hearts of the people.

Analysis

DIVINE FAITHFULNESS — IN DISCIPLINING AND DELIVERING

The Book of Deuteronomy comprises a long discourse which Moses delivered to the people on the plains of Moab as a final message to them before his death (Deut. 1:1,3). It includes a recapitulation of past events, interspersed with exhortations based upon those happenings, as well as a re-statement of important aspects of the Law received through him at Sinai. The last chapter is an epilogue, recording the death of Moses on Mount Nebo.

The whole book can be divided into nine sections: eight discourses by Moses, plus the final historical record of ch. 34 describing his death. As we have noted earlier, chronologically the book covers a period of only two months, most of which time is spent in mourning the death of Moses.

Interspersed throughout the book are captions such as are found in ch. 4:44: "And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel". These statements provide breaks in the narrative, pauses in the discourse of Moses. Such breaks divide the book into nine sections. They are as follows:

First Discourse: Retrospect — Israel's faithlessness and Yahweh's care: ch. 1:1-4:43.

Second Discourse: Review — What the present generation shall heed: ch. 4:44-26:19.

Third Discourse: Warning — The solemn responsibility resting upon the Nation: ch. 27:1-28:68.

Fourth Discourse: Covenant — Terms that would ensure Israel's continued Occupancy of the land: ch. 29:1-30:20.

Fifth Discourse: Counsel — Moses' final words of advice: ch. 31:1-23.

Sixth Discourse: Instruction — The written Law preserved as a witness: ch. 31:24-29.

Seventh Discourse: Song — A Psalm of witness against Israel: ch. 31:30-32:52.

Epitaph: Death — Yahweh buries His workman: ch. 34:1-12.

A detailed analysis provides the following breakup of the Book:

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

Yahweh's Faithfulness Demands Israel's Obedience

Words of warning and exhortation to the new generation about to enter the land, comprising eight discourses, and an epilogue.

FIRST DISCOURSE: RETROSPECT —
ISRAEL'S FAITHLESSNESS AND YAHWEH'S CARE — Ch. 1:1-4:43

1. **Failure at Kadesh-Barnea — Ch. 1:1-46**
 - Introduction to the First Discourse vv.1-4
 - Condition of the People — about to enter the land vv.5-8
 - The burden of Moses — Rulers appointed from the people, and charged to lead them vv.9-18
 - Exhorted at Kadesh to conquer the land vv.19-21
 - The People cautious — Discouraged by the Spies' report vv.22-28
 - Failure of the People — they believed not vv.29-40
 - Folly of the people — they tried to force God's hand vv.41-46
2. **Thirty Eight Years of Wandering — ch. 2:1-3:29**
 - Again directed to the land via Arnon vv.1-3
 - Instructions regarding the inhabitants and route 4-15
 - The new generation exhorted to conquer the land 16-25
 - Victory over Sihon providing assurance of success vv.26-37
 - A further victory over Og 3:1-11
 - Distribution of conquered territory vv.12-17
 - Responsibilities of the Eastern Tribes vv.18-20
 - Exhortation to Joshua — Moses' successor vv.21-22
 - Moses refused permission to enter the Land vv.23-29
3. **Lessons of the Past Impressed Upon the New Generation — Ch. 4:1-40**
 - Exhortation based on their privileged status vv.1-8
 - Individual responsibility to obey vv.9-13
 - Yahweh to be worshipped in Truth vv.14-20
 - Rejection of Moses' plea reveals God as a consuming fire vv.21-24
 - Yahweh as Merciful, will hearken to his repentant children vv.25-31
 - Israel's tremendous privileges Demand Obedience vv.32-40

4. Appointment of Cities of Refuge — Ch. 4:41-43
 God's Mercy dramatised in the cities of refuge vv.41-43

SECOND DISCOURSE: REVIEW —
WHAT THE PRESENT GENERATION SHOULD HEED — Ch. 4:44-26:19

1. Review of the Divine Covenant — Ch. 4:44-5:33

Introduction 4:44-49
 Circumstances of the giving of the Covenant 5:1-5
 The Ten Commandments — the basis of the Covenant vv.6-21
 Moses as the Mediator of the Covenant vv.22-27
 The People's Fear of Yahweh Commended vv.28-29
 Moses Stands Before Yahweh vv.30-31
 The people's responsibility to keep the Covenant vv.32-33

2. What the Covenant Demands — Ch. 6:1-26:19

Attitude Towards Yahweh — Ch. 6
 Introduction to His commandments, statutes, and judgments vv.1-3
 Yahweh to be supreme in every avenue of life vv.4-15
 Prosperity promised if this Principle observed vv.16-25

Attitude As A Holy Nation — Ch. 7
 Fellowship with the Nations prohibited vv.1-4
 Their influence to be ruthlessly destroyed vv.5-8
 Israel's responsibility to obey vv.7-11
 Obedience will bring blessing vv.12-15
 The folly of fearing the nations vv.16-24
 Their gods to be destroyed vv.25-26

Attitude Towards Yahweh's Word — Ch. 8
 Man's Dependence on God Tested in the Wilderness vv.1-6
 Need to recall past experiences vv.7-10

Attitude Towards Divine Blessings and Mercies — Ch. 9,10,11
 Entrance to the land not through personal righteousness 9:1-6
 The need to recall their rebellions vv.7-25
 God's Mercy in restoring the Two Tables 10:1-5
 God's Mercy in maintaining the Priesthood vv.6-7
 God's Mercy in separating Levi vv.8-9
 God's Mercy in Harkening to Moses' intercession vv.10-11
 How Israel should repay Divine Mercy and Love v.12-Ch. 11:1
 God's mighty acts should be repaid by obedience vv.2-9
 The Land of Promise depends upon Rain vv.10-12
 This will be provided — if vv.13-17
 Thus the need to revere and teach God's Word vv.18-21
 Success will result from so doing vv.22-25
 Thus the need to proclaim the blessings & cursings in the land vv.26-32

Attitude Towards Matters of Divine Worship — Ch. 12,13
 Pagan worship to be destroyed 12:1-3
 Yahweh's Altar to be Revered vv.4-14
 Yahweh to be acknowledged in the eating of Meat vv.15-16
 Yahweh to be acknowledged in the payment of tithes vv.17-19
 No excuse will justify the avoidance of these principles vv.20-28
 Exercise care against ensnarement by environment vv.29-32
 False Prophets to be suppressed Ch. 13:1-5
 Yahweh's Word to be elevated above fleshly relations vv.6-11
 Idolatrous cities to be punished vv.12-18

Attitude Towards Yahweh As His Children — Ch. 14,15
 Man not disfigure themselves in mourning Ch.14:1-2
 What may, and may not be eaten vv.3-21
 Tithing of increase vv.22-27
 The tithing of alms and charity vv.28-29
 A Sabbatical year of release for debtors Ch.15:1-6
 No reduction of lending because of proximity of year of release vv.7-11
 Slaves to be freed and helped 12-18

Firstling of animal males to be sanctified to Yahweh vv.19-23
Attitude Towards Yahweh's Appointed Times — Ch. 16:1-17
 Passover to be observed Ch. 16:1-8
 Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) to be kept vv.9-12
 Feast of Tabernacles to be commemorated vv.13-15
 Liberality enjoined at the feasts vv.16-17
Attitude Towards Crime — Ch. 16:18-17:20
 Judges and Officers to be appointed vv.18-20
 The worst crime: Treason against the Supreme Ruler vv.21-22
 Things Sacrificed must be sound Ch.17:1
 Idolators must be slain vv.2-7
 Hard controversies determined by Priests and Judges vv.8-13
 The election and duty of a King vv.14-20

Attitude Towards Yahweh's Ministers — Ch. 18
 Levi to have no inheritance among the people vv.1-2
 To be supported by the people vv.3-5
 All Levites to have equal privileges in Jerusalem vv.6-8
 Gentle abominations to be avoided, particularly divination etc. vv.9-14
 Israel to await the Ruler and Mediator to come vv.15-19
 False Prophets to be destroyed vv.20-22

Attitude Towards Mutual Antagonisms — Ch. 19
 Cities of Refuge to be Appointed vv.1-3
 For whom Designed vv.4-10
 For whom not Designed vv.11-13
 Landmarks not to be removed v.14
 Mutual Accusations to be Properly Witnessed v.15
 False Witnesses to be Severely Punished vv.16-21

Attitude Towards Warfare — Ch. 20
 To Fight in Faith vv.1-4
 Those Excluded from Fighting vv.5-9
 Methods of Warfare vv.10-18
 Care of Trees in Time of Siege vv.19-20

Attitude Towards Human Life and Rights — Ch. 21
 The Unsolved Murder Trial vv.1-9
 Treatment of a Married Slave vv.10-14
 Treatment of Firstborn of Wife and Concubine vv.15-17
 Treatment of Rebellious Children vv.18-21
 Treatment of Criminals when Publicly Executed vv.22-23

Attitude Towards Civil Responsibilities — Chs. 22,23,24,25
 Consideration for the Property of Others vv.1-4
 The Sex to be Clearly Distinguished by Apparel v.5
 Consideration to be Given to Bird Life vv.6-7
 Consideration for Others when Building v.8
 Yahweh's Distinction in Nature to be Respected vv.9-11
 Israel's Distinguishing Dress v.12
 Consideration for The Unloved Bride vv.13-19
 A Whore to be Put to Death vv.20-21
 Adulterers to be Put to Death v.22
 City Adulterers to be Put to Death vv.23-24
 Rapists in the Field to be Put to Death vv.25-27
 Punishment for Fornicators vv.28-29
 Incest Strictly Forbidden v.30
 Who May, and Who May Not Enter the Congregation Ch. 23:1-8
 The Army to be Purged of Impurity Before Warring vv.9-14
 Assistance to be Extended to an Escaped Slave vv.15-16
 Prostitution Prohibited vv.17-18
 Usury Prescribed vv.19-20
 Vows to be Fulfilled vv.21-23
 Liberty Must Not Turn into License vv.24-25

Divorce to be Carefully Regulated	Ch. 24:1-4
Newly-weds Exempted from War	v.5
Millstones not to be Taken as Security	v.6
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Homes of the Debtor to be Respected	vv.10-13
Wages to be Punctually Paid	vv.14-15
Sins of the Fathers not to Rest on the Family	v.16
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Gleaning Harvests to be Left to The Poor	vv.19-22
Punishment Limited to 40 Stripes	Ch. 25:1-3
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Levirate Marriages to be Encouraged	vv.5-10
Decency to be Maintained in All Circumstances	vv.11-12
Integrity in Trade to be Observed	vv.13-16
The Memory of Amalek to be Blotted Out	vv.17-19
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Ritual Confession When Presenting Third Year Tithes	vv.12-15
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1. A Ceremony Of Remembrance in the Land — Ch. 27	
The Law to be Published in Shechem	vv.1-4
An Altar of Stones to be Erected	vv.5-8
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Blessings in Activity	v.8
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The Nation Scattered, and Threatened with Extinction	vv.58-68
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An exhortation to Seek Life and Goodness	vv.15-20
FIFTH DISCOURSE: COUNSEL —	
MOSES' FINAL WORDS OF ADVICE — Ch. 31:1-23	
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The Priests to Instruct the People in the Law	vv.9-13
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SIXTH DISCOURSE: INSTRUCTION —	
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The Law Laid up as a Witness	vv.24-27
The Nation Assembled to hear the Song of Witness	vv.28-29
SEVENTH DISCOURSE: SONG —	
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His Reward	vv.10-12

The outline above, shows that the Book of Deuteronomy is a long discourse by Moses to the people, divided into eight sections and an Epilogue. Each of the different sections is introduced by a statement that draws attention to the words of Moses. For example, in chapter 4:44 we read "*and this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel*". Every one of the divisions set out above is introduced by similar words.

THE DISCOURSES OF MOSES

The contents of Deuteronomy consists of (1) three addresses to the people delivered by him in the eleventh month of the fortieth year after the Exodus (chs. 1-30); (2) certain final acts and words of Moses, including the solemn appointment of his successor (ch. 31); his Song of Witness (ch. 32); his Blessings on the tribes (ch. 33); and the record of his death (ch. 34).

His discourses are mainly exhortatory, being both heart-searching and impressive. They keep constantly in view the circumstances then present and the crisis to which the guidance of Yahweh had brought Israel. Moses had before him not the men to whom, by Divine command, he delivered the Law at Sinai, but the generation following which had grown up in the wilderness. Large portions of the Law had stood in abeyance during the years of wandering; and of his present hearers many must have been strangers to various prescribed observances and ordinances. Now however, on their entry into settled homes in Canaan a thorough discharge of the various obligations laid on them by the Covenant was imperative; and it is to this state of things that Moses addresses himself. He speaks to hearers neither wholly ignorant of the Law, nor yet fully versed in it. Much is assumed and taken for granted in his speeches; but in other matters he goes into detail, knowing that instruction in them was needed. Accordingly the great Law-giver completes his work by supplying what was needed to the generation about to enter the Land.

— Selected and Amended

DEUTERONOMY:

DIVINE FAITHFULNESS

IN DISCIPLINING AND DELIVERING

Discourse One

RETROSPECT —

ISRAEL'S FAITHFULNESS AND YAHWEH'S CARE

Ch. 1:1-4:43

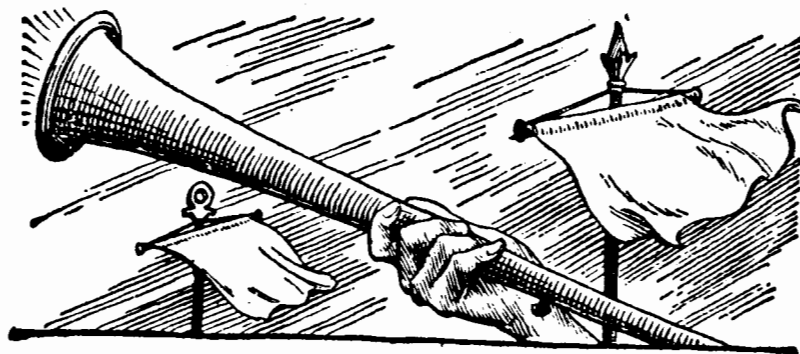
The Book of Deuteronomy

Broadly speaking, the Book of Deuteronomy is comprised largely of a series of addresses spoken by Moses at Moab shortly before his death, and containing exhortations and precepts on civil, religious, and moral legislation for the Twelve Tribes of Israel to follow and be bound by when they arrive in the Promised Land of Canaan (western Israel). Its present title notwithstanding, Deuteronomy is not so much a "second law" as it is a reiteration and amplification of the religious and political legislation handed down to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, as detailed in the Book of Leviticus. In terms of chronology, the setting of Deuteronomy is thirty-eight years after the events described in Leviticus and the Book of Numbers, which precede it in the Old Testament Canon. Deuteronomy begins with a recapitulation of the events which had befallen the Israelites from the time of their Exodus from Egypt and their wanderings during the period of the wilderness, to, as the book begins, their arrival in Moab east of the Jordan River prior to their crossing into Canaan (narrated in the Book of Joshua which succeeds it in the Canon of Scriptures).

Outline

FIRST DISCOURSE: RETROSPECT — ISRAEL'S FAITHLESSNESS AND YAHWEH'S CARE — Ch. 1:1-4:43

This section is introductory to the whole book. Moses begins his first address to the people, calling upon them to look back over the past and to profit by their mistakes. It is, therefore, mainly historical. It traces the thirty-eight years of wandering to the point where the people now stand. It provides an exhortation based upon Israel's privileged status, and concludes by reference to the appointment of the cities of Refuge, as illustrating God's continuous mercy to them. Past faithlessness and failures, therefore, provide contrasts with Yahweh's continuous goodness and mercy. Moses calls upon the people to remember their past failures, he warns them to exercise care in the future, and in order to point the lesson of the consequences of neglect, appoints cities of refuge. Because of the weakness of flesh, God's people are constantly humbled as they consider their past mistakes, and are constantly buoyed up in hope as they recall the goodness and mercy of Yahweh even in the circumstances of their everyday life.



CHAPTER ONE FAILURE AT KADESH-BARNEA

This chapter provides an introduction to the first discourse. It reminds the people of their privileged position as they are about to enter the land, recalls the difficulties facing Moses that caused him to seek additional help of Yahweh to lead the people, and provides a brief recapitulation of events from Sinai to Kadesh. Discouraged by the report of the spies, the people refused to enter the land, despite the pleading of Moses, and the faithful urging of Caleb and Joshua. Moses recalls the decision of Yahweh that the old generation would perish except Caleb and Joshua, who had remained faithful. He recapitulates how, with stubborn folly, the people then decided to enter the land without the aid of Yahweh, and in attempting it were driven back by the Amorites. The point of Moses' introductory exhortation is that apart from the help of Yahweh the new generation also will fail in its attack upon the land.

Introduction to the First Discourse — vv. 1-4

These verses provide the title, and general introduction to the book. They announce its contents, its author, the parties to whom it is addressed, and the time and place it was given.

VERSE 1

“These be the words which Moses spake” — This introduction to the book, which also identifies its nature and author, forms the basis of the Hebrew title. The first word in Deuteronomy in the Hebrew is *Haddebarim* signifying “the words”. Accordingly it is used as the Hebrew title of the book.

“Unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness” — By “all Israel” is not necessarily meant every individual of the nation, but a representative national gathering. See the use of the phrase in 1 Sam. 7:3; 12:1,19; Rom. 11:26.

“On this side Jordan” — The R.S.V. renders this “beyond Jordan”, presuming

that the introductory note was added by Joshua, after the children of Israel had passed beyond the Jordan. The Septuagint (*LXX*) renders it “on the back of the Jordan west of the wilderness that reaches to the Red Sea”. The Hebrew word *eber* here rendered “side”, signifies *crossing*. The verse links with that of Num. 35:1 “And Yahweh spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan”.

The wilderness is the place of education and meditation. The Hebrew word *midbar* is derived from *dabar* signifying to arrange in order, and therefore, is used particularly of words. However, it has the dual idea of both “to speak” and “to lead”. To be in the wilderness under guidance, as a flock of sheep being led to pastures, or to be led by the Word amounts to nearly one and the same thing. Those doing so are both taught and led. The wilderness, therefore, can be considered both literally and figuratively. Israel was led through the wilderness of the land, and spiritual Israel wanders in the wilderness of modern life. When John was conducted into a

place where he could view Babylon the Great in all its glory and power, he was taken “in the spirit into the wilderness” (Rev. 17:3). That wilderness was Europe. From the Gentile viewpoint it is a place of culture and prosperity, but considered spiritually it is a howling wilderness. Through that wilderness, saints must walk as pilgrims under the guidance and teaching of Yahweh, onwards to the promised destiny that awaits them.

The word “side” as rendered in the AV is from the Hebrew *eber* signifying the “crossing”.

“In the plain” — The Hebrew word is *Arabah*. The Arabah is the deep depression that stretches from the Sea of Galilee, south to the Red Sea. It is bordered on the eastern side by steep rugged mountains that stretch down to the gulf of Aqaba on the Red Sea.

“Over against the Red Sea” — There is no word for *sea* in the Hebrew text. The word is *Zuph*, and seems to relate to a place, and not the sea. The *Book of Deuteronomy* is known among the Jews as “*The Books of Reproofs*”. The places mentioned in the verse before us are related by them to sites which witnessed the more serious sins of the people.

“Paran” — Paran is the northern edge of the Negev. Shortly after arriving there the spies were sent out into the Promised Land. On their return the great rebellion took place. See Num. 12:16.

“And Tophel” — Tophel signifies *Quagmire*. It is sometimes identified with Tafleth in Jebel, west of the mountains of Edom. It is supposed by some to be where the Israelites purchased provisions (Deut. 2:28-29). At this point, they passed out of the wilderness to more hospitable land.

“And Laban” — The name signifies *White*. It is perhaps Libnah of Num. 33:20.

“And Hazereth” — Reference to Hazereth is found in Num. 11:35; 12:16. See notes at those places.

“And Dizahab” — The word signifies *Having gold*. It is identified, perhaps, with Mersa Dahab, or Mina Dahab, signifying *Gulf harbour*. It is identified close to the Gulf of Aqaba.

VERSE 2

“There are eleven days journey from Horeb by way of Mt. Seir unto Kadesh-barnea” — Reference to Kadesh-barnea is found in Num. 13:26; Deut. 2:14; 9:23.

The distance is approximately 165 miles, or (265.5km). The Israelites commenced their journey on the 20th day of the second month (Num. 10:11), but did not complete it until many wearisome years later. A journey that might have been successfully completed with ease was made difficult and was long protracted through lack of faith.

VERSE 3

“And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that Yahweh had given him in commandment unto them” — The 40th year of the wanderings was most momentous. On the first month Miriam died (Num. 20:1); in the fifth month Aaron died (Num. 33:38); finally, in the eleventh month, Moses died (Deut. 32:48:52). In the *Book of Deuteronomy* therefore, the Law was recapitulated to a new generation. It is specifically stated that the wandering continued “until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host” (Deut. 2:14). The expression “this day” marks out the *Book of Deuteronomy*, as a book of decisiveness. The phrase occurs 68 times in the book. Among other things, it suggests the whole book was spoken in one day, and recorded by scribes. It was the eleventh month of the Jewish year, and approximates to February. According to Deut. 31:2, the first day of that month was Moses' birthday. he was 120 years of age. On that day he wrote his memorial song (31:22); and was instructed to ascend the mountain for his death (Deut. 32:48-52). The phrase occurs in the following places: 1:10; 2:18,22,25,30; 3:14; 4:4,8,20,38,39,40; 5:1,3,24; 6:6,24; 7:11; 8:1,11,18,19; 9:3; 10:8,13,15; 11:2,4,8,13,26,27,28,32; 12:8; 13:18; 15:5; 19:9; 20:3; 26:3,16,17,18; 27:1,4,10; 28:1,13,14,15; 29:4,10,12,15,18,28; 30:2,8,11,15,16,18,19; 31:2,27; 32:46. The expression not only suggests decisiveness, but also activity and of work accomplished.

VERSE 4

“After he had slain Sihon the King of the Amorites which dwelt in Heshbon” — This was one of the items of decisiveness and finality accomplished by Moses. In slaying Sihon King of the Amorites, he avenged the disastrous defeat of the first generation (see Deut. 1:44), and so gave

point to his continuous exhortation to the people, "to fear not!" This victory was extremely important to Moses. Compare his references to the Amorites in Deut. 1:7,19,20,27,44, with his statement in Deut. 3:2,8; 4:46-47. The triumph was so remarkable, and complete, as to greatly influence the Canaanites, when Joshua led the people into the land (see Josh. 2:10; 9:10; 24:8-12). The destruction of these kings, recorded in Num. 21:21-35, provided tangible evidence to the people of Israel that Yahweh would deliver the land into their hands.

"And Og the King of Bashan" — Og was an Amorite ally of Sihon (Deut. 3:8). His name signifies *"Round"* (Strong), probably because of his size. He was among the last of the giants, or *Rephaim*. Contrast Gen. 14:5 with Deut. 3:11. Reference to him is likewise found in Num. 21:33-35.

"The King of Bashan" — Bashan was an extremely fertile part of the land, east of the Jordan (see Deut. 32:14; Isa. 2:13 etc.). When Moses led the people into the area, it was heavily fortified with 60 walled forts (Deut. 3:4-5). Archaeologists have studied many of the ruins of Bashan, and have commented on the strength of the fortresses uncovered at their diggings. The name "Bashan" signifies *open spaces*.

"Which dwelt at Ashteroth" — This place is identified with Ashteroth-Karnaim, referred to in Gen. 14:5, and signifying *Astarte of the Two Horns*. The reference is to the worship of the horned moon, a Phoenician goddess (1 Kings 11:5,33). The word Ashteroth signifies *A binding together, A union*. The worshippers of Ashteroth were bound together in her licentious rites.

"In Edrei" — Instead of identifying Ashteroth as being in Edrei, the *LXX* renders the statement "and in Edrei". This identifies Edrei as a different place from Ashteroth, and aligns it with a similar statement found in Joshua 12:4. The word Edrei signifies *Strong*. It was at this spot that the battle was fought. See Deut. 3:1; Num. 21:33-35,

VERSE 5

"On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab" — This identifies the place where Moses spake unto all Israel, as being adjacent to the site of the victory over those

powerful enemies. Earlier, the Amorites had conquered part of Moab (See Num. 21:26). It was appropriate that this recapitulation of the Law should be given near the spot where notable victories had been recorded. For they illustrated that given faith on the part of the people, Yahweh would accomplish His purpose in them.

"Began Moses to declare this Law, saying" — The word "began" is from the Hebrew word *ya'al* signifying "to undertake with will". This implies that at this spot and time, Moses began enthusiastically to set forth the Law unto the people. The word "declare" is from the Hebrew *ba'ar* and signifies "to make plain, to show sense, or to declare in writing". The word is found again in Deut. 4:8; 31:9; 32:46. In Deut. 27:8 the word is rendered "very plainly".

Invitation To Enter The Land — vv. 5-8

Moses commences his recapitulation of events that brought the children of Israel to the plains of Moab, ready to enter the land.

VERSE 6

"Yahweh our God spake unto us in Horeb saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount" — The use of the Divine Name implies that covenant union that Israel enjoyed with Yahweh, and presupposes the acceptance by the people of the terms that were entered into at Sinai. It was at Horeb that the people of Israel were constituted the Kingdom of God (Exod. 19:5), Yahweh's special treasure. It was at Horeb that He made known His Name, and entered into covenant with them. There they received the Law, on the keeping of which depended their retention of the privileges to which they had been elected. The Israelites remained at Horeb for about a year (cp. Exod. 19:1; Num. 10:11-12), and when the purpose for which they had been brought there was completed, they were enjoined to move. This command was not by express words merely, but also by the movement of the cloud from over the Tabernacle, which was the signal to march (Num. 9:15). See Num. 10:11; Deut. 2:3.

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The Christadelphian Expositor

A Verse by Verse Commentary Upon the Scriptures

Editorial

Dear Reader,

We continue our exposition of Deuteronomy in this issue. Moses reviews the faithlessness and rejection of the first generation that came out of Egypt, as a basis for his final appeal and instruction to the new generation that entered the Land. Though circumstances are different today, we can profit by the words of Israel's great leader, and see in the fulfilment of his prophetic utterances a vindication of Scripture as a whole. In this number of our *Expositor* we complete the first three sub-sections of the book:

The Failure At Kadesh-Barnea — Ch. 1:1-46.

The Thirty-Eight Years of Wandering — Ch. 2:1-3:29

The Lessons of the Past Impressed Upon the New Generation — Ch. 4:1-40.

In reading or studying Deuteronomy it will be found helpful to keep these subject-headings in mind: it will assist the better understanding of the book as a

CHAPTER ONE

VERSE 7

"Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates" — In this statement, reference is made specifically to "the mount of the Amorites". This relates to the hill country of Ephraim and Judah. It is identified as the mount of the Amorites, because the term "Amorites" was used for Canaanites generally (See Gen. 15:16; Deut. 1:20-21). Constant reference is made to the Euphrates as the northern border, even though the Israelites at that time never extended their conquests that far. See. Deut. 11:24; Josh. 1:4; 2 Sam. 8:3; 1 Chron. 5:9. However, Abraham was promised that his seed would inherit territory extending to the Euphrates (Gen. 15:18); and though they have never done so in the past, they will do so in the age to come.

VERSE 8

"Behold I have set the land before you" — The Hebrew word signifies *given*. The land had been allocated them by Yahweh, the great Disposer of nations and territories (Acts 17:26), and they were now exhorted to go in and possess it. If the Israelites had fulfilled the conditions set down, there would have been no doubt about them occupying the territory promised.

"Go in and possess the land which Yahweh sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give unto them and unto their seed after them" — References to this promise are found in Gen. 12:7; 15:18; 17:7-8; 26:4; 28:13; 50:24. Gen. 22:16 records how the promises to Abraham were confirmed by an oath. However, the Israelites were not invited to occupy the land in fulfilment of that promise, but conditionally upon obeying the Sinaitic covenant. The promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was unconditional, and provided for an eternal inheritance. It is yet to be fulfilled, Stephen, among many others, being witness (See Acts 7:5).

Difficulties Facing Moses — Leaders Are Appointed to Assist Him — vv. 9-18

Moses reminds the people that he has done all that has been required of him to

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enable them to inherit the land. They have so increased in number, that Moses has found himself unable to attend to all matters concerning them, or to adjudicate in all differences that arose among them. Yahweh has so fulfilled that which he promised to Abraham, so that his seed has increased as the "stars of the heaven for multitude". In this, Moses rejoices, and looks for an extension of the blessing. At the same time, it has increased his problems. He finds the burden of leading the people, the weight of care and trouble caused by their faithlessness and strifes, too much for him to bear. Earlier he had followed the advice of Jethro, his father-in-law, and selected competent men capable of relieving him of the duties which fell more heavily upon him (Exod. 18:13-18). Later, as a result of Moses' appeal, Yahweh directed him to select others who might share the burden (Num. 11:10-14). He now reminds the people how he instructed the officers so appointed to conduct themselves faithfully, that they may be of the greatest assistance to the people as they moved towards the Promised Land. This important arrangement for the good government of the people was designed to contribute to the successful obtaining of the reward. His care underlines the extent of the people's perverseness and ingratitude to which Moses next alludes (v. 22). It shows that he was anxious to impress them with the realisation that the fault of the forty years' delay rested only with themselves. By bearing this in mind they may correct the mistakes of the past, and so ensure the success of the impending campaign under Joshua.

VERSE 9

"And I spake unto you at that time saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone" — This statement of Moses followed the advice of Jethro (see Exod. 18:13-26), and was later supplemented by Yahweh's instructions (Num. 11:14). To delegate authority is a good thing. It not only draws others into the work, but helps to ensure that it is properly performed. Moses found the task of administration too much for him on his own. His objective was not personal power, but national service. He worked for all, and not merely for himself. There is always a need for conscientious workers in the service of Yahweh, but they need direction, and must learn to submit to authority. The

Lord told the apostles: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few, pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matt. 9:37-38). There is always need for good conscientious workers who will submit to the requirements of Yahweh to the work in hand.

VERSE 10

"Yahweh your God hath multiplied you, and behold ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude" — This partially fulfilled the promise made to Abraham (see Gen. 15:5; 22:17). See notes for the explanation of this description in Gen. 22:17, and compare with Deut. 28:62. There the people of Israel after the flesh are warned that though this had been their state, they would be reduced to a few in number, "because they would not obey the voice of Yahweh their God".

VERSE 11

"Yahweh God of your fathers, make you a thousand times so many more as ye are" — Moses was not distressed over the large number over whom he had to preside, but rather saw that as a blessing, and prayed for its increase. He regretted his own inability to cope with the work.

"And bless you, as He hath promised you!" — Moses did not see the present population as the complete fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham. The complete fulfilment awaits the future. See Rev. 7:9.

VERSE 12

"How can I myself bear your cumbrance, and your hurden, and your strife?" — The Hebrew word rendered "cumbrance" is translated *trouble* in Isa. 1:4. The word suggests a burden so heavy as to produce weariness. In Isaiah the sin and hypocrisy of the people are represented as burdens so grievous as to tire Yahweh, and therefore is an expression designed to illustrate the oppressive load of sin. Moses had to put up with such, as well as bearing the burden of administration, and the strife of the people as they turned on him with their complaints. In the face of such problems, he needed help, and so appealed unto Yahweh.

VERSE 13

"Take you wise men" — The literal Hebrew expresses this as "give wise men".

The selection was to be left to the people. Jethro's description of men who could help Moses was "such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness" (Exod. 18:21). The term here translated "wise men" is *chachamim* men who have gained knowledge by great labour and study.

"And understanding" — Here the word is *nebonim*, and it denotes judicious persons of discernment.

"And known among your tribes" — The Hebrew word *yadum* denotes those "of sound reputation"; such as would have been respected for their discernment. Similar qualifications were required in the Apostolic days of those appointed to positions of Ecclesial authority (Acts 1:21-23; 6:2-6; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9).

"And I will make them rulers over you" — The Hebrew word is *roshei* and denotes "heads" or "officers," as in Exod. 6:14. It is important in the appointment of those to authority within ecclesias, that regard be had to these qualifications as set down by Moses. Mere fleshly popularity should give place to such.

VERSE 14

"And ye answered me, and said, the thing which thou hast spoken is good for us to do" — The people approved of the arrangements suggested by Moses, and gave him their full support. It was a wise provision that he made. It is obvious that if the people assisted in appointing their officers they would be more inclined to respect and obey them.

VERSE 15

"So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known" — The NIV renders "known" as "respected" men. Moses selected them for endorsement by the people. Evidently the arrangement proved satisfactory, for he later instructed that when Israel occupied the land, the people should follow the same practice in the appointment of rulers.

In like manner, in Apostolic times, delegation of authority was vested in brethren of varying ability (see Eph. 4:11). This led Paul to command: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17).

"And made them heads over you, captains over hundreds, and captains over fif-

ties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes" — Reference to those so appointed is found in Num. 30:1. The heads are called in Hebrew *roshim*, and the captains are *sari*. The organisation in Israel, therefore, provided for the following gradations of rank:

1. Yahweh as supreme (Deut. 6:4).
2. The Elohim — manifestations of His power and authority (Exod. 23:20-23).
3. Moses, the Mediator (Gal. 3:19).
4. The Priests, consulting Yahweh by Urim and Thummim.
5. The twelve leaders, or princes of the tribes (see Num. 7).
6. Captains over thousands.
7. Captains over fifty.
8. Captains over ten.
9. Officers or men appointed to execute particular commands.

Authority was thus delegated throughout the nation, and as the various appointments were recognised and respected by the people, the organisation was calculated to bring about the best results in cooperative regard and obedience.

VERSE 16

"And I charged your judges at that time saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him" — In installing the judges, Moses solemnly charged them to deal impartially, fairly, and equitably with those who appeared before them. The same qualifications apply in Christ (see John 7:24). Moses stressed that the stranger should be treated the same as the Israelite. It is a divine characteristic to look after strangers (see Deut. 10:17-19 and cp. Matt. 5:45). The Israelites had been strangers in Egypt, and therefore, should extend to strangers in their midst the same consideration as they had at first received from the Egyptians (see Gen. 47:5-6; Exod. 22:21; 23:9; Lev. 24:22; Deut. 24:14).

VERSE 17

"Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great" — The literal Hebrew renders this: "ye shall not acknowledge faces in judgment". In other words, let not the bold, daring countenances of the rich influence you; not the abject, humble appearance of the poor move you to unwarranted sympathy (Exod. 23:3). Perfect judgment is to be meted out. It must ever

be borne in mind that Yahweh will act on behalf of the poor if they are unfairly treated (Prov. 22:22-23); whereas the rich generally have plenty who will come to their support. The command of this verse is well supported elsewhere (see Lev. 19:15; Deut. 16:19; 1 Sam. 16:7; Prov. 24:23; Jer. 5:28-29; Amos 5:11-12; Micah 2:1-3; 3:1-4; 7:3-4; James 2:1,2,4,6,9). To wrest judgment in respect to persons, is to jeopardise one's future in the kingdom of God.

"Ye shall not be afraid of the face of man" — Judgment is to be given fearlessly. It is not to be clouded over by the fear of man, or the desire to gain favour. Sometimes the dread of temporal consequences, will lead to a time-serving tampering with conviction, so that judgment is not pronounced fairly or frankly. Faith is sometimes necessary to carry out these instructions of Scripture.

"For the judgment is God's" — As judges were appointed by God's permission, and administered in His Name, they acted for Him, and were answerable to Him (see 2 Chron. 19:6). Hence the phrases to "enquire of God," "to bring before God", found in such places as Exod. 18:15; 21:6; 22:8 (where the Hebrew word *Elohim* rendered "God" in the first reference is translated "judges" in the last two) signify to appear before those persons appointed to administer His laws, for they acted on behalf of God. When a person came before the judges, he was accounted as standing before Yahweh (see Deut. 19:17). The same onerous position relates to those who must give decisions in Ecclesial matters. See the warning of Christ in Matt. 5:19.

"And the cause is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it" — This was in accordance with the advice of Jethro, (Exod. 18:22, 26), and was incorporated in the instructions of Moses for further generations (see ch. 17:8-13).

VERSE 18

"And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do" — This statement is constantly reiterated. See Deut. 4:5,40; 12:28,32; 16:18-19. Moses made clear to the people what was required of them, as Paul, later, did to those whom he converted to the faith. See Acts 20:20,27. Unfortunately, some of the Israelitish judges departed from that way (see Ps. 58:1).

The People Encouraged At Kadesh To Inherit the Land — vv. 19-21

Moses briefly recapitulates the events that took place after leaving Horeb until the people arrived at Kadesh-barnea on the southern border of the Promised Land. He had exhorted the people to "fear not", but with faith and courage to move into their inheritance.

VERSE 19

"And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness" — Reference to the harsh bitterness of the wilderness wanderings, is contained in Num. 10:12; Deut. 8:15; 32:10; Jer. 2:6. Faith was required to surmount the difficulties of that wilderness wanderings, and unfortunately, the generation that left Egypt lacked sufficient of that commodity.

"Which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as Yahweh our God commanded us" — The Amorites appear to have been the dominant tribe in the land, and the command of Yahweh was for Israel to boldly invade the country in spite of their strength (see v. 7). But the people lacked the faith and courage to do so. Discontent had broken out more than once before reaching this place, but Moses, in this recapitulation, passes over those earlier instances of rebelliousness, and concentrates upon the final and most serious one at Kadesh. It was the stubbornness that the generation that left Egypt, manifested at that place, that resulted in it being doomed to wander in the wilderness until it perished.

"And we came to Kadesh-barnea" — The word Kadesh-barnea signifies *Sanctuary of the Wandering Son* (see note at v. 2).

VERSE 20

"And I said unto you, ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God, doth give unto us" — As noted above, the Amorites appear to have been the dominant tribe in the land at that time, and the term here is used for the inhabitants in general. The defeat of Sihon, the Amorite chieftan, was a token of the ability of this new generation to conquer the land before them. See note on v. 4.

VERSE 21

"Behold Yahweh thy God hath set the land before thee" — The word "set" is

from the Hebrew *nathan*, and signifies *to give*. The land was therefore for them to occupy.

"Go up and possess it" — The exhortation was necessary, for the tendency of the flesh is to hesitate. The people were not sure of their ability to take the land; they were inclined to hang back.

"As Yahweh God of thy fathers hath said unto thee, fear not, neither be discouraged" — This was the appeal of Moses when the first generation reached Kadesh, and the constant exhortation to the new generation throughout the *Book of Deuteronomy* is to fear not! Fearlessness comes from faith, and this the earlier generation had lacked. Moses summed up his constant exhortation with the appeal: "Yahweh it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: *fear not*, neither be dismayed" (see Deut. 31:8). A similar exhortation was given Joshua as he was appointed to lead the people into the land (Josh. 1:9).

The People Cautious — They are Discouraged by the Spies' Report — vv. 22-28

Moses reminds the new generation of Israelites how their fathers refused his appeal, and so lost both the land and their lives. It is a salutary warning to the new generation.

VERSE 22

"And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come" — This suggestion came from the people, and was accepted by Yahweh, who told Moses to implement it (see Num. 13:1-2); but, in fact, it was motivated by lack of faith. The word *search* is from the Hebrew word *chaphar*, and signifies "to pry into", "investigate," by implication "delve", or "explore." A different word is used in Num. 13:2. See notes.

VERSE 23

"And the saying pleased me well" — Moses misunderstood the motives of the people. See Num. 13:3 and notes.

"And I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe" — See Num. 13:2-3.

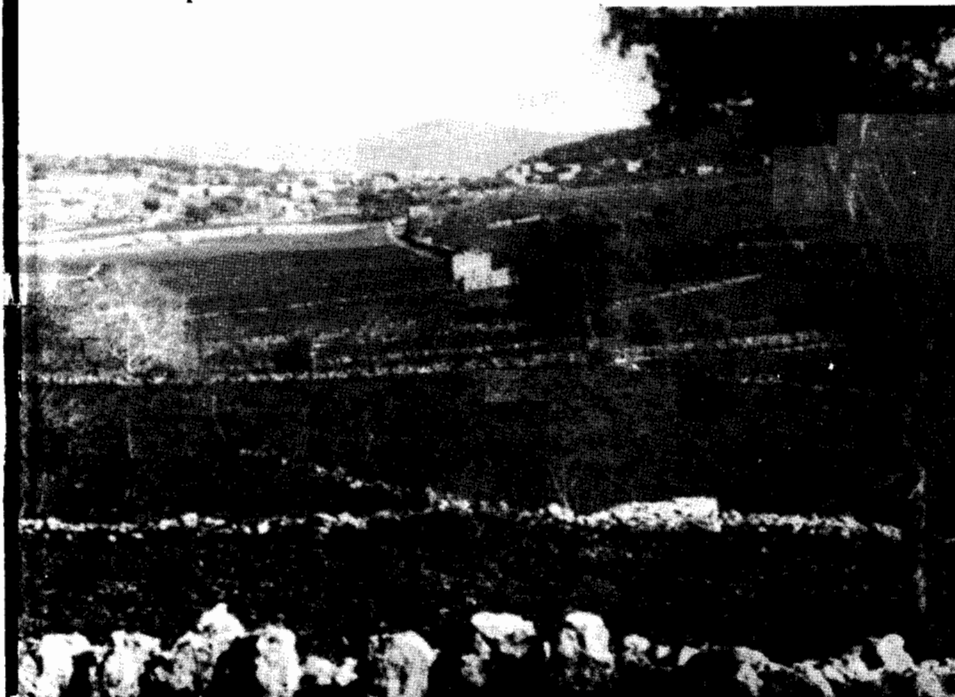
VERSE 24

"And they turned and went up into the mountain, and came into the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out" — By the term "the mountain", is meant the hill country of Judea, just north of the Negev. Close to Hebron is found the valley of Eshcol. The word signifies *Grape cluster*. It was the site of the Amorite chieftains who joined with Abram in his attack upon the forces of Chedorlaomer. Therefore, it commemorated that wonderful victory of faith (Gen. 14). The faithless spies, however, returned with their "evil report of the land". In doing so they weakened the rest of Israel, and brought failure and tragedy to the nation.

VERSE 25

"And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which Yahweh our God doth give us" — The land fulfilled all the expectations of the Israelites, but they lacked faith to acquire it.

The Valley of Eshcol just north of Hebron. Site of an outstanding act of faith when the Amorite Chieftains of the area, embracing the covenant of Abram, joined him in defeating the invading confederacy from the north; and site of gross faithlessness on the part of ten of the spies.

**VERSE 26**

"Notwithstanding, ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of Yahweh your God" — The refusal of the Israelites is recorded in Num. 14:1-4. See also Psa. 106:24-26; Isa. 63:10; Acts 7:43-44,51. The word "commandment" is from the Hebrew *peh* and signifies "mouth". Hence, Moses reminds them, they rebelled against the expressed will of Yahweh.

VERSE 27

"And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because Yahweh hated us, He hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us" — This statement cites the record of Num. 14:1-4. See also Psa. 106:25. The word *murmured* signifies "to complain or grumble". To this Paul makes reference in 1 Cor. 10:10, and strictly forbids this sin in Phil. 2:14 (cp. also Jude 16). Israel had the power to conquer, they had the invitation of Yahweh to enter the land (see v. 8), but instead of keeping their eyes firmly fixed on the

glory set before them, they permitted present difficulties to obscure their vision. Grumbling (Num. 11:1) led to complaining, and found the people adversely contrasting the comforts they had left, with their hard state in the wilderness; so that even Moses was discouraged (Num. 11:11-15). Contention then broke out among the leaders (Num. 12:1), and finally the defeatist attitude of the spies brought ruin to the whole project (Num. 13). It all commenced with a little grumbling! The lesson teaches that those who murmur without real cause, are soon given real cause to murmur! The murmuring was done secretly in the tents first, and then openly (Num. 14:1-2). This is generally the case. People who grumble amongst themselves, are soon emboldened to speak openly on the same theme. This motivates others to do likewise, so that they too give voice to their complaints real or imagined.

VERSE 28

"Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart saying, The people is greater and taller than we" — The Hebrew word for *discouraged* signifies "melted". The report of the faithless spies made the people faint-hearted. They manifested no resolute determination to conquer. The voice of complaint was heard throughout the camp, discouraging the people, causing their hearts to "melt". As they were engaged in a battle of faith, from which all fainthearted were to be excluded (Deut. 20:8), few remained to engage the enemy in battle. Later, Caleb recalled to Joshua their experiences at the time. He declared: "My brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I followed Yahweh my God" (Josh. 14:8). The faithless spies and the people alike allowed the sight of present difficulties to undermine their faith. They saw their enemies as greater and taller than themselves, and lacked confidence to win. They forgot they had God on their side, and so capitulated (see Deut. 9:1-3; Num. 13:28-33).

"The cities are great and walled up to heaven" — Certainly the difficulties facing the invaders were great. Archaeologists have remarked upon the strength of the massively constructed fortified cities whose ruins they have unearthed. J. L. Porter in the *Giants Cities of Bashan* writes as follows: "The houses of Kerioth and other towns of Bashan appear

to be just such dwellings as a race of giants would build. The walls, roofs, but especially the ponderous gates, doors, and bars, are in every way characteristic of a period when architecture was in its infancy, when giants were masons, and when strength and security were the great requisites. I measured a door in Kerioth: it was 9 feet (2.74m) high, and 4½ feet (1.37m) wide, and 10 inches (254mm) thick — one solid slab of stone. I saw the folding gates of another town still larger and heavier. Time produces little effect on such buildings as these . . . There can scarcely be a doubt, therefore, that these are the very cities erected and inhabited by the Nephilim, the aboriginal occupants of Bashan".

What was true of Bashan also applied to the land of Canaan, the city of Jericho being witness.

"And moreover, we have seen the sons of the Anakims there" — The word "Anak" signifies "*the long neck*" — Probably denoting the height of the people. They were the giant dwellers of Canaan (See Josh. 11:21-22; 15:14).

Failure of the People: They Believed

Not — vv. 29-40

Moses recalls how he exhorted the people that if they put their trust in God, all would be well. However, they refused to do so, and instead, they rebelled against Yahweh. As a consequence, He rejected them, condemning them to wander in the wilderness without hope, until death claimed them.

VERSE 29

"Then I said unto you, dread not, neither be afraid of them" — To "fear not!" was the constant exhortation of Moses to the people. Unfortunately it was not heeded by them. Most of them lacked faith, and those that may have manifested faith, failed to match courage with it. Both faith and courage are necessary in the battle of life. Joshua and Caleb were outstanding exceptions to the rest of the spies.

VERSE 30

"Yahweh your God which goeth before you, He shall fight for you, according to all that He did for you before your eyes" — The people of Israel should have recalled the wonderful victory at the crossing of the Red Sea. Surely the God that was able to

deliver them from the hand of Pharaoh, could establish them in the land of promise! After all, their national deliverance from Egypt was designed to that end. But Israel "soon forgot His works" (Psa. 106:13). Let us see to it that we do not imitate them in like manner. The battles of Israel were battles of faith. Success depended, not on the ability of their warriors to wage war, but to the extent that they drew Yahweh into their lives. See the instruction of Deut. 20:1-9. Prior to attacking Jericho, Joshua was accosted by an angel with a drawn sword, who introduced himself as Commander of the Army of Israel (Josh. 5:14-15). It reminded him of the forces that would help Israel if the people proved obedient. At the conclusion of his campaigns, it is claimed that Joshua succeeded, "because Yahweh God of Israel fought for Israel" (Josh. 10:42). Other notable incidents, illustrating the same principle, are revealed in the defeat of Goliath by David (1 Sam. 17:45-46); the victory of Asa over the Ethiopians (2 Chron. 14:11-12); Hezekiah's defiance of Sennacherib (2 Chron. 32:6-8); Nehemiah's defence of Jerusalem (Neh. 4:20); see also Rom. 8:31; 9:29; James 5:4.

"According to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes" — The deliverance from Egypt, commemorated in the

Passover Celebrations, witnessed to the power of Yahweh to save, if the people would put their confidence in Him.

VERSE 31

"And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that Yahweh thy God bear thee, as a man doth bear his son in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place" — Yahweh's goodness in the wilderness is the constant subject of exhortation. See Psa. 78:14-28; 105:39-41; Neh. 9:12-23. Yahweh bare them as a man beareth his young son: sustaining, tending, supporting, and carrying them over difficulties. See Exod. 19:4; Deut. 32:11-12; Isa. 63:9; Acts 13:18. Malachi reminded Israel of the love shown towards them by Yahweh but which the people overlooked through lack of faith (see Mal. 1:6). However, let us not be too ready to criticise the people. They had many hardships to overcome. We live in comparatively easy conditions. Would we have the faith to endure the wilderness trials?

"All the way that ye went, until ye came into this place" — Yahweh's strength and goodness on behalf of Israel were manifest not only at the Red Sea when Pharaoh's chariots and cavalry were overthrown, but



Cities Walled Up To Heaven — The first generation of Israelites was deterred by the strength of the fortresses in the Promised Land. The above is an unexcavated tell or walled city indicating the height and strength of its fortification.

throughout their wilderness wanderings. It was experienced by the generation that perished in the wilderness, for the people continued to receive their daily ration of manna even though they had rebelled against Him. This, of course, also sustained the rising generation that was to inherit the land. The goodness of God is extended to all mankind (Matt. 5:45), but especially the faithful (1 Tim. 4:10).

VERSE 32

“Yet in this thing ye did not believe Yahweh thy God” — Young renders this as “ye were not *steadfast*”. See the comments in Psa. 78:22; 106:24. Paul attributes their failure to “unbelief” (see Heb. 3:12, 18, 19); but the Greek word does not signify ignorance, but lack of conviction. Lack of faith was the root cause of Israel’s failure in the wilderness. Without it we cannot please God (Heb. 11:6).

VERSE 33

“Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tent in, in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day” — References to these provisions are found in Exod. 13:21; Num. 10:33; Psa. 77:20. Israel was not left to its own resources during the wanderings in the wilderness, any more than believers are today. The people had the cloud by day and the fire by night, and believers have the Word of God and the communion of Prayer to sustain and guide them. The cloud symbolised Divine guidance. It was direct, continuous, unmistakable, and infallible. All plans, all rules, all camping, all marching, was subject to “if the Lord will . . .” (James 4:15). To watch the guiding pillar was all that the Israelites were required to do. On that guidance they were entirely dependant, and in following that guidance they were absolutely safe. Believers today need to discern for the guiding hand of Yahweh in their lives and as it is revealed in the Word. By its teaching, and by communion and prayer, they can be made conscious of the reality of Yahweh’s presence, and His guiding influence in their lives. They need always bear in mind that His eyes are upon them (Psa. 32:8; 33:18), they are under his constant surveillance.

The fire by night was an emblem of the purifying and protective presence of Yahweh. It represented God’s Spirit which, on the Day of Pentecost appeared

as “cloven tongues of fire” (Acts 2:3). It must have been a very wonderful thing for a spiritually minded Israelite to observe that fire in the darkness of the night. It was a reminder that though there may have been dangers in the darkness of the night, when in fellowship with Yahweh “even the night shall be light” (Psa. 139:11; 78:14), teaching the lesson: “Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness; He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous” (Psa. 112:4). This provides a lesson for the Israel of God today (Gal. 6:16), for He provides light in darkness (Psa. 119:105, 130). The cloud, overshadowed the people by day, providing a covering from the heat of the sun (Psa. 105:39), but became luminous by night. It was a sign of the Divine presence (Matt. 17:5; 18:20; Acts 1:9). See our notes on Num. 9:15.

VERSE 34

“And Yahweh heard the voice of your words, and was wrath, and sware, saying” — The reference is to the final act of rebellion when the spies returned with their cowardly report. See Num. 14:21-24. Because of their faithlessness, that generation was not allowed to enter into “the rest” that Yahweh had arranged for them (see Psa. 95:11).

VERSE 35

“Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers” — See note Num. 14:29. Dr. Young renders the statement as a question: “if there be one?” This rendition would leave the answer to be determined by the attitude of individuals. For example, Caleb and Joshua entered the land, and apparently others could have done likewise if they had repented and sought the grace of Yahweh.

VERSE 36

“Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon and to his children, because he hath wholly followed Yahweh” — This statement singled out Caleb for particular attention. His living presence among the Israelites at that time demonstrated the value of a faithful continuance in well doing. He, and his companion, Joshua, were unique among the older generation that had left Egypt. The baptism of the others in passing through the Red Sea availed them nought in view

of their failure to act consistently under the pressures of the wilderness wanderings. The final statement of this verse “because he hath wholly followed Yahweh” is in the Hebrew: “he hath fulfilled to go after Yahweh” (see Num. 14:24, and our notes thereon).

VERSE 37

“Also Yahweh was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither” — These words are parenthetical as is indicated by the use of the word *also* in the A.V. The reference is not to the time of the rebellion of the first generation at Kadesh, but to the arrival of the second generation at that place, many years later. The statement was evidently made by Moses at this point for the purpose of preparing the people for what he had to say to them in regard both to himself and Joshua. The circumstances are recorded in Num. 20:12; 27:13-14; Deut. 32:51; 34:4; and commented upon in Psa. 106:32. It is significant that Moses claimed that Yahweh’s anger against him was “for your sakes”. In other words, to teach a powerful lesson, that would have a particular reference to the people of Israel. Firstly it taught that absolute obedience to a requirement of Yahweh is necessary in order to experience His pleasure; and secondly, Yahweh’s refusal to allow Moses to enter the land, because he had failed to carry out Yahweh’s requirements, showed that those who seek justification through the Law, will not inherit the promises, for it is beyond the ability of flesh in normal circumstances to do so. Grace manifested in forgiveness is necessary for that (see Rom. 8:1-3).

VERSE 38

“But Joshua, the son of Nun, which standeth before thee” — Moses sought by prayer to change the decision of Yahweh, for he desired to enter the land. However, Yahweh refused to be moved. Instead, He ordered Moses to prepare Joshua to lead the people into the land. See Moses’ prayer as recorded on that occasion in Deut. 3:23-25, and Yahweh’s response thereto in vv. 26-28.

The verse before us describes the status of Joshua. He was appointed “to stand before” the people. Though he was to lead them into the land, and as such they should defer to him, he was to assume the

position of a servant to the nation. See Christ’s exhortation to the Apostles (Luke 22:26). He, himself, humbled himself as servant (Phil. 2:7), setting an example for all to follow.

“He shall go in thither” — Whilst the rebellious generation was to perish, and Moses was not permitted to enter Canaan, Yahweh did not turn from His covenant. He promised to bring the people to the inheritance which He had sworn to their fathers to give them through another leader, Joshua. This action typed His purpose of redemption, for Joshua is the Hebrew name for Jesus. The Law could not grant an eternal inheritance, and in order to fulfil the type Moses was not permitted to enter; but grace through Jesus is able to do so. Through him we can obtain forgiveness and an eternal inheritance. It is important to recognise the type in this incident.

“Encourage him; for he shall cause Israel to inherit it” — Faithful and courageous though Joshua was, he, like most great men would respond to encouragement. His arm would be strengthened for the work before him by the realisation that the people supported him. See how this message was passed on to the people by Moses (Num. 27:18-20; Deut. 3:28; 31:7,23). To “inherit” the land in the sense of this verse, is a contrast to “possessing” it as expressed in vv. 8,21. To “possess” implies wresting it from the Canaanites; to “inherit” suggests dividing it up among the tribes as places in which to dwell. The successful campaigns of Joshua enabled the Israelites to both possess and inherit the land promised.

VERSE 39

“Moreover, your little ones, which ye said would be a prey, and your children which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it” — When the spies returned with their faithless report, the Israelites decided against invading the land on the ground that their children, and their little ones, would be destroyed. See Num. 14:3,31. Now, “those little ones”, and “children”, had grown to maturity, and were about to enter, and occupy the land. They would, said Moses, possess it. They would successfully attack it under the leadership of Joshua: an accomplish-

ment that their fathers deemed to be utterly impossible.

VERSE 40

“But as for you, turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea” — see notes Num. 14:25. The Israelites were turned back into the wilderness over a period of thirty-eight years. This took them ultimately to the head of the Gulf of Aqaba, then northwards to the land of Moab. See Deut. 2:1.

The Folly of the People: They Try To Force God's Hand — vv. 41-46

Appalled at the prospect of wandering without hope in the arid and bitter wilderness, the people decide to defy God though claiming to obey Him. After discussing the matter amongst themselves, the next day they faced Moses with the proposition that they will, after, all invade the land. But their decision and action are dictated by fear of the wilderness, and not love of God.

VERSE 41

“Then ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned against Yahweh, we will go up and fight, according to all that Yahweh our God commanded us” — See note Num. 14:40. The people claimed that their decision was based upon the command of God, but they had shown complete lack of faith, and disrespect for Him. Their foolish attitude in now deciding to invade the land, irrespective as to whether Yahweh blessed the venture, illustrates the truth of Prov. 19:1: “Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool”. The people were now two-fold disobedient. Firstly, they had refused to enter the land as commanded by God; and secondly, they determined to enter it, when prohibited by Yahweh. Their confession of sin was useless in the face of their continued disobedience.

“When ye had girded on every man his weapons of war, ye were ready to go up into the hill” — The warriors girded on all the weapons of war except the ones most necessary: those of loving obedience and faithful submissiveness to Yahweh! Fleshly weapons are of little avail without His blessing; and that will not be granted unless those desiring it manifest obedience to His commands. It would have been far better for the Israelites to have

expressed repentance and forgiveness of their previous defiant attitude and words, and seek the guidance of Yahweh for the course they should adopt. Instead of that, they added defiance to defiance, to their ultimate failure, and the national disaster.

The A.V. renders them as saying “they were ready to go up into the hill,” that is the hill country of Southern Judea. The verb is from the Hebrew *hawn*, signifying to be “nought” or to be “light” (Dr. Strong). In other words, they now claimed that it would be a light thing for them to advance into the hill country of Judea, and conquer the territory! How contradictory flesh can become! This is exactly the opposite to what they said before, when the faithless spies claimed they could not take it. The invasion of the land would not have been an easy task then, nor would it be for the new generation. Given faith in Yahweh, and the Divine blessing, it would succeed. But the old generation of Israelites, had neither faith nor blessing.

VERSE 42

“And Yahweh said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies” — Moses warned the people, that if they invaded the country in defiance of God they would do so on their own responsibility, and at their own risk. They would receive no divine help or protection (See Num. 14:42; Lev. 26:14-17). The account in Numbers states that neither Moses nor the Ark followed the people in this unauthorised war (see Num. 14:44).

VERSE 43

“So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of Yahweh, and went presumptuously up into the hill” — The action of the Israelites was not motivated by faith, but in complete rebellion and disobedience of Yahweh (See Isa. 63:10; Acts 7:51). The literal Hebrew renders the latter portion of this verse: “you were presumptuous, and went up into the hill”.

VERSE 44

“And the Amorites which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you” — The Amorites were evidently the dominant nation in Canaan. In several places they are termed Canaanites, even though they only comprised a section of those in the Land. The account in Num. 14:45, mentions the

Amalekites joining the Canaanites, against the Israelites, whereas here they are described as Amorites. Evidently the Amorites, being the dominant tribe, represented the Canaanites as a whole.

“And chased you as bees do” — When bees are provoked, or disturbed, the whole swarm attacks and pursues with great courage and fury, whatever annoys them. Under such conditions they become a most formidable enemy. The description, therefore, is a most graphic illustration of what took place as far as the old generation was concerned. The Canaanites united as bees against the new generation also, but not successfully. As the narrative in Joshua shows, they did so first with the men of Jericho in opposing the Joshua's invasion; and afterwards by forming confederacies in the south, and in the north. However, all were overthrown by the Israelites.

“And destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah” — The word “Hormah” signifies to *seclude by a ban, to devote to destruction*. Accordingly, the name can signify *Ban-town, or Town of Destruction*. (See note Num. 14:45).

CHAPTER TWO

THIRTY EIGHT YEARS OF WANDERING

Moses turns from the description of the rebellion at Kadesh, and its tragic outcome to the period proceeding his oration. He makes only brief references to the long period of thirty-eight years spent in the wilderness, in the region of Kadesh. More particular reference is made to the dealings of the nation with Edom, Moab, and Amon. Israel is related to those nations by blood, and therefore their dealings with them are to be governed by such consideration. There is such a thing as the “brotherly covenant” (Amos 1:9), and when that is broken, Yahweh requires it of those doing so (Obad. 12). Therefore, even though Edom, Moab and Amon show bitterness towards Israel, the Israelites are not

VERSE 45

“And ye returned and wept before Yahweh” — The unauthorised army returned from its abortive attack on the Canaanites, and made its way to Kadesh, and the camp. The people mourned their misfortune, and complained unto Yahweh. They sought His help to open the way for a successful campaign. But in vain!!

“But Yahweh would not hearken to your voice, or give ear unto you” — Compare this silence on the part of Yahweh with the encouragement received by the new generation 38 years later (See Num. 21:3 and contrast Psa. 78:34-37).

VERSE 46

“So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according to the days that ye abode there” — See notes Num. 20:1,22. Evidently Kadesh in the northern sector of the Negev, became the national centre for Israel during the wilderness wanderings. Around that centre they wandered for the best part of 38 years, occasionally visiting the sanctuary. The period of time denoted by “many days” was the best part of 38 years.

to retaliate, except when openly attacked. They are not to provoke them, but avoid their lands. However, when the Amorities, then in occupation of some of these lands, attack Moses is forced to retaliate, and they are completely overwhelmed in spite of their fleshly prowess. The victories on the eastern side of Jordan, are well calculated to encourage the people to anticipate outstanding successes in the land once they pass over Jordan. This section of Moses' oration continues on into chapter three.

Israel Directed to the Land Via Arnon — vv. 1-3

The chapter commences thirty-eight years on from the previous one. Moses turns from the description of the rebellion at Kadesh, and its tragic outcome, to the period immediately preceding his oration. There is only brief reference to the long period of wilderness wandering adjacent to Kadesh. Particular reference is made to the dealings of the nation with Edom, Moab and Amon.

VERSE 1

“Then we turned” — Edom refused Israel passage through its territory, and so forced upon the nation a circuitous route to the Promised Land (see Num. 20:14-20).

“And took our journey into the wilderness, by the way of the Red Sea, as Yahweh spake unto me” — The children of Israel moved from Kadesh in a south-easterly direction towards the gulf of Aqaba, and then, as indicated in the wanderings listed in Num. 33, they returned to Kadesh.

“And we compassed Mt. Seir many days” — Mt. Seir is the geographical name for the nation of Edom, whose territory at that time extended west almost to Kadesh. The children of Israel skirted the western borders of Edom for thirty-eight years, returning again to Kadesh.

VERSE 2

“And Yahweh spake unto me saying” — After thirty-eight years, a new commandment was issued by Yahweh to Moses.

VERSE 3

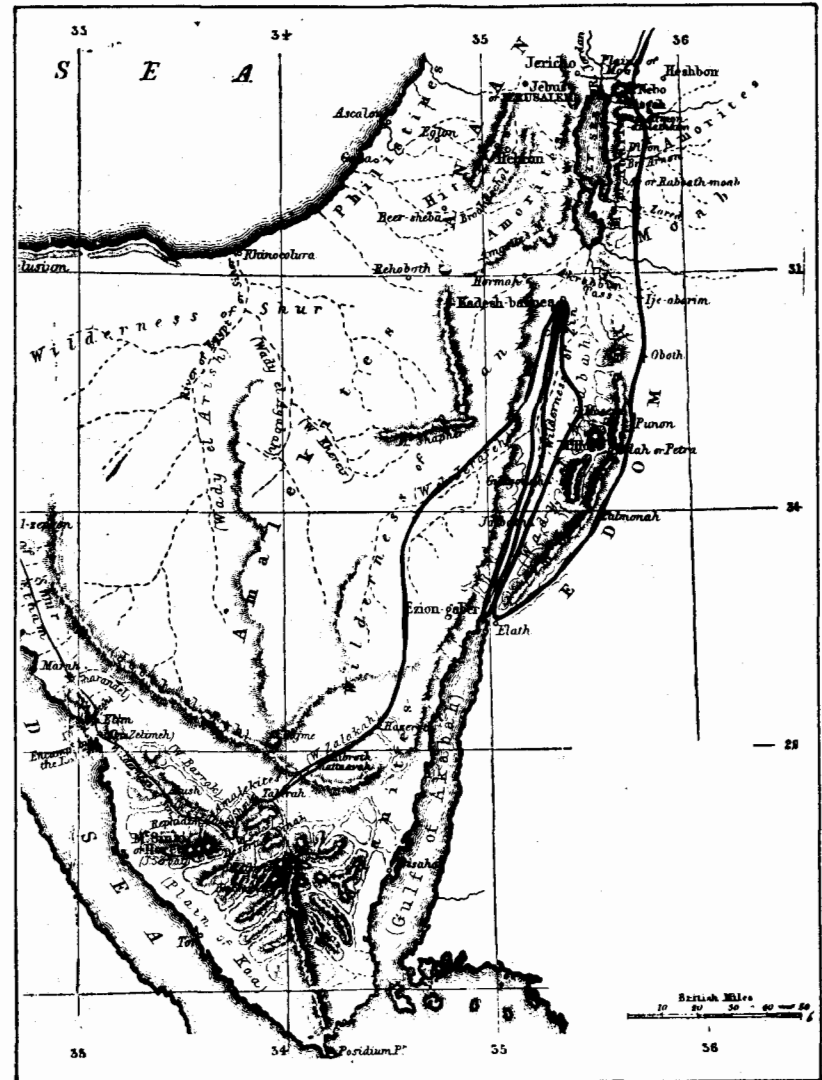
“Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward” — This instruction is similar to that given the people at Horeb. See Deut. 1:6. The new command brought to an end the aimless wandering of the children of Israel, and ordered them to commence a direct march to the Land of Promise.

Meddle Not With Edom — vv. 4-7

Though Edom is related to Israel, it is a quarrelsome, warlike nation. Though it refuses the Israelites a short-cut passage through its country Moses is warned not to attack it, or meddle with the people. Edom is identified with Esau, described as a “profane person” (Heb. 12:16). For the people of Israel to meddle with that which is profane is to court disaster in their spiritual walk to the Land of Promise. Yahweh “hates Esau” (Mal. 1:3), yet, because of the brotherly covenant, orders Israel to avoid conflict with the nation.

VERSE 4

“Command now the people saying, Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir” — The thirty-eight years of wandering had witnessed the death of Miriam, the sin of Moses, the death of Aaron, defeat at the hands of the Hormahites, a plague of serpents cured by the brazen serpent on a pole (See Num. chps. 20,21). Now the command is to move directly to the Land of Promise, skirting the borders of the Edomites. The Israelites were strictly forbidden to invade their country in a hostile manner; they were to watch over themselves, so as to avoid being provoked into making war with the Edomites,



Wandering of the Children of Israel in the desert for thirty-eight years. Note that they made their way to Kadesh twice: at the beginning and end of the wanderings.

who were their brethren. As, “their brethren”, they had to bear in mind “the brotherly covenant” (Amos 1:9). In this description of their journey, therefore, Moses was not concerned so much with the way itself, which was already recorded in the Book of Numbers, as their relation-

ships with the different nations among whom they were to pass. Some they were to avoid, some they are to attack. It is also important for the Israel of God today to recognise these different circumstances in their journey towards the Kingdom of God. There are things that they must con-

tend with, and things that they must ignore and pass by.

"And they shall be afraid of you" — The Edomites' fear of Israel created in them an inferiority complex that caused them to adopt a belligerent attitude and prepare for war (See Num. 20:18-20; Obad. 10). The Israelites, however, in obedience to Yahweh's command, kept to the outskirts of their country, and did not attempt to cross the border. Therefore, the Edomites did not attack them, or seek to hinder their progress.

"Take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore" — The Israelites were to watch over themselves, so as not to be incited to make war with the Edomites who were their brethren, now to enter into any friendly alliance with them.

VERSE 5

"Meddle not with them" — The Heb. word *Garah* rendered "meddle" signifies "to contend," and is so rendered in the R.V. In the A.V., it is also translated *hast striven* (Jer. 50:24) and *stirred up to battle* (Dan. 11:25). The verb signifies to be incited to war. They were to avoid this. In any case, true Israelites are not capable of fighting the sin power in their own strength, they must rely upon the help of Yahweh in faith.

"For I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth" — The Heb. is even more expressive; it renders this clause as "even to the treading of the sole of the foot". However, this statement is of a temporary nature. Israel will attain unto the land of Edom in the future. See Isa. 11:14; 63:1-5; Amos 9:12; Obad. 8.

"Because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession" — This interesting statement shows that Yahweh apportions the lot of nations in their particular inheritances. He determines "the bounds of their habitations". He decides how far a Napoleon or a Hitler may go; or what will be the extent of British or Russian possessions. "He rules in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (Dan. 4:17). See this fact expressed in the following places: Gen. 32:3; 36:8; Josh. 24:4; Deut. 32:8; Acts 17:26. Mount Seir was given to Esau. This is appropriate even to the significance of the names. "Seir" denotes *rough* or *hairy*, like Esau (Gen. 25:25). He was a "profane person," wayward and self-assertive as a goat. It is significant, therefore, that the word for

"goat" as found in Num. 28:22; 29:22,28,31 etc., is from a common root with that of Seir. The goat represented sin in the flesh, and Edom symbolised the sin power in political manifestation. No wonder Israel was commanded not to meddle with such!

"Mount Seir" as a geographical term seems to relate to the whole of the mountainous area extending south to Aqaba, and known as the Mountains of Edom.

VERSE 6

"Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink" — The first word "buy" is from the Heb. *shabar*, and signifies to "deal in grain" — being a denominative from the Heb. word *Sheber* — signifying "grain". The second word "buy" is a different word in Hebrew. It is *karah*, and is from a root signifying to *plan* — that is to purchase. Also to *bore* or *dig* hence to pay to dig wells. Previously, whilst at Kadesh, Moses had sent messengers to Edom, requesting that they might take a short cut to the Promised Land by traversing their territory; but the king had been hostile, and would not grant Israel permission. He feared the Israelites (Deut. 2:4), and prepared forcibly to resist them. See Num. 20:14-22. Faced with such belligerent opposition, Moses offered to buy food and drink, even paying for wells to be dug.

VERSE 7

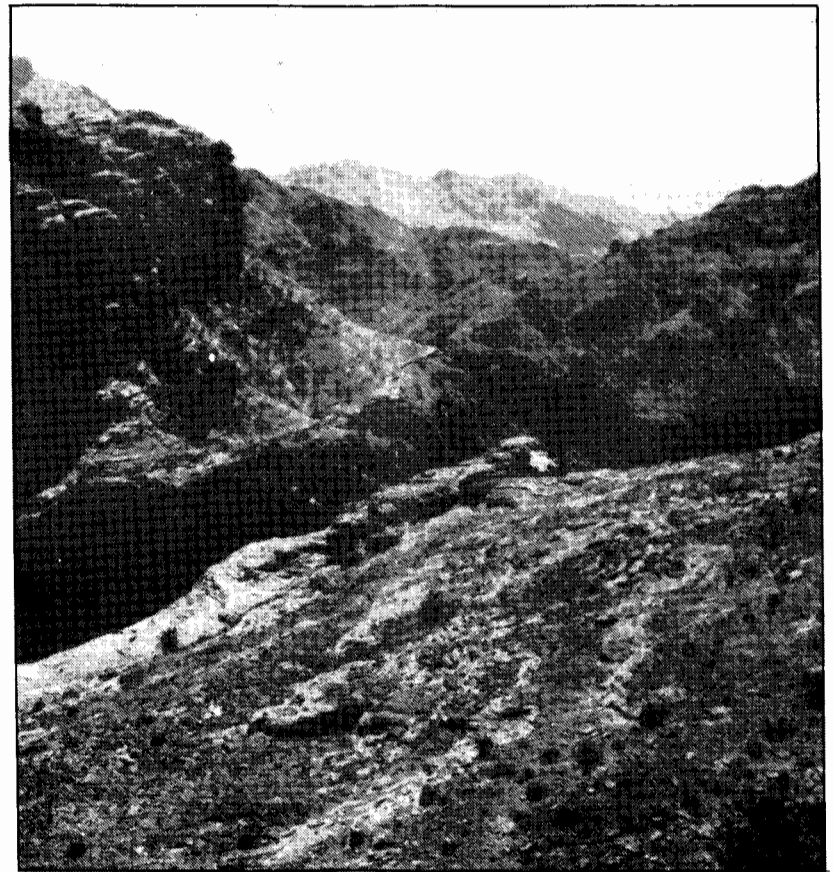
"For Yahweh thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand" — Yahweh had prospered the Israelites so that that they had the resources wherewith to pay.

"He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years Yahweh thy God hath been with thee thou hast lacked nothing" — Very difficult and bitter had been many of the experiences in the wilderness (Deut. 8:2-4; 29:5; Neh. 9:21) during that period of probation (Deut. 25:3). Yet, in spite of the aridness of the way, the Israelites had not lacked. They received their needs though not always their wants. Food, drink, clothing and shelter were provided them, whilst constantly Yahweh overshadowed their lives, providing effective protection against any hazards en route (Isa. 63:9). In fact, their very adversities were designed

for their help (see Deut. 8:1-5). In all circumstances, as this verse states, Yahweh was with them, as Yahweh Ra'ah — *I will be a Shepherd* (see Psa. 23:1; 78:52-53; 80:1). He had also manifested Himself as Yahweh Yireh, or *He who will be a Provider*. (For that title see the comments on Gen. 22:14; and cp. Neh. 9:21). The purpose of these sufferings, and the lessons they were intended to convey are clearly delineated in Deut. 8:2-4. As *Ra'ah* or *Shepherd* Yahweh led the people, and as *Yireh* or *Provider* He supplied them with the necessities of life so that they lacked nothing essential to their wellbeing.

However, their wanderings had taken

them through some of the most difficult areas on the face of the globe, and their sufferings had been acute. The first generation had succumbed to the pressures. Before we condemn them, however, let us bear in mind the great contrast of the conditions they had to endure to the affluence of the present age. Yahweh provided for their necessities, but not always their wants. Sometimes we find it difficult to discriminate between wants and necessities; and become confused as to which are what. David declared that he had "never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psa. 37:25). It is our wisdom to carefully discern between wants



Seir signifies *rough*. The title is descriptive of the area of which Petra (above) is a typical example.

and needs, and to be restrained in an inordinant seeking of the former whilst being content in obtaining the latter. Further, let us also be restrained in our criticism of Israel, bearing in mind the harshness and aridness of the dusty and waterless wilderness, they had to traverse.

VERSE 8

“And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau which dwell in Seir” — In obedience to the command of Yahweh, the children of Israel bypassed the country of Edom, moving around its borders (see Jud. 11:18). They were warned against meddling with Edom, because of their evil example; and of attacking them because of their relationship. They are described as “our brethren, the children of Esau”. That relationship protected the Edomites in measure, but when they “despised the brotherly covenant”, their ultimate national punishment was decreed. See Obad. 10.

“Through the way of the plain” — The word plain is *Arabah* and relates to the deep and long depression that extends from the sea of Galilee in the north, through to the Gulf of Aqaba, and onwards to north Africa. The children of Israel bypassed the Arabah, first moving south down its western side to Elat and Ezion-geber, and then north on its eastern side, skirting the borders of Edom and Moab, until they reached the valley of Shittim east of the Jordan.

“From Elath and from Ezion-geber, we turned and passed by the wilderness of Moab” — This traces the journey of the children of Israel as they moved from the western side of the Arabah to its eastern side. Elath and Ezion-Geber are both on the northern tip of the Gulf of Elath, or as it is sometimes called, the Gulf of Aqaba. From Kadesh, the children of Israel moved down to the north tip of the Gulf, and then northward on the western side of the Arabah to the Jordan.

Distress Not Moab — vv. 9-12

The children of Israel are warned against interfering with the people of Moab, on the grounds that their inheritance is God-given. Their relationship brings them within the terms of the brotherly covenant, and therefore they must not be molested.

VERSE 9

“And Yahweh said unto me, Distress

not the Moabites” — This command illustrates the different character of this new generation of Israelites. No longer cowardly, they are restrained from belligerency. The Moabites were the descendants of Lot (Gen. 19:37), and therefore closely related to Israel. See notes above on the Edomites.

“Neither contend with them in battle” — These instructions were followed. See Num. 21:13-15; and Jephthah’s comments regarding the action taken by the Israelites (Jud. 11:18-21).

“For I will not give thee of their land for a possession” — The area given to Moab was a country diversified, with hill and plain. South of the Arnon, it is cut up by steep hills and deep valleys, but north of the river the country is an elevated plateau, very pleasant, and fertile, though neglect subsequently brought desolation to it (see Zeph. 2:9). Archaeologists have excavated many ruins demonstrating the strength of its ancient cities and the extent of the population. When the people of Israel emerged from out of the desert, into this more fertile area, they rejoiced at the prosperity they saw. To them it was a token of that which they would receive in the Land of Promise (Num. 21:16-20).

“Because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession” — The word “Ar” signifies a City. The capital of Moab was given that title (See Num. 21:15). The site has not been completely identified.

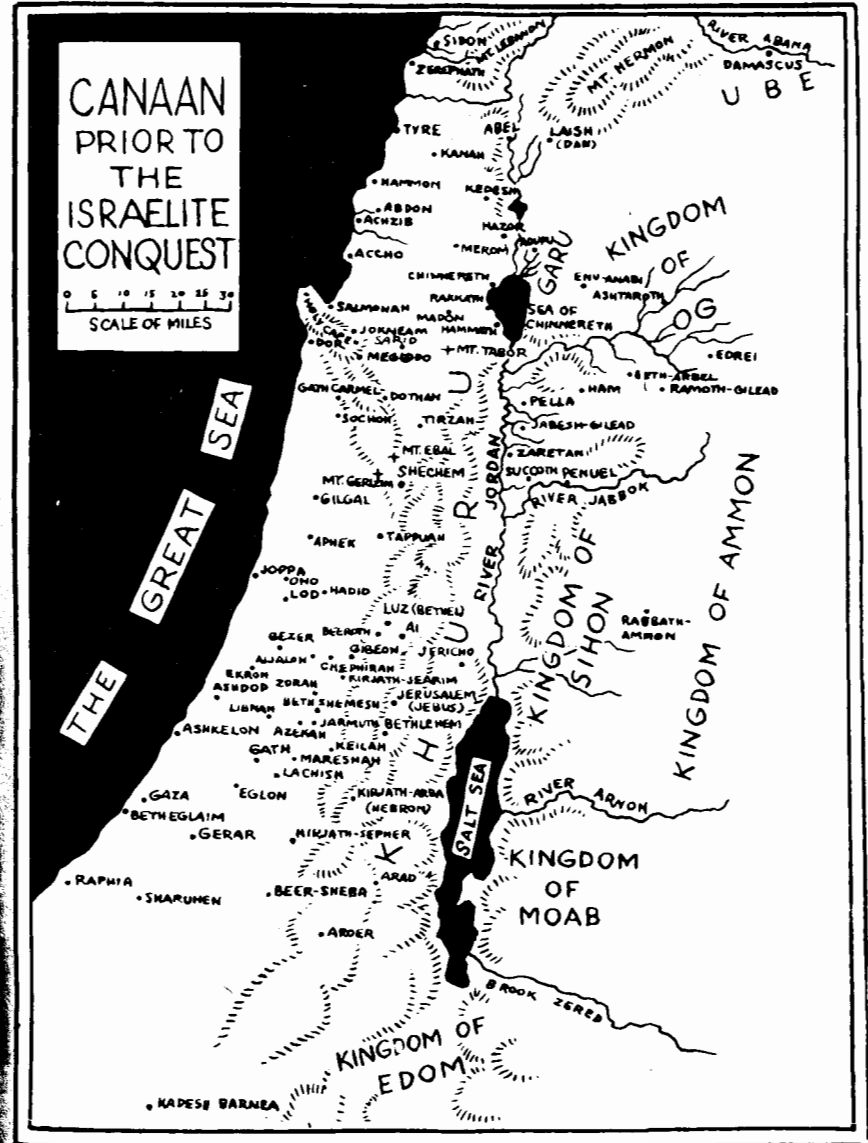
VERSE 10

“The Elims dwelt therein in times past, a people great, and many and tall, as the Anakims” — Reference to the Emims is found in Gen. 14:5. For the significance of the title *Anakims* see notes on Num. 13:22. All the nations mentioned in vv. 10-12, appear to have been of the posterity of Ham, who lay under the prophetic curse of Noah. The curse on them was thus executed by the Moabites and the Edomites who drove them from their original territory, and occupied it in fulfillment of the purpose and promise of Yahweh. Archaeologists, in excavating the ruins of the cities in this area, speak of the splendid physique of the original inhabitants. They make reference to the “giant cities” in the area: “the houses and towns appear to be such just dwellings as a race of giants would build”. The term “Emim” signifies *terrible or frightful ones*. They were a type of people calculated to inspire fear in their

opponents. The fact that they had been conquered by the Edomites and Moabites implied the outstanding prowess in war of the latter nations.

VERSE 11

“Which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims; but the Moabites called



them Emims” — It was the presence of the Anakims 38 years previously that had deterred the previous generation of Israelites from entering the land. See Deut. 1:28. That these formidable antagonists had been driven from the land, implied the strength of their conquerors. Now those same conquerors manifested a fear of the Israelites, giving the latter confidence that they would be successful in occupying the land. If Yahweh was with them, no enemy could succeed in destroying them.

VERSE 12

“The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime” — The word “Horim” is derived from the Heb. word for *cave*, and denotes a *cave dweller*. They appear to have been the original inhabitants of the land. See Gen. 14:6. The Edomite range, including the marvellous rock city of Petra, abounds in caves that were used as dwelling places. Even today, this is the case, and many of the cave-dwelling inhabitants claim they are descended from the ancient Nabateans.

“But the children of Esau succeeded them, when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead” — Instead of “succeeded”, the Heb. has *inherited* them. When Esau lost the promise of the birthright, he moved over the river Jordan, and occupied the area of Seir, driving out the Horites. So the area became known as the country of Edom.

“As Israel did unto the land of his possession, which Yahweh gave unto them” — This statement is sometimes used to prove that Moses did not write Deuteronomy, for the Land of Promise was not occupied by the Israelites until after his death. The reference, however, is not to the occupation of the land west of the Jordan, but that to its east: the ancient territory of Sihon and Og, which Moses conquered before his death.

The Last of the Old Generation Dies at Zered — vv. 13-15

The children of Israel move north along the eastern border of Edom until they come to the book Zered. Here they pause until the last of the old generation dies. Following that sad event Moses orders the tribes to again move north. Zered marks the termination of the 38 years of wandering.

VERSE 13

“Now rise up, said I” — Moses’ command implies that there had been a pause at Zered, evidently while the remaining few of the old generation died (v. 14). This spot, therefore, was the site of a very traumatic experience for the new generation, as the people waited for this sad event to take place.

“And get you over the brook Zered” — Zered signifies *exuberant growth*. The Israelites had arrived at the valley of exuberant growth, where they saw evidence of greater fertility. Though the brook commences in desert, it ultimately flows through a very lovely and fertile valley, a token to the children of Israel of the prosperity to come. However, it was probably towards the eastern extremities of the brook, where it disappears into the sand of the desert that the Israelites crossed over, for they followed the eastern border of Moab until they came to the Arnon along the course of which they moved west.

“And he went over the brook Zered” — The last of the old generation having died, the new generation that passed over the brook Zered, could look forward in hope to their inheritance in the Land. The brook formed the boundary line between northern Edom and southern Moab, and was the limit of Israel’s wanderings in the wilderness. From there onwards the condition of the country improved.

VERSE 14

“And the space in which we came from Kadesh-Barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years” — Instead of the word “space” the R. V. has *days*. This brook marked the termination of the wilderness wanderings. The thirty-eight years of helplessness seem to be typed by the impotent man who waited thirty-eight years by the water of Bethesda because he had nobody to help him (Jhn. 5:5). This was the third of the miracles recorded by John as signs of Christ’s labours. He, alone, is capable of strengthening Israel in its impotence. Without Yahweh, Israel is impotent indeed!

“Until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as Yahweh swore unto them” — The reference is to those from 20 years old and upwards (Num. 1:3; 14:29). They, as responsible transgressors, all perished; an

entire generation was consumed (Deut. 1:34-35; Num. 14:33-35; Psa. 78:33; 95:11), as Yahweh had sworn (Num. 14:28-29).

VERSE 15

“For indeed the hand of Yahweh was against them, to destroy them from among the host, until they were consumed” — The rebels died not only by natural means, but by Divine Judgment. Some were swallowed up of earthquake (Num. 16:31), some died by serpent-bite (Num. 21:6), and so forth.

The Heb. word translated “host”, in this verse is *Machaneh*, and signifies an *encampment*. The R. V. has “to destroy them from among the camp until they were consumed”. The destruction was not limited to the army, but extended to all classes within the nation.

Ammon Not To Be Molested — vv. 16-23

As the descendants of Lot (Gen. 19:38), and therefore related to Israel, the Ammonites are to be given preferential treatment in accordance with that granted Edom and Moab. But as they despised this relationship the immunity is withdrawn.

VERSE 16

“And so it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people” — The generation that sinned, having perished, the nation could move confidently forward to the Land of Promise.

VERSE 17

“That Yahweh spake unto me, saying” — New instructions were now about to be given to the purified generation.

VERSE 18

“Thou art to pass over through Ar, the coast of Moab, this day” — Young renders “coast” as *borders*. At that time, due to the annexation of part of Moab by Sihon, King of the Amorites, the borders of Moab only reached to the river Arnon (See Num. 21:13-15; 22:36). The capital of Moab was known as Ar, or *The City*, as in Num. 22:6. This city was situated on the border of Arnon (See Num. 21:15; 22:36). The instructions of Moses in this verse, suggest that the Israelites had skirted the eastern border of the land of Moab in their progress northwards, until they came to the eastern extremities of the River Arnon

where they turned west and moving along its course traversed the existing northern border of Moab. At that time, this deep and wide ravine formed a barrier-border between Moab and the Amorites. The Amorites attacked the Israelites, but were decisively and miraculously defeated. Sihon, noted for his skill in war, was dramatically overthrown, a victory that had a profound effect upon the enemies of Israel (Josh. 2:9-10). Reference to this outstanding victory is given in Num. 21:14-15.

VERSE 19

“And when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them” — The Ammonites, not to be confused with the Amorites, occupied the land east of the Jordan, to the north of Moab. The Israelites approached their borders after occupying the territory of Sihon (See Num. 21:24). Because of their relationship to Israel, the people are warned against distressing them, or meddling with them. This was a wise provision, as the spiritual, political and material wellbeing of Israel depended upon the nation maintaining the standard of conduct which had been set them by Moses in his covenant Law. Any close associations with the Ammonites would put that under risk. The Ammonites were related to the Israelites, but the latter were warned to keep away from their relations because they did not respect the laws and teaching of Yahweh. The instructions given the children of Israel in that regard, is wise guidance for the Israel of God in any age.

“For I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession” — It is significant that the Ammonites, as with the Moabites, were also children of Lot. The circumstances are recorded in Gen. 19:38. The daughters of Lot entered into an incestuous union with their father, in order that they might bear children. They probably did not view their action as perversion, for it had become common practice in the evil cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Use of the title *children of Lot* for the Ammonites and Moabites, implies the character of the people. They were people who knew the truth, but did not act upon it. They dwelt on the border of the Land of Promise, but did not identify themselves with the Israel of God. There are many

such among the acquaintances of the Sons of God in every age, and the instructions here given to the children of Israel, comprise wise guidance for the people of God at any time.

From the first mention of these brother-tribes in Genesis, until they disappear from Biblical history, they are joined together (See Jud. 10:6; 2 Chron. 20:1; Zeph. 2:8; etc.). They combined together to hire Balaam to curse the people of God (Deut. 23:3-4). In answering the King of Ammon, Jephthah alluded constantly to Moab, linking the two nations together (Jud. 11:15,14,25). The god Chemosh, which was the main god of Moab (Num. 21:29), is called "thy god" by Jephthah when speaking to the King of Ammon (Jud. 11:24). The land from Arnon to Jab-bok, which the King of Ammon calls "my land" when contesting the issue with Jephthah (see Jud. 11:13), is elsewhere described as once belonging to Moab (Num. 21:26). On the other hand, only one city of Ammon (Rabbah) is mentioned. Of the two tribes descended from Lot, the Ammonites seem to have been fiercer, more predatory, and bedouin in attitude and habits (see 1 Sam. 11:2; Amos 1:13); whilst the Moabites more settled and civilised. Thus the fierce god of Ammon (Molech) dwelt in a tent (Amos 5:26), whereas Chemosh had a temple.

How wise that Israel should keep separate from such people, even though they were linked by ties of blood.

VERSE 20

"That also was accounted a land of giants: giants dwelt therein in old time; and the Ammonites call them Zamzumims" — The A. V. places verses 20-23 in parenthesis. The inclusion of these descriptive words, is designed to emphasise the warlike ability of the Ammonites and Moabites in overthrowing such formidable foes, and occupying the land in which they once dwelt. The fact that Sihon had since conquered parts of their territory argued the skill of his prowess in war and the strength of his billigerent ability. The Moabites and Ammonites dwelt in the land once occupied by giants. All the nations mentioned in this parenthesis (vv. 20-23) appear to have been of the posterity of Ham, who lay under the prophetic curse of Noah. In defeating these giants, the Moabites and Ammonites had executed the terms of the curse; and in fulfil-

ling Yahweh's will and purpose had been granted their land as a reward. Because of that, the Israelites were not to attempt to wrest it from them. Nevertheless, Israel was permitted to defend itself if attacked, and when the Moabites and Ammonites did so, they rightly retaliated and occupied the territory thus won.

The word translated "giants" in the verse before us, is *nephilim* in the Hebrew, and is found in Gen. 6:4. The word relates not merely to giants in size, but also in crime and wickedness; and therefore deserving Yahweh's punishment. Archaeologists confirm the description here given by Moses of the dwellers in this land. They make reference to the strength of the cities that they have uncovered, and the powerful fortifications that enclosed them. In his work *The Giant Cities of Bashan*, J. L. Porter comments: "The houses of Cheriath and other towns of Bashan appear to be such dwellings as a race of giants would build. The walls, the roofs, but especially the ponderous gates, doors and bars are in every way characteristic of a period when architecture was in its infancy, when giants were masons, and when strength and security were the grand requisites. I measured a door in Cheriath; it was 9 feet (2.7m) high and 4½ feet (1.3m) wide, and 10 inches (25cm) thick — one solid slab of stone. I saw the folding gates of another town still larger and heavier. Time produces little effect on such buildings as these . . . there can scarcely be a doubt, therefore, that these are the very cities erected and inhabited by the Nephilim, the aboriginal occupants of Bashan."

VERSE 21

"A people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims" — See note v. 10.

"But Yahweh destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead" — The destruction of the Anakims was a work of Yahweh, partly fulfilling the curse pronounced upon the descendants of Ham (Gen. 9:25). It illustrated His power to overthrow the strongest of nations, and give their territory to others. He had permitted the Ammonites to succeed the Anakims, demonstrating that He had the power to do the same for his own people. Therefore the terror shown by the spies at the fleshly strength of the inhabitants of the land was quite unwarranted (cp. Num. 13:28).

VERSE 22

"And he did to the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir" — Dr. Young translates "to" as *for*. What Yahweh did for the Edomites, he would certainly do for His own people if they were obedient to His command. These incidents of history are recalled by Moses to encourage the Israelites in their impending attack upon the land.

"When he destroyed the Horims from before them" — See reference to the Horim in v. 12.

"And they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead, even unto this day" — The day referred to was that on which Moses spake to the people. See Deut. 1:3.

VERSE 23

"And the Avims which dwelt in Hazerim" — The word "Avims" is from a root denoting *wickedness* (see *Strong's Concordance*). This, doubtless, denoted to their character, for which reason they were probably driven out of the land they once held. The word *Hazerim* is the Hebrew word for *villages*, and is rendered by the R.V. in that way. "The Avim which dwelt in villages" would therefore be a better rendition of this statement.

"Even unto Azzah" — The word *Azzah* is the Hebrew form of Gaza which signifies *strong*. The Avims evidently occupied the coastal plains of Palestine, and were driven therefrom by the Philistines because of their wickedness.

"The Capthorims which came forth from out of Capthor, destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead" — The Capthorim were the original Philistines. See the reference to them in Jer. 47:4; Amos 9:7. In the verse before us they are represented as issuing forth out of Capthor, and after driving the Avim from the coastal plains of Palestine, occupying their territory as far north as Gaza. In Gen. 10:14 they are connected with Egypt (*Mizraim*). There was a place in the Egyptian Delta called Kapethor, and some identify this Capthor with that site. But, generally, Capthor is identified with Crete. The word means "wreath shapes" according to *Strong's Concordance*, perhaps a reference to the shape of the island. Kitto quotes Herodotus to show that the Philistines dwelt in Egypt as shepherds, and he identifies them with Hyksos, or shepherd kings who were driven from Egypt and settled in Palestine. He gives the word "Philistine" as signifying

shepherds. Strong gives the meaning as *migratory*, and therefore "Palestine" as signifying *shepherd land* or *Land of the Wanderers*. The Hebrew for sheep is *isone*, signifies "to migrate" or "wander", so that the name Palestine, is appropriate to the people. This link between Crete, Egypt and the Philistine is supported by archaeology. For example, the Beehive Tombs of Mycenae, have similarities in architecture to some buildings of Egypt, and as the Cretians at one time set up their power in Mycenae, a link was established between the Philistines of Crete and Egypt. They evidently borrowed some of their architectural patterns from Egypt and exported them to Crete and Mycenae. This verse, therefore, traces the migration of the Philistines from Crete to Egypt, and then north along the coastal plains of Palestine.

VERSE 24

"Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon" — The children of Israel had moved over the brook Zered, and skirted the eastern border of the territory of the Moabites. At that time, due to the depredations of Sihon, the northern border of Moab was limited by the river Arnon. Accordingly, having reached that part, the Israelites turned West, and followed the course of the river. See notes on Num. 21:13-14. The victory of the Arnon is one of the most spectacular in the history of the ancient Israelites. They scaled the steep high banks of the river, that provides access to the beautiful plateau of Moab, then dominated by Sihon, and won an outstanding, and miraculous victory over that formidable foe.

"Behold I have given into thy hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land" — Moses first sent a message of peace to Sihon which he spurned (Num. 21:21-23). This was in accordance with the instructions given by Yahweh as to how the Israelites should wage their wars (See Deut. 20:10-12). The result was a remarkable triumph for Moses and Israel. Reference is made to it in this place to remind the people that if He be for them in the conquest of the Land, the most powerful enemies will be unable to resist them. See Paul's encouraging words to the believers in Rome (Rom. 8:31). The most insidious and powerful enemy, which must be ruthlessly resisted in order to conquer, is the flesh itself, typed by the Amorites.



The waters of the River Arnon which flow into the Dead Sea formed the border between Moab and the Amorites in the days of Moses. They cut a deep canyon into the highlands east of the Sea, the cliffs of which rise some 1600 feet above the river. Moses won a remarkable victory over the forces of Sihon at this point, scaling the steep cliffs, and putting to rout the skilled warriors of the Amorites. The illustration above depicts the ruins of a solitary Moabite frontier fortress. See Deut. 2:24.

“Begin to possess it” — The Hebrew is more expressive. It renders the statement *“Begin, possess it!”* In these words Moses instructed the people to mentally arm themselves for the war, which the assurance that they would be victorious, and would assuredly possess the land. It is interesting to note that the word *begin* occurs three times in this chapter. This verse announces the *beginning of war*; v. 25 describes the *beginning of fear* as felt by the Canaanites; v. 31 invites the Israelites to *“begin” to possess* the land. However, Israel never at any stage occupied the full extent of the territory promised it. The full borders of the Promised Land are outlined in Gen. 15:18, and will extend from the Nile to the Euphrates in the North. This territory will not be fully occupied till the millennium.

“And contend with him in battle” — Yahweh declared war on Sihon, and inspired the people with the conviction that they could succeed despite the formidable

difficulties. The previous generation had believed that the conquest of the land was beyond them. There is assurance given to this new generation, that it will be able to conquer. See further assurance in Deut. 11:25.

VERSE 25

“This day will I begin to put the dread of thee, and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee” — Instead of the Israelites being weakened by fear as was the case with the previous generation, this fear would now rest upon the Gentiles whom they are to attack. This would fulfil the prophetic promise of Exod. 15:14-15. Yahweh had promised Moses that Israel’s enemies would be enfeebled by fear if the people were strong in faith. Faith is the key to victory in all such battles. It can enable God’s people to rise above every difficulty, and level every obstacle. *“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith”* (1 John 5:4). The previous generation of Israelites lacked faith, and therefore failed to overcome. Paul wrote: *“So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief”* (Heb. 3:19). The word *“unbelief”* is better rendered *lack of faith*. It was lack of faith that defeated the previous generation of Israelites, and the manifestation of faith which would gain for the present one the victory promised by Yahweh. Indeed, the report of Israel’s dramatic victories swept the land of Canaan before the people passed over the river. When the spies entered Jericho, they heard from the lips of Rahab that the city was fearful at the coming onslaught. She commented: *“Your terror is fallen upon us, and all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you”* (Josh. 2:9).

Victory Over Sihon Provides Assurance of Further Success In the Land — vv. 26-37

Sihon rejecting Moses’ offer of peace belligerently marches against the Israelites and occupies a formidably strong position on the northern side of the Arnon. In spite of the strength of his forces the Israelitish army completely discomferts him, occupies his towns, and completely overthrows his power. The Israelites are enriched by the spoil of sheep and cattle, and by virtue of conquest, occupy the whole of Sihon’s territory, even though it is not orig-

inally included in the allocation of land to be given to them.

VERSE 26

“And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth unto Sihon King of Heshbon with words of peace saying” — The word *“Kedemoth”* signifies *beginnings*. It witnessed the beginning of victory for the Israelites. The wilderness of Kedemoth received its name from the town of Kedemoth, an old Amorite town, on the right bank of the upper Arnon. At a later period, it was appointed a Levitical city of the tribe of Reuben (Josh. 21:37; 1 Chron. 6:79). The name is from the Heb. *Kedem*, signifying *“the east”*, and denotes the *“eastern parts”*, so implying that it was situated on the eastern boundary of the Amorite region. The desert named from it, therefore, must have bordered the great Arabian desert. Unger claims that it was on the eastern border of the Amorite territory, on the bank of the upper Arnon. According to him, Kedemoth signifies *eastern most parts*. The wilderness extended east of the town.

From here Moses sent an offer of peace to Sihon as required by the Law (Deut. 20:10), but it was spurned. Moses’ negotiations illustrates the words of Psa. 120:7: *“I am for peace, but when I speak, thy are for war”*.

VERSE 27

“Let me pass through thy land” — See ref. to this in Num. 21:21-22; Judg. 11:19.

“I will go along by the highway, I will neither turn unto the right hand or to the left” — Moses offered to move north in accordance with the commands of Yahweh without molesting the Amorites, or occupying their territory. The highway referred to was the Kings highway. See Num. 20:17; 21:22.

The term *“highway”* in Hebrew is *derek derek*. Literally rendered this would be; *“the way the way”*. The repetition is for emphasis. Moses promised the Amorites that Israel would not march through their land *en mass*, trampling down the foliage of the area, but would proceed along the made roads in an orderly fashion without deviation. The Kings’ highway (see Num. 20:17-21:22) stretched north from Eziongeber at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba through Transjordan. It was so named because it was the route taken by the invading Kings described in Genesis 14.

VERSE 28

“Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat; and water for money that I may drink; only I will pass through on my feet” — Moses’ approach to the kings on the eastern side of Jordan was according to Yahweh’s command. See v. 6. Num. 20:17-19.

VERSE 29

“As the children of Esau which dwell in Seir, and the Moabites which dwell in Ar, did unto me;” — The Edomites, or Children of Esau evidently sold these provisions to Israel in fear (Num. 20:18-21). The Moabites apparently did so also under the same compulsion (see Deut. 23:3-4). Ar was situated adjacent to the Arnon, so that the people of that city (then the capital of Moab) would have witnessed the strength of the Israelitish advance. The Israelites had compassed the land, without trespassing upon it, or molesting the people (see Jud. 11:18).

“Until I shall pass over Jordan into the land which Yahweh our God giveth us” — As the first statement of this verse is in parenthesis, these words should link up with the conclusion of verse 28. It was part of the message that Moses delivered unto Sihon.

VERSE 30

“But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him; for Yahweh thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day” — Sihon, of his own will, stubbornly refused to allow Israel passage. Yahweh hardened his heart only by controlling the circumstances. He did so, by permitting him to develop the military power he then possessed. His pride was elevated to the point that he refused the reasonable request of the Israelites. Moses described Sihon’s action by repeating the statement earlier made concerning Pharaoh, when his heart was hardened, by Yahweh withdrawing the plagues. (See Exod. 9:34-35; 1 Sam. 6:6). Yahweh tolerated the stubbornness of Pharaoh that His signs and wonders might be multiplied in the land of Egypt (Exod. 7:3). In like manner, the victory of Moses over Sihon demonstrated to the Canaanites that Israel had access to a Power that would enable them to conquer the land in spite of the numerical might of their enemies.

VERSE 31

"And Yahweh saith unto me, Behold I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee; begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land" — This verse illustrates the promise of v. 24. The words "inherit" and "possess" in this verse are the same word in the Hebrew.

VERSE 32

"Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz" — Jahaz lay north of the river Arnon, situated between Medeba and Dibon. The name signifies *trodden under foot*. This became the fate of Sihon's forces. Later the town was assigned to Reuben (Josh. 13:18), and to the Levites (Josh. 21:36). See also Num. 21:23-30; Judg. 11:19-23.

VERSE 33

"And Yahweh our God delivered him before us; we smote him, and his sons, and all his people" — See Deut. 29:7; Num. 21:24.

VERSE 34

"And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we let none to remain" — The term "utterly destroyed" literally means *to place under a ban*, as in Lev. 27:28-29 and, therefore, implies their destruction. The reason is given in Gen. 15:16, which predicts the iniquity of the Amorites coming to its full. That had taken place; and the utter depravity and moral wickedness of the Amorites fully deserved such a fate. The term "men" in this place is *mathim*, which denotes adults. See Job 11:3; 24:12. The verse can be rendered: "every inhabited city, including the women and children." The reason for this wholesale destruction is given in Num. 33:55: "If ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come to pass that these that you let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell". The people of Israel had to maintain their separateness from the nations round about, otherwise they would be morally polluted. Their experience with the Midianitish women revealed how susceptible human nature is to such influences, and the need to be constantly on guard. The Amorites could not be converted, and therefore had to be destroyed. They typed the flesh in its worst aspect.

VERSE 35

"Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we took" — For the law governing the acquiring and apportioning of such prey, see Num. 31:25-54. The war was extended throughout the territory of the Amorites on the eastern side of the Jordan, until all was brought under the control of the Israelites.

VERSE 36

"From Aroer, which is by the brink of the river Arnon" — Reference to this area is found in Deut. 3:12. The word Aroer, signifies *Naked*. The people had no adequate means to effectively resist, for God was with His people. Reference to the deep ravine through which Arnon runs is made in our notes on Num. 21:13. The word signifies *Murmuring*. It formed the northern border of Moab, and the southern border of Sihon's territory at the time that Moses moved through the land.

"And from the city that is by the river" — The word city is *Ar* in Hebrew. It was situated in the valley of the Arnon, and constituted the capital of Moab. See reference and notes on Num. 21:15.

"Even unto Gilead" — Sihon's territory extended north to Gilead. The word signifies *heap of witness*, as indicated in Gen. 31:47-48.

"There was not one city too strong for us; Yahweh our God delivered all unto us" — Despite the strength of the giant cities of the north, they were breached and captured by Israel, for Yahweh fought with His people. For Israel's rejoicing at Yahweh's help see Psa. 136:18-23.

VERSE 37

"Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not, nor unto any place of the river Jabbok" — The Ammonitish border formed the eastern border of the Ammorites. Israel was commanded to abstain from attacking the Ammonites (see v. 19). The reference to the river Jabbok relates to the upper Jabbok on the eastern side of which the Ammonites dwelt. See further comment in Josh. 12:2.

"Nor unto the cities of the mountain, nor unto whatsoever Yahweh our God forbade us" — The reference is to the Ammonitish highlands (Josh. 13:25). In their conquest of this part of the land, this new

generation of Israelites strictly followed the instructions given them of Yahweh. See vv. 5,9,19. Portion of Ammonitish territory taken was afterwards assigned to Gad, but it comprised land between the Arnon and the Jabbok that had previously

been taken from the Ammonites by the Amorites. In overthrowing the Amorites, Israel occupied all the territory previously governed by them, even though previously it belonged to Moab or Ammon against whom they did not now fight.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONQUEST OF FURTHER LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN

This chapter first outlines the defeat of Og, then the distribution of his territory. It closes with Moses' appeal to Yahweh to be permitted to enter the Land of Promises, now that it was in sight of those who are to possess it; a request that is refused. Israel's conquest of its enemies on the eastern side of Jordan reveal that similar victories await it in the west, for "if God be for us who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). The key thought of this chapter, therefore, is that of Conquest: "Ye shall not fear; for Yahweh your God He shall fight for you" (v. 22). Yahweh's greatness has already been manifest, providing assurance that His servants can rely upon Him with every confidence (v. 24). Though Yahweh rejects Moses' request, He does, at least, give him a glimpse of the Land, portion of which he will one day inherit with eternal life. Let us bear in mind that if Yahweh does not by His providence give us what we desire, He can, by His grace in Jesus Christ, make us content with what we have received, in anticipation of what we will obtain in the future age. See Col. 4:11-12.

Further Victory Over Og — vv. 1-11

Og, a powerful ally of Sihon, resident in the north, and protected by sixty strong fortresses comes to the aid of his neighbour and attacks Israel. He suffers a like fate to

that of Sihon. Despite the skill of his army, and the strength of his many fortresses he is completely defeated, his fortresses overwhelmed, and his followers put to the sword like those of Sihon. However, this

attack of Og forces Moses to make a diversion into the northern parts of the land through the area of Bashan. After completing the conquest, he leads his people back to the plains of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho. References to this remarkable victory over Og are frequent throughout the Word. See Num. 21:32-35; 32:32-33; Deut. 1:4; 4:47; 29:7; 31:4; Josh. 2:10; 9:10; 12:4-5; 13:1-31; Jud. 11:19-21; 1 Kings 4:19; Neh. 9:22; Psa. 135:11; 136:19; Amos 2:9.

VERSE 1

"Then we turned and went up the way to Bashan" — This implies a peaceful survey of the land. Bashan (one of the meanings is given as *fertile*; Gesenius gives it as *soft soil*), is one of the most fertile districts of the Holy Land. The scenery of this elevated plateau is extremely beautiful. The plains are covered with rich soil, its hills are clothed with forests, and at every new turn there is presented the most beautiful landscapes imaginable. A portion of Bashan is familiar to the modern world as the Golan Heights.

"And Og the King of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Endrei" — Without any provocation, Og adopted a belligerent attitude, and marched against Israel. The two armies met at Endrei. The word signifies *"strong"*. The town was noted for the strength of its fortifications, so that normally it would have been beyond the ability of the Israelites to take it. So outstanding was Moses' victory that it, like that over Sihon, was recalled for centuries (Amos 2:9). These conquests revealed that Yahweh was with Israel, and were evidences of His mercy towards them (Psa. 136:19-20). Endrei was one of Og's two capitals, the other being Ashteroth (Deut. 1:4; Josh. 12:4-5). They jointly dominated sixty fortresses established throughout the area, and which are referred to in subsequent verses of this chapter.

VERSE 2

"And Yahweh said unto me "Fear him not; for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon, king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon" — The words of Yahweh to Moses evidently were in answer to a prayer for help on his part. The exhortation to *fear not!* is constant throughout the book of Deuteronomy (cp. Ch. 1:21). It

was given added force by the recent conquest of Sihon, which would have encouraged the people regarding the outcome of the impending battle with Og. Having tasted the fruits of victory through the help of Yahweh, they would have the confidence to go forward in faith.

VERSE 3

"So Yahweh our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people; and we smote him till none was left to him remaining" — All Og's family was destroyed, and the Amorites devoted to ultimate destruction (cp. v. 6). This partially fulfilled the requirements and promise of Gen. 15:16 and Exod. 34:11.

VERSE 4

"And we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them" — See Num. 32:33; Josh. 12:4; 13:30-31.

"Threescore cities" — It is said that the ruins of some of these cities remain to this day. The number 60 is figurative for the flesh in multitudinous manifestation. In his book *The Giant Cities of Bashan*, W. Porter writes:

"The 60 walled cities are still traceable in the space of 308 sq. miles. The architecture is ponderous and massive, with solid walls 4 feet (1m) thick and stones on one another without cement; the roofs are enormous slabs of Basaltic rock like iron; the doors and gates are of stone 18 inches (46 cm) thick, secured by ponderous bars. The land bears still the appearance of having been called: *The land of giants under the Giant Og.*"

"All the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan" — According to Dr. Strong, Argob signifies *stony*. The area of Bashan extended from Jabbok to Hermon, and comprised north Gilead and Bashan, some 20 by 30 miles (32 by 48 kms) in extent. It is the elevated table land called Trachonitis in Luke 3:1. The word Trachonitis signifies *the rough country*. The area is very good grazing country.

VERSE 5

"All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars;" — The appearance of "cities great and walled up" (Num. 13:28) had deterred the spies of the previous generation of Israelites. They had feared the Canaanites rather than God,

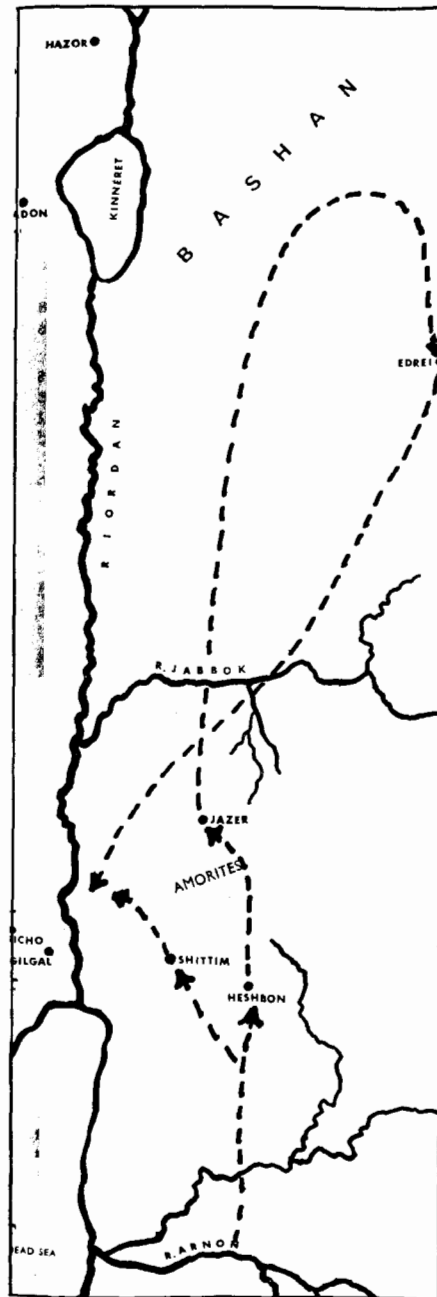
and it had destroyed faith (cp. Deut. 1:28). The term "gates" is a translation of the Hebrew *delethim* — and describes two-leaved doors. The ruins of those vast two-leaved doors today astonish the archaeologists, filling them with admiration for the skill of the builders, and the strength of the mighty cities they erected.

"Beside unwall'd towns a great many" — An "unwall'd town" is a rural village. See 1 Sam. 6:18; Est. 9:19. The familiar reference to "unwall'd villages" in Ezek. 38:11, relates to such rural centres.

VERSE 6

"And we utterly destroyed them" — The Hebrew expression denotes that the cities and villages were "devoted to destruction". It was a command of God, and was faithfully carried out by the Israelites.

"As we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city" — This ruthless extermination of the Amorites seems cruel and unnecessary to modern thinking, but the preservation of the Israelites depended upon it. It was a case of either exterminating the polluting presence of these pagans whose worship was so depraved, or allowing them to grow up in the midst of Israel, a menace to their spiritual integrity. In destroying a nest of snakes, one does not hesitate to crush the eggs, or kill the young progeny though not fully developed. So with the seed of the serpent in relation to the people of God. Whilst the hand of mercy is always extended to those who wish to take hold of it, the only safe course for the righteous is to exterminate the wicked. The doctrine of the Atonement teaches that. It ordains that defilement is easily transmitted one to the other, whereas holiness is much more difficult to acquire (see Hag. 2:11-14). Let any seek holiness and they can be saved. Therefore, the Canaanites did not have to perish. The alternative was for them to turn to God and live. That was illustrated in the case of Rahab in Jericho. She and her household were saved even though they were Canaanites, because they acted in faith (Heb. 11:31). Already an offer of peace had been made to Og and his people, but it had been spurned. The responsibility for the punishment that now followed rested squarely upon the stubborn king and his deluded followers. On the other hand, the continued existence, let alone the prosperity of Israel, depended upon the people faithfully carry-



ing out what Yahweh knew was best for them, though the flesh might philosophise otherwise. The Amorites, and people like them, stood in relationship to Israel as "sin in the flesh" does to the saint in Christ. He is required to ruthlessly suppress such motions of the flesh. Paul commanded: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3:5). To *mortify*, is to ruthlessly put to death such things. That is what is required of saints today, and it is what was required of Israel as the people came into contact with sin in the flesh, politically manifested in the Amorites.

VERSE 7

"But all the cattle and the spoil of the cities we took for a prey to ourselves" — See the comment on Deut. 2:35. For the law concerning the disposal of such prey, see Num. 31:25-30.

VERSE 8

"And we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites the land that was on this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto Mount Hermon" — Supporting references are found in Josh. 12:2-6; 13:9-12. The land was afterwards allotted to the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and half tribe of Manasseh, as recorded in Num. 32:33-42. Mount Hermon constituted the northern border of this territory. Its name signifies *Separate*, which was appropriate, for it separated the territories which were given unto the Israelites, south of its range of mountains.

VERSE 9

"(Which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion)" — Hermon signifies *High*, *Separate*, or *Abrupt*. It is always covered with snow. In Deut. 4:48 it is also called Sion (different to Zion), or *Elevation*. The Sidonians, however, called it Sirion, which means *Breastplate*. The abrupt high mountain-peak of Hermon stands as a sentinel, or guardian of the land.

"And the Amorites called it Shenir" — Reference to this name is found in 1 Chron. 5:23; Song of Solomon 4:8. Shenir signifies *Coat of Mail*. With its range of mountains it forms a natural barrier for the land.

VERSE 10

"And all the cities of the plain" — The Hebrew word denotes the level country

whether forming a plateau, or at sea level. See Deut. 4:43; Josh. 13:9.

"And all Gilead" — Gilead signifies *rough country*, either through growth of trees, or because cut up into heights and valleys. It is situated south of Bashan.

"And all Bashan" — Bashan is the area north of Gilead. Part of it today is known as the Golan Heights. See note Deut. 1:4.

"Unto Salchah" — Salchah signifies *a walk*. It was found to the extreme east of the territory thus conquered. Reference to it is found in Josh. 12:5; 13:11; 1 Chron. 5:11. The first reference suggests it was a place of considerable importance in Og's realm.

"And Endrei" — Endrei signifies *strong*. The city was located south of the river Yarmak, on the border of Bashan. It was here that the Israelite army engaged that of Og, and defeated him. See v. 1. After it was conquered, it was allocated to the eastern Manasseh. See Num. 32:33; Josh. 13:31.

"Cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan" — The main cities were outstanding fortresses.

VERSE 11

"For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants" — The Hebrew word rendered "giants" is *rephraim*. According to some Hebraists the word signifies *to be stretched out*, evidently relating to their height. "There were giants (*rephraim*) in the days of Noah and after that" wrote Moses (Gen. 6:14). He wrote from personal experience. These "giants" were mighty men of the flesh, as well as being giants in crime. Og was one such. He was the last of the remnant of the giants. In fleshly prowess and in repudiation of the authority of Yahweh he manifested the same characteristics as the antedeluvian giants.

"Behold his bedstead was a bedstead of iron" — The Hebrew word *eres* rendered "bedstead", is not the usual word for such an article of furniture. It suggests a nuptial bed, or funeral couch. It is from a root signifying *to unite, bind together or arch*. Therefore it can signify a canopied bed, a bier, or tomb. The "iron", was probably the black basalt stone of the country which contains about 20% iron. The "bedstead", therefore, probably relates to the tomb which Og had prepared for himself before his death, after the manner of many kings of those times, as well as the Pharaohs of



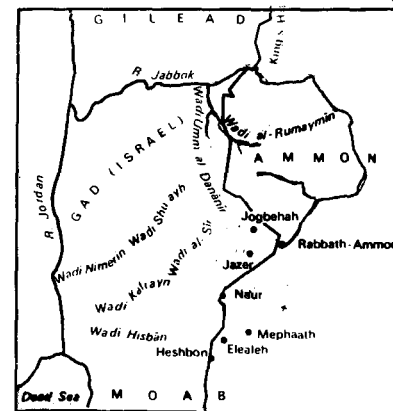
The heavily sculptured and inscribed sarcophagus, or stone tomb, is that of Hiram of Tyre now in the Beirut Museum. The "bedstead" of Og was probably a similar sarcophagus.

Egypt. It evidently had a mythological significance, suggesting the worshipping of the king as a god such as was customary among pagan nations in those days. This beautifully polished black tomb, funerary couch, or sarcophagus, made ready by Og against his death, was designed to perpetuate him to posterity (cp. Psa. 49:11). Og's name has been continued to posterity, not, however, because of his tomb, but because of his infamy and foolishness in opposing Moses, and waging war with the Israelites, and therefore with Yahweh. In view of his stupidity it was appropriate that his tomb (if tomb it was) should be made of iron, because iron is a Bible symbol of the flesh. The King personified the flesh in his arrogance and power.

"Is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon?" — Apparently Og had seized some of the territory of Ammon (see Jud. 11:13-24), and had built his tomb, funerary couch, or sarcophagus in Rabbath. Either that, or the Israelites transported it there when they conquered Rabbath, and so preserved it as a memorial of the victory of Moses.

The word "Rabbath" or "Rabbah" signifies *Great* or *Populous*. It is identified with modern Amman, about 22 miles from the Jordan situated in a valley which is a branch, or perhaps the main course of the Wadi Zerka, usually identified with the Jabbok. It is the only Ammonitish city

mentioned in the Bible, and therefore is frequently called Rabbah or Rabbath of the children of Ammon as in the verse before us. It was not included in the territory of Israel, the border of Gad stopping at this point (Josh. 13:25). It was prominent throughout Israelitish history. In the days of David, Abishai held the Ammonites in check at this spot (2 Sam. 10:14) whilst Joab and the main army rested at Medeba (1 Chron. 19:7). The next year Joab attacked Rabbah (2 Sam. 11:1), which fell after a siege of perhaps two years (2 Sam. 12:26; 1 Chron. 20:1). One of the men slain at the time was Uriah the Hittite (2



Sam. 11:17). At that time it was an important centre, and classified as a royal city (2 Sam. 12:26). Some 250 years later, it still contained the sanctuary or palaces of Molech, the god of the Ammonites (Amos 1:14). Within its walls, Baalis king of the Ammonites plotted the attack of Ishmael, that cost Gedaliah his life, and drove Jeremiah into Egypt (Jer. 40:14). After the death of Alexander the Great, and the division of his empire into four parts, it was occupied by the Egyptians and re-named *Philadelphia* from the ruler of Egypt, the Greek Ptolemy Philadelphus (B.C. 285-247). Under the Roman Pompey (BC 63), Philadelphia was made a member of the Decapolis. Jeremiah predicted the decline and restoration of Rabbah (Jer. 49:1-6), whilst Ezekiel declared that the city would be given into the hands of the "men of the east", or the Arabs (Ezek. 25:1-7). Modern Amman fulfils both prophecies. The Ammonites disappeared from among men, the city fell into ruins and remained like that for a considerable time, the Arabs took over the site, but today it is one of the most prosperous cities of the Middle East, and is the capital of Jordan.

Rabbah is frequently designated "of the children of Ammon" as in this verse, and, therefore, the "chief of the children of Ammon" mentioned in Daniel 11:41 relates to the city, and not to the people. That is important in view of the latter day application of this prophecy.

"**Nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man**" — According to the size of the cubit, this would make Og's memorial 13 feet 6 inches (4 metres) by six feet (2 metres). If the memorial related to a sarcophagus it would provide for a very large man. It is significant that the term, *of a man*, is used to describe these measurements. It emphasises the fleshy character of this mighty king.

Distribution of Conquered Territory — vv. 12-17

The territory acquired from Og and Sihon is distributed to the two and a half tribes that elect to remain on the eastern side of Jordan.

VERSE 12

"**And this land, which we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, and half Mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites.**" — The countries thus conquered by the Israelites were assigned by Moses to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half tribe of Manasseh. The southern portion, from Aroer in the valley of Arnon to the Jabbok with its towns (see Josh. 13:15-20, 24-28), was assigned to the Reubenites and the Gadites; and the northern portion from the Jabbok, comprehending with Gilead the whole of Bashan, or Argob, was given to the half tribe of Manasseh.

VERSE 13

"**And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants**" — Argob signifies *A heap of stones*. It is noted for its stone fortresses, and smaller circular enclosures. Some of these Jair captured (Num. 32:41). The word "Golan" signifies *Heights*. It is a high plateau leading to Hermon in the north. Hermon signifies *Separated* or *High* and therefore the *Lofty Peak*. It is a mountain that is conspicuous from all sides. By some the root of the name "*Hermon*" is connected with that of Hormah signifying *a devoted thing*. This is appropriate because this mountain marked the limit of the country devoted or placed under a ban, as being separated to Israel. It is certainly remarkable, that at the names given to the territories at the extreme north-east, and south-west of the land conquered by the Israelites are Hermon and Hormah, and they are derived from a root "haram" (*to seclude*). It is as though the very names are given to indicate that all the land between was secluded, devoted, or given over to Israel. Hermon is the southernmost spur of the anti-Lebanese range of mountains. It ranks next in size to the highest peak of Lebanon behind the cedars. Its elevation is about 10,000 feet, whilst Hermon itself ascends some 2-3000 feet (607-914 metres) above the ridges that spread out from it, thus giving it a more commanding aspect than any other mountain in the area. The peak is largely destitute of trees or vegetation, but is covered with snow.

VERSE 14

"**Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi**" — The exploits of Jair, the son of Manasseh, are recorded in Num. 32:41. His name signifies *He en-*

lightens. The Geshuri and Maachathi, were small Syrian tribes located to the east of Hermon. Geshur signifies *A bridge*, from which it is thought that the Geshurites were located near some well-known bridge across the Jordan, of which, perhaps, they were the keepers. Reference to them is found in Josh. 12:5. Later this place became the centre of a Syrian principality, ruled over by Talmi, whose daughter David married (2 Sam. 3:3). There Absalom fled after killing Amnon (2 Sam. 13:37).

The word "Maachathi" signifies *Depression* from *Ma'ak* to *press* or *bruise*. The Maachathi comprised a small kingdom east of Argob in Bashan (v. 4), bordering the territory of Og (Josh. 12:4-5; 13:11). The tribe was probably descended from Maachah, a relative of Abraham (Gen. 22:24).

"**And called them after his own name Bashan-havoth-jair unto this day.**" — The term *Havoth-jair* signifies "the villages of Jair". They were situated in Bashan, hence the full title Bashan-havoth-jair.

VERSE 15

"**And I gave Gilead unto Machir**" — Machir was the firstborn of Manasseh, and, as far as the records show, was his only son (Gen. 50:23). From him there sprang the various families of the tribes, amongst which was Beni-machir, or *The sons of Machir* (Num. 32:39). Perhaps the name Machir, was carried on by the firstborn in every generation, therefore accounting for its use in the verse before us. However, it is evident from their history that the term *children of Machir* or *Ben-Machir* — as the Heb. has it, formed a family powerful enough to have a name of its own in the tribe and in Israel (see Num. 32:40; Judg. 5:14). Machir had a son called Gilead. From 1 Chron. 7:14 it appears that his mother was from Aram, the country of Laban. This, perhaps, was the reason why her son was called Gilead, for it was the name given to the border established by agreement between Laban and Jacob (Gen. 31:46-48). This probably explains the subsequent allotment of territory in that direction by Moses to the Machirites (see ref. to Gilead's family in Jud. 11:2). It appears, therefore, that the term *Gilead* is used in a general sense, for the territory actually allotted to Machir in Bashan, rather than in Gilead proper. As noted above, Machir was the father of Gilead (Gen. 50:23; 1 Chron. 2:23), so

probably what territory was granted him whether in Bashan or Gilead proper was given the name Gilead.

VERSE 16

"**And unto the Reubenites, and unto the Gadites, I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon, half the valley, and the border even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon**" — See further comments in Num. 32:33-38; 1 Chron. 2:23. The term "half the valley" relates to the valley of the Arnon. The border between Israel and Moab in the south was defined as half the valley of that river.

VERSE 17

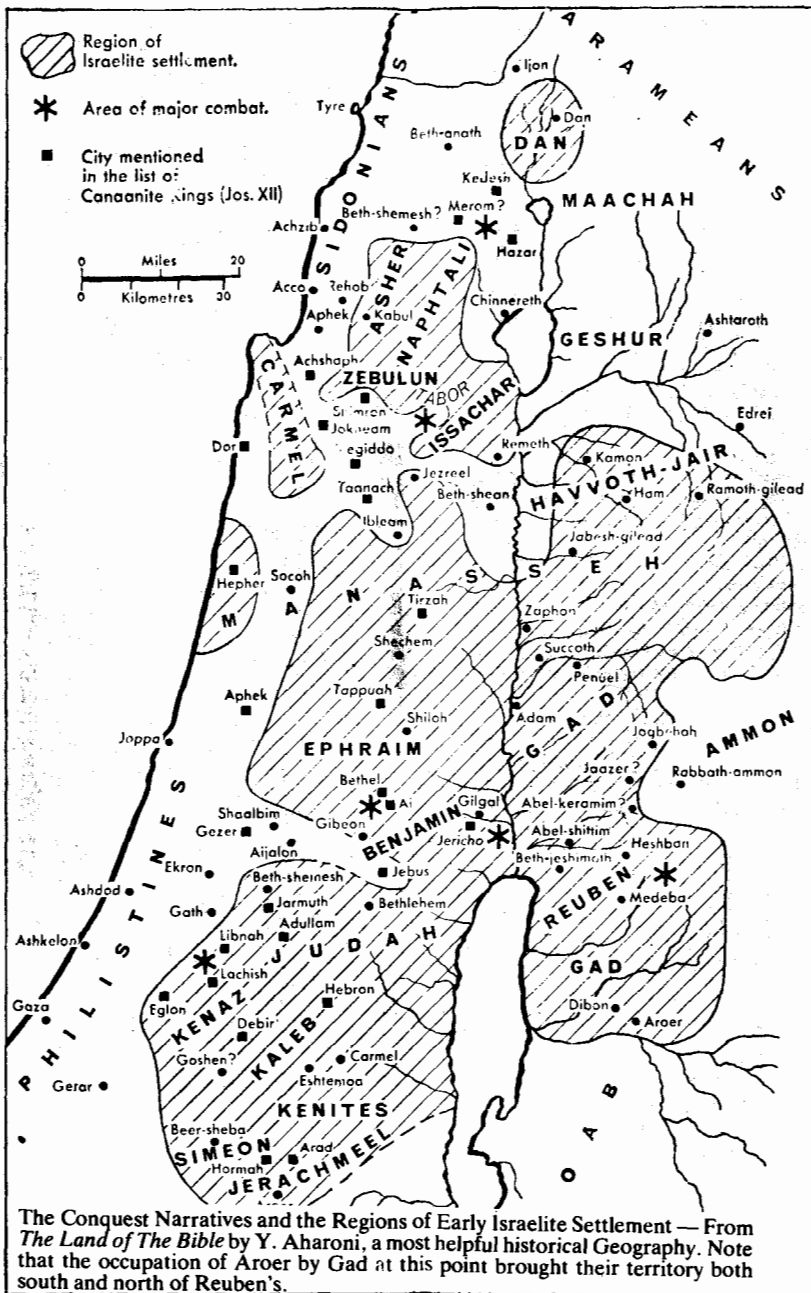
"**The plain also, and Jordan, and the coast thereof, from Chinnereth, even unto the sea of the plain, even the salt sea**" — The word "plain" is *Arabah* in Hebrew, and relates to the deep depression that extends south of the sea of Galilee, onwards to the gulf of Aqaba. The western border of the two and half tribes was the sea of Galilee, and the depression of the river Jordan down to the Salt sea, or Dead sea. The word *Chinnereth*, signifies "lute" — or "harp". The city itself was adjacent to the sea of Chinnereth by which the sea of Galilee was then known because of its harplike shape (Num. 34:11; Josh. 12:3; 1 Kings 15:20). It is also called The Lake of Gennesaret (the Greek form of Chinnereth), The Sea of Tiberias, and The Sea of Galilee.

"**Under Ashdodth-pisgah eastward**" — Ashdodth-pisgah signifies *The outgoings of Pisgah*, or the height. The margin gives it the rendition: *under the springs of pisgah, or the hill*.

However, *'ashedoth* signifies "slopes" rather than "springs". The name can be rendered The Slopes of Pisgah, the Pisgah relating to the headlands of the plateau at the north-east corner of the Dead Sea.

The Responsibilities of the Eastern Tribes — vv. 18-20

Moses reminds the two and half tribes of their obligation to the rest of Israel. They are to help the other tribes obtain their inheritance west of Jordan even as the others have assisted them to conquer the territory in the east. Their families may remain in their recently acquired possessions, but the fighting men are obligated to cross the Jordan to help their brethren.



VERSE 18

"And I commanded you at that time, saying, Yahweh your God hath given you this land to possess it: ye shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all that are meet for the war" — These instructions are also given in Num. 32:21. There Moses refers to the Canaanites as Yahweh's enemies, and the army of Israel as being recruited for a holy war to destroy such. He guarantees victory if the Israelites follow His instructions (Deut. 3:20; Josh. 10:30,42; Psa. 44:1-3; 78:55). The cause of the war was the complete repudiation of Yahweh's standards of morality by the Canaanites, whose iniquity was now full (Gen. 15:16). Nations cannot please themselves as to what they do, or how they act. Even though not in covenant relationship with Yahweh, they are held accountable for their doings. At the coming of the Lord, the Gentiles will be judged as were the Canaanites when Joshua entered the land; but this time by Christ, and the immortalised Saints (Dan. 7:10-14).

In the verse before us, the Hebrew expression for "all that are meet for the war" is *sons of valour* or *of power*. It denotes specially selected soldiers, trained for the purpose that Moses had in mind, and not merely those who were of an age to fight.

VERSE 19

"But your wives and your little ones, and your cattle (for I know that ye have much cattle) shall abide in your cities which I have given you" — The statement that the two and half tribes of the East had "much cattle" has been used by critics of the Bible to be inconsistent with its record of the wilderness wanderings and hardships of the children of Israel. It has been asked, where did their large herds come from after forty years' sojourn in the wilderness? It is obvious that a nucleus of flocks and herds taken out of Egypt were retained during their wanderings. For example, in the *second year*, Moses asked: "Shall the flocks and herds be slain for them to suffice them?" (Num. 11:22). This was after they had kept the passover, and had slain whatever sheep or goats were required for that purpose. Evidently sufficient were retained to supply the basis to build up large herds and flocks in the land. Moreover, a spoil of 675,000 sheep and 72,000 beeves (oxen) had been taken in battle from the Midianites (Num. 31).

This prey was added to by the animals acquired after the conquest of Gilead and Bashan, for Moses stated: "Only the cattle we took for a prey to ourselves" (Deut. 2:35; 3:7). The spoil of the Midianites was divided among all the tribes, but there was nothing to hinder the Reubenites and Gadites from purchasing the share of the others; and their evident preference for a pastoral occupation suggests that this is exactly what they were likely to do.

VERSE 20

"Until Yahweh have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you, and until they also possess the land which Yahweh your God hath given them beyond Jordan; and then shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you" — These instructions were carried out to the letter. The record of their return is given in Josh. 22:4,8.

Exhortation To Joshua, Moses' Successor — vv. 21-22

Joshua had previously been publicly set forth as the successor of Moses (Num. 27:18-23), but is now given a further word of exhortation to encourage him in the onerous duties facing him.

VERSE 21

"And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, thine eyes have seen all that Yahweh your God hath done unto these two kings" — Since leaving Egypt, Joshua had seen much that could strengthen his confidence in Yahweh: the miracle of the Red Sea crossing, the provision of manna and water, the defeat of Amalek, the theophany of Yahweh at Sinai, and the victories at Arad, Edom, and over Sihon and Og. This was contrasted to what the faithless spies had seen as they searched the land from Kadesh. It was the sight of their eyes that had deterred them, and weakened the hearts of the people, so that they refused to enter into their inheritance. (Num. 13:28, 32, 33). "We saw the giants", they complained, "and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight". Joshua was undeterred then, and had since been strengthened in faith by the mighty acts of power performed by Yahweh that he had witnessed. The Hebrew is more literally expressed: "Thine own eyes are they that saw". The appeal is to personal experience.

"So shall Yahweh do to all the king-

doms whither thou passest" — Joshua never forgot this exhortation, and at a later date passed it on to the people of Israel (Josh. 10:25). He was able to record that, through the help of Yahweh, no less than thirty one kingdoms had been overthrown (Josh. 12:24).

VERSE 22

"Ye shall not fear them: for Yahweh your God He shall fight for you" — This identical exhortation was given by Moses to the people of Israel, when they were fearfully conscious of the chariots of Pharaoh swiftly bearing down upon them, whilst facing the impassable barrier of the Red Sea before them. Then, as now Moses had exhorted the people: "Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of Yahweh . . . Yahweh shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (Exod. 14:13-14; cp. also Josh. 1:6-8; Psa. 44:3). In addition to reminding Joshua of the power of Yahweh to save, he also reminded the people, that they had seen what Yahweh could do, and therefore should place their confidence in Him (Deut. 4:3,9). A similar exhortation was given by the prophet Jahaziel at a time of great crisis in Israel (2 Chron. 20:17). The record states that as a result of Divine intervention the fear fell upon all nations (2 Chron. 20:29).

Moses' Prayer Seeking Permission To Pass Over Jordan — vv. 23-29

Moses pleads with Yahweh for permission to pass over the Jordan, to personally view the land that he is one day to inherit. His request is refused in order to impress the need of obedience upon the Israelites. Instead, he is told he must ascend Nebo, and though he will be allowed to view it afar off, he must die there. A remarkable type is set forth in this incident.

VERSE 23

"And I besought Yahweh at that time saying" — Moses' great desire was to view the land of promise, but he was refused his request.

VERSE 24

"O Lord, Yahweh, Thou hast begun to show Thy servant Thy greatness, and Thy mighty hand" — Yahweh's greatness and His mighty hand had been shown in His care of Israel, and in the desert victories won at the expense of the nation's adversaries as he states in Deut. 11:2. But this

was only the beginning of His greatness and mighty hand. These attributes were to be manifested to a far greater extent in the Land itself, and also, of course, in the age to come. See these Divine characteristics expressed in Neh. 9:22; Psa. 106:2; 145:3,6; Jer. 32:18-21.

"For what God is there in heaven or earth, that can do according to Thy works, and according to Thy might?" — The word "God" in this statement is the Hebrew *El*, which describes the power of Yahweh. Whenever the Hebrews used that word in relation to Yahweh, the idea of Divine Power, such as is unknown to flesh is presented to their minds. *El*, as a title, expresses the source of all real Power, and is manifested in all His actions. This statement is an echo of the Exodus song of Moses (See Exod. 15:11; and cp. with 2 Sam. 7:22; Psa. 35:10).

VERSE 25

"I pray thee, let me go over, and let me see the good land that is beyond Jordan" — This was the description given the Land by Yahweh at the bush, when He called Moses to return to Egypt to deliver the people: "I will bring them up out of that land, to a good land, and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. 3:8 see also Num. 13:27; Psa. 106:24; Dan. 11:41).

"That goodly mountain" — Moses could have had in mind the mountain of Yahweh's house (Isa. 2:2-4). In his blessing of Zebulon and Issachar, he predicted: "They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness (Deut. 33:19). He evidently saw in prophetic vision the place that Yahweh subsequently selected as His resting place, the site of which was revealed unto David (see Psa. 132:13-14; Ezek. 43:7).

"And Lebanon" — Moses had been told that the land to be occupied by the Israelites when they passed over the river Jordan, was to extend to Lebanon (see Josh. 1:4). The word Lebanon signifies *White*. It possibly derived its name from the snow that rests permanently upon its highest peaks.

VERSE 26

"But Yahweh was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me" — See Psa. 78:21; Deut. 1:37. This verse, explains why Moses was denied entrance into the land. It was "for your sakes".

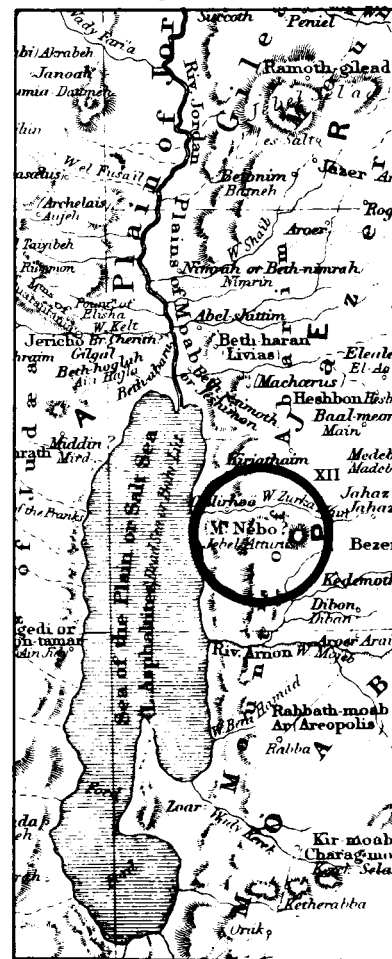
Yahweh refused Moses' request in order to impress the people with the need for strict obedience to His commands. The incident is recorded in Num. 20. In smiting the rock *twice*, Moses typed those who heed not Yahweh's words, but "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:6). The fate of all such, as well as those who rest on obedience to the Law as the means of justification, was typified by Moses being refused entrance into the Land. The refusal was designed to teach a lesson to whosoever should heed. Moses represented the Law. God's refusal to permit him to enter the Land, demonstrated that the Law of itself was unable to save. It was unable to do so because of the weakness of flesh (Rom. 8:3). It is beyond the ability of flesh unaided to render perfect obedience to God, hence the Law could only condemn. The manifestation of grace in forgiveness was, and is necessary for salvation. This was demonstrated to the people of Israel when Moses was denied entrance into the Land, despite the Divine assessment of his character as exceeding in virtue that of all others at that time (Deut. 34:10-12). If such a man as that could not enter therein what hope could any have apart from Grace. So the Law was "a schoolmaster leading unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24). Of course, Moses will ultimately receive the "recompence of the reward" (Psa. 99:6; Heb. 11:24-26). He will receive it through the ministry of that one whom he typed (Deut. 18:15). Refusal of Moses' request, therefore, taught powerful lessons. Firstly: it emphasised the need of obedience; and, Secondly: it taught that the Law, because of the weakness of flesh, could not of itself provide salvation. In that way, it pointed to the need of Christ.

"And Yahweh said unto me, let it suffice thee; speak no more unto Me of this matter" — Rotherham renders this statement: "Enough for thee . . ." Yahweh had a purpose in denying Moses his request. As noted previously, it demonstrated that Israelites could not enter their eternal inheritance by Law. The refusal of Moses' request, was similar to the refusal of Yahweh to the request of Paul. He prayed several times that the thorn in the flesh might be removed, in order that he may be told to serve Yahweh better, but he was told: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). Paul's thorn in the flesh provided a powerful exhortation, for he did

not permit it to deter him from the work before him. He continued to labour in the things of God in faith, and so presented a living exhortation to all who might take heed.

VERSE 27

"Get thee up into the top of Pisgah" — See notes on Num. 27:12-13. The word "Pisgah" signifies *the Hill*. The actual site cannot be identified with certainty. There are many peaks adjacent to Nebo, and it could have been any one of these. A glorious panoramic view spreads out before one from the top of Nebo.



“Lift up thine eyes, westward, northward, southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes” — These are similar words to those spoken to Abraham when he was told to look, north, south, east and west, “for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever” (Gen. 13:14). In viewing this same land Moses saw the promises “afar off” (Heb. 11:13). The directions are descriptive when read in the Hebrew — “Westward” literally becomes *seaward*, pointing to the Mediterranean which is to the west; “northward” is literally *the hidden*, or *dark place*, and extended from where he stood to Mount Hermon; “southwards” indicates the *right*, for the east is always the front to the Hebrew; and “eastward” is literally *the sun’s rising*. Moses was invited to view the land in all those directions, because it was promised to Israel. The nation has not yet received that land, but will do so in the age to come. In being invited to view the land eastward, as part of that promised, it is obvious that the Promised Land is not limited to that west of Jordan.

“For thou shalt not go over this Jordan” — This statement is constantly reiterated (Deut. 1:37; 4:21-22; 31:2).

VERSE 28

“But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him” — Joshua had a formidable task in taking over where

Moses left off. He needed all the encouragement and help that his great predecessor could give him. Moses gave Joshua his orders, and strengthened him in the work before him (See Num. 27:23; Deut. 1:38; 31:3-7). Joshua also received encouragement direct from Yahweh (see Josh. 1:1-9).

“For he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see” — In doing this Joshua typed the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. “What the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh”, God did through Christ (Rom. 8:3). This was foreshadowed in the work of these two great leaders of Israel. Joshua led the people over Jordan as a shepherd, and therefore accomplished what Moses could not do. In the type, he represents the ministry of grace, whilst Moses set forth the condemnation of the Law.

VERSE 29

“So we abode in the valley over against Beth-peor” — Beth-peor signifies the *house of peor* or the *opening*. It was situated in the valley of Shittim, on the Eastern side of the River Jordan opposite Jericho. It was a place notorious for the licentiousness practised there as recorded in Num. 25:1-3. In this valley the tribes remained in their tents awaiting the command to move.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LESSON OF THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS IMPRESSED UPON THE NEW GENERATION

Having brought his historical review to an end, Moses launches into his final exhortation. This also is interwoven with appeals to past experiences of the nation, so giving point to the lessons it is intended to impress. The chapter is divided into three main sections:

First: The Exhortation (vv. 1-40). Emphasising the responsibility resting upon the people of Israel to obey;

Second: The Assistance (vv. 41-43). The appointment of cities of refuge indicative of the mercy of Yahweh, should they fail;

Third: The Beginning (vv. 44-49). The commencement of the second discourse of Moses which commencing at v. 44 extends to chapter 26:19. The new generation is thus taught the lessons impressed upon the previous generation at Sinai.

Note the importance of v. 2, and compare it with vv. 6,9,23,24,39. Moses foresees the Jewish apostasy and consequent scattering (vv. 27-28), but also predicts the restoration of the nation in “the latter days” (vv. 30-31).

Israel’s Privileged Status Brings Heavy Responsibility — vv. 1-8

Moses commences his exhortation by clearly stating that the privileges granted the people of Israel great privileges in being the recipients of divine revelation, calls for a practical response. The Word of God must be hearkened to, heeded, and translated into active obedience. No nation has been granted the benefits and opportunities afforded Israel; so it is expected of the people that they respond to that granted them. A similar exhortation applies to spiritual Israel today.

VERSE 1

“Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and judgments which I teach you, for to do them” — The word “statutes” is from the Heb. *Chogqim*, from *Chaaq* signifying “to engrave”. The word therefore describes laws that are intended to be engraven upon the conscience, so demanding obedience. The word “judgments” is from the Heb. *Mishpatim* and relates to “verdicts — or case laws”, that is laws laid down by authority, or so settled by ancient custom, as to guide a judge in the decisions to be granted in certain specific cases. True Israelites were called upon to heed that which Yahweh commanded, and to bear in mind the benefits of so doing, or the punishments they could incur if they failed to do so.

“Which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which Yahweh, God of your fathers has given you” — The term “to live” does not merely signify a long physical existence as in v. 40, but also a higher spiritual life, as in ch. 8:3. This latter life would enable Is-

raelites both to possess the land, and to enjoy the inheritance of it.

VERSE 2

“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Yahweh your God which I command you” — To the law of Yahweh, nothing must be added or taken away. The main idea is that there must be no attempt to pervert the plain meaning of the Divinely given instruction. The Lord Jesus Christ charged the Pharisees with “making the Word of God of none effect through their traditions” (Mark 7:13). His reference was to the Law. It must be reverently preserved, as well as observed. To keep God’s word means life; to disobey it means death; as witness the fate of those who died by succumbing to the worship of Baal-peor (Num. 25:1-9). In this verse we have another term related to the Law, namely “commandments”. This is from the Hebrew *Mitswath* from *Tsavah* — “to constitute, enjoin”. The term seems to relate to commandments given in relation to specific occasions, such as offerings and so forth. As there was to be no diminishing of, nor adding to, the revelation of Yahweh given through Moses, so, in the final chapter of *The Apocalypse*, there is a warning of dire punishment for any who may tamper with the revelation given, who “shall add unto these things”, or “take away from the words of the book of this prophecy” (Rev. 22:18-19). In a flagrant manner, religions such as the Mormons, have not hesitated to add to, and diminish from the clear teaching of the

Word of Yahweh by claiming new revelations or perverting the obvious teaching of the Word. The warning in both Deuteronomy, and *The Apocalypse* relates to the adding to, or diminishing from, the power and significance of the words recorded. It is the responsibility of those who would worship Yahweh in truth, that they seek out the literal meaning of His words and instructions, and apply them fully in their lives. It is significant and appropriate that both Moses and the Lord should issue this warning during the last messages they respectively delivered to the Israelites during their two ministries.

VERSE 3

“Your eyes have seen what Yahweh did because of Baal-peor” — The reference is to the sin described in Num. 25:1-3. The punishment was severe, and witnessed by representatives of the nation (See Num. 25:4-9; 31:16). Hence that generation that witnessed the goodness of Yahweh in His deliverance of the nation from Egypt, also felt His severity. The new generation is now called upon to keep that in mind. Similar instruction is given to the Lord's followers today (see Rom. 11:22). Inasmuch as the people had witnessed what Yahweh did, gave point and power to Moses' exhortation.

“For all the men that followed Baal-peor, Yahweh thy God hath destroyed them from among you” — The record states that 24,000 died in the plague that smote the people for their sin. However, Moses implies that there was a careful discrimination made so that it was only the guilty who were destroyed.

VERSE 4

“But ye that did cleave unto Yahweh your God, are alive everyone of you this day” — The term “cleave” in this statement is a most significant one. It is the term used to describe the true state of marriage (see Gen. 2:26); and so includes love for the object of it. The term, relates to those who recognised their responsibility to Yahweh as that of a wife to her husband (see Isaiah 54:5), and therefore manifested loving submission to His desires, whilst repudiating any adulterous association with the gods of the Midianites. It is significant that the term used to describe sexual intercourse (designed to conceive a new life — see Gen. 4:1), is that also used to describe a true worshipper's obedient

and loving submission to the will of Yahweh (cp. 2 Sam. 2:12 with John 17:3). Thus human relationships are used in the Word to illustrate our moral responsibilities to Yahweh.

VERSE 5

“Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as Yahweh my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land, whither ye should go to possess it” — This verse should be compared with v. 1. In the former verse Moses used the present tense *I teach you*. Here he uses the past tense: *I have taught you*. Deuteronomy is an exposition of Laws already given, with the new conditions experienced in the Promised Land in mind. Moses again emphasised that the things set before the people were the commandments of Yahweh; and therefore obedience to them was imperative. Only by so doing would they be permitted to enjoy the inheritance set before them. He declared that his words were the words of Yahweh, and should be accepted as such. In that regard, he typed the Lord Jesus Christ. Like Moses, the Lord declared that the words which he spake to the people were not his own, but were words that came from God (see John 7:17; 12:49; 14:10).

VERSE 6

“Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations which shall hear all these statutes and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people” — If Israel manifested obedience to the things of God, it would constitute a witness to His truth before all nations. Yahweh declared through Jeremiah that the people were chosen, “that they might be unto Me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory; but they would not hear” (Jer. 13:11). Yahweh chose Israel, guided them, educated them, revealed His will to them in order that they might reflect His glory and that they might be equipped to pass on to others the message of His plan. But, as the prophet sorrowfully adds: “they would not hear”. The Proverbs adds: “the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that is wise winneth souls” (Prov. 11:30). Yahweh's statutes “make wise the simple” declared the Psalmist (Psa. 19:7; 119:98,99), and they who are thus made

wise, attract the attention of others by the fame of their wisdom. Thus the Queen of Sheba was drawn to the wisdom of Solomon (1 Kings 10:1); and in every age, people have been drawn to God by seeing the impact of the truth upon the lives of believers. The Lord taught: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). He instructed his apostles: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one toward another” (John 13:35). It was Yahweh's laws that made Israel unique among all the nations. This is acknowledged even to the present day. Men continue to express the great debt that mankind owes to the Hebrews because of the great teaching that has emanated from them to all the world. In like manner, when Christ's followers take Yahweh's word to heart, their actions command the respect of others. How often have the one-time friends or acquaintances of believers been induced to enquire the cause of such a change, and so be drawn to God through the channel of their witness.

Moses made reference to both wisdom and understanding. The *Book of Proverbs* proclaims that the “fear of Yahweh is the firstfruits of knowledge” (Prov. 1:7); and Job adds his witness by stating: “Behold the fear of Yahweh, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (Job 28:28). Hence, adds Proverbs: “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding” (Prov. 4:7).

Admiration for the laws given to Israel have been expressed in the past (1 Kings 4:34; 10:6-9; Dan. 1:20; 4:9); and will be acknowledged in the future (Zech. 8:20-23).

VERSE 7

“For what nation is there so great, who have God so nigh unto them, as Yahweh our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?” — The greatness of Israel was not due to any militant might or inherent ability, but to the fact that God was nigh unto them. Members of other nations, who would desire to approach unto Him must do so through Israel, and upon Israelitish principles. This is so in Christ, as it was under Moses. A person in Christ has been brought nigh to the Commonwealth of Israel, and to the God of Israel (Eph. 2:12-14). The R. V. makes an important

amendment to the AV rendition of the verse before us. It gives it as: “For what great nation is there that hath a God so nigh unto them as Yahweh our God is, *whosoever we call upon Him*”. In illustration of this statement, see Deut. 33:29; Psa. 34:17-20; 145:18. The word “God” in this verse is “*Elohim*” in Hebrew, and is a plural word that elsewhere is rendered angels (Psa. 8:5). The angels are “ministering spirits sent forth to them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14). It is through the ministry of the angels that Yahweh helps His elect (Psa. 103:20-22). Jacob saw the vision of angels ascending and descending the staircase that led to heaven, as he rested his tired head upon the stone pillow at Bethel (Gen. 28:10-13), and now his descendants are reminded that the help of Yahweh is available through His ministering spirits, when they turn unto Him. This same wonderful privilege of contact with Yahweh is open to believers today, so that the divine heritage granted Christ's followers is: “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn” (Isa. 54:17). They can rejoice in the wonderful privilege that is granted them in being accounted the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16).

VERSE 8

“For what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?” — The answer to this question is that no nation has been granted such wonderful privileges. Even today, when Israel as a nation has been temporarily cast off, it is only through the Israelitish constitution of things that Gentiles can enter into covenant relationship with Yahweh.

The Individual Responsibility To Obey — vv. 9-13

The people are told that possession of the oracles of God are beneficial only to those who keep in mind the requirements of Yahweh and reverently fulfil them. Time and again in Deuteronomy, Moses takes the nation back to the historic proclamation of God at Horeb. A Voice was heard giving commandments and making a covenant, appealing to conscience and faith, and it is the people's individual responsibility to hearken and act in accordance with requirements.

VERSE 9

"Only take heed to thyself" — It is a believer's personal responsibility to learn the requirements of Yahweh, for true religion and the possession of wise laws and teaching are only of benefit if acknowledged and applied.

"And keep thy soul diligently" — Care needs to be exercised to make life worth living (see v. 1). If believers redeem the time by active service to Yahweh they gainfully use the span of life which God has granted them. See Prov. 3:1-2, 16-17; 13:3; 16:17; 19:16; Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5. In the fuller sense, of course, those who follow the admonition of Moses will keep their lives eternally in the age to come.

"Lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen" — Scenes soon fade from one's memory when circumstances change, particularly unpleasant things, such as Israel had seen at Baal-peor (cp. v. 3). Regarding Israel, the Psalmist lamented: "They soon forgot His works" (Psa. 106:13,21; Psa. 78:11).

"And lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life" — The heart was considered the seat of knowledge by the Hebrews, the place of inner understanding that should govern the desires. Both intellect, and emotions need to be exercised by a knowledge of Yahweh and His ways.

"But teach them thy sons and thy sons' sons" — This is an Abrahamic characteristic (Gen. 18:19). The teaching of Moses is that such instruction should become a family project, and not be left entirely to some outsider to perform. The Truth needs to be openly discussed by all members of a family, as the natural thing to do. (See Deut. 6:7; 11:10; Psa. 78:4-6).

VERSE 10

"Specially the day that thou stoodest before Yahweh thy God in Horeb, when Yahweh said unto me, Gather Me the people together, and I will make them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children" — The word *specially* is in italics and should be eliminated. The R. V. renders: "At the day that thou stoodest before Yahweh. . . ." See Exod. 19:9,16. Divine revelation is designed to instill fear in the hearts of believers. Such fear, or awe, is not an adverse emotion, but the best thing for flesh as it is constituted at pre-

sent. It develops reverence for the object of it. And gradually, as the believer comes to understand and appreciate Yahweh more, his "fear" becomes blended with love: love of God which he delights to share with him fellowman. The Book of Proverbs declares: "The fear of Yahweh is the firstfruits of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7 — Heb.). As Yahweh required that the firstfruits be offered unto Him, so should be this "fear". It needs to permeate the home, so that all its inmates hold Yahweh in the utmost reverential respect. The daily readings of the Word, public thanks for the blessings of food receive, and family prayers can contribute towards this desirable objective. Such reverential awe is induced by hearing (Deut. 4:10), doing (Deut. 5:29), keeping (Deut. 6:13), walking (Deut. 8:6). Thus the "fear of Yahweh" is no mere, inarticulate, superstitious awe of the unknown, but a respectful, reverential love for One Who has revealed Himself in His word, and Whose goodness has been experienced in the lives of His worshippers.

VERSE 11

"And ye came near and stood under the mountain" — Moses led the people close to the mountain (Exod. 19:17), but the theophany of divine glory was so awe-inspiring and fearful that they requested that he act as a mediator (Exod. 20:19-21).

"And the mountain burned with fire" — See Exod. 19:18; 10:18, and the exhortation of Heb. 12:18-23.

"Unto the midst of the heaven" — The Hebrew expresses this as "the heart of heaven"; that is, to the very sky: a description of the mighty pillar of fire that blazed on Mt. Horeb betokening the presence of Him who is "a consuming fire" (v. 24; Deut. 9:3).

"With darkness, clouds, and thick darkness" — The plural "clouds" is better rendered in the singular number, *cloud*. The RSV provides: "wrapped in darkness, cloud and gloom". See Exod. 19:18; 20:18; 24:16-17. Yahweh manifested Himself in a thick cloud of darkness which hid His overpowering glory from the people (Exod. 19:9,16). This cloud settled on the mountain, whilst above it the divine glory shone forth as a pillar of fire (Exod. 19:18) ascending to the heart of heaven above.

VERSE 12

"And Yahweh spake unto you out of the midst of the fire" — See Ch. 5:4,22.

"Ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude" — See vv. 33,36. Whereas the people only saw the fiery glory, and heard the Voice of Yahweh (Exod. 19:18; 20:18; 24:16-17), Moses did see the similitude of Yahweh as revealed in the angel of His presence (Num. 12:8; Isa. 63:9); and the Apostles saw it manifested in the Son (John 1:14; Heb. 1:3; 1 John 1:1-3). The word "similitude" signifies *shape* or *appearance*, and argues the corporeal personality of Yahweh. James taught that man is made "after the similitude of God" (James 3:9).

"Only ye heard a voice" — The Hebrew renders this as *save a voice*. They saw no shape, but they heard the Voice of Yahweh. But even this filled them with such fear that they requested that Moses act on their behalf (Exod. 20:18-19). The Voice of Yahweh can be heard today whenever His word is opened; but, unfortunately, like Israel of old, people prefer others to do the hearkening for them.

VERSE 13

"And he declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone" — See Deut. 9:9,11; Exod. 24:12; 34:28. This statement identifies the Mosaic covenant with the Ten Commandments, contrary to the claims of Seventh Day Adventists who teach that they represent the Abrahamic Covenant. They separate the Ten Commandments from the rest of the Law as given through Moses which they describe as the ceremonial law or Mosaic Covenant, and claim that only animal sacrifices are done away in Christ. This is not so, however. The Ten Commandments formed an integral part of the Mosaic Covenant. Paul contrasted the Abrahamic Covenant confirmed in Christ with the Covenant made through Moses, and he described the former as "the new covenant" and the latter as "the old" (Heb. 8:13). Moreover, he defined the two tablets of stone on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed as "the tables of the new covenant" i.e. the "first" or Mosaic Covenant (Heb. 9:4,1). It was the Covenant based upon the Ten Commandments that Paul described as "decaying and waxing old and ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8:13). That Covenant having been taken away, is no longer binding on those who

are in Christ Jesus as Paul consistently taught (Rom. 7:4); though it still has a claim against those who persist in attempting justification by its means, for they are "debtors to do the whole law" (Gal. 5:3). Does that mean that those in Christ can ignore the provisions of the Law and the Ten Commandments? By no means. They express eternal verities that must be respected and acted upon by those who would please God and Christ. But the Mosaic Law demanded obedience in every particular, and did not make provision for the weakness of the flesh to sin (Rom. 8:3). On the other hand, the Abrahamic covenant, confirmed by Christ, is based on faith and grace, and provides for forgiveness of sins. It is just as rigorous in its standards of conduct, but more liberal in its scope of grace and forgiveness. Therefore, for those in Christ, the Ten Commandments are equally as binding, or even more so, than they were to Hebrews under the Law. And this applies to the provision for Sabbath-keeping as will be seen from Deut. 5:14. There is a "keeping of the sabbath" for those "in Christ" as there was for those in the Mosaic Covenant (Heb. 4:9).

The word "commandments" of this verse is from the Hebrew *dabarim*, "words". The same expression, also rendered "commandments", occurs in Exod. 34:28 (see notes). Those ten "words" denote the ten different subjects upon which the entire Law was based.

Yahweh To Be Worshipped In Truth — vv. 14-20

The people have seen no shape or similitude of Yahweh, and now must exercise care lest they, like heathen nations, invent such so as to lead to idolatry. They have seen cloud and thick darkness, and above that a fire which can purge, and a light which can illuminate, both of which combined provide a basis for true worship. They need to reach up to that. The voice they heard validated the divine revelation through a mediator, Moses. But nothing that could be seen or touched was in evidence at Horeb, lest worship should become materialised and sensualised, to exalt itself over spirit. The people are warned of forms of idolatry that can lead them astray, and are exhorted to heed the Voice that spoke. So with believers today: they must listen to the same Voice, and keep their worship and service pure.

VERSE 14

"And Yahweh commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it" — See Psa. 105:43-45. The generation that was about to enter the land had need to be mentally prepared for the venture. It was the responsibility of Moses to see to this in a manner that would grace the call of Yahweh. He had to do this even though he knew that he would not personally enter the Land. Today there remains the same need to study the Words of Yahweh so as to be mentally prepared for entrance into the heritage provided at the coming of the Lord. Instruction must not be mere academic, however. The statutes and judgments of the word are designed for practical application, that "ye might do them", and so become equipped for entrance into the Kingdom in the future.

VERSE 15

"Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves" — This is the constant exhortation of this section of Moses' discourse. See vv. 9,23. See also Josh. 23:11; 1 Chron. 28:10; Psa. 119:9; Prov. 4:23,27; Mal. 2:15; Luke 21:34-36. If every individual Israelite followed Moses' advice, the nation would have enjoyed complete success in its ventures.

"For ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that Yahweh spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire" — See note v. 12; and cp. with Isa. 40:18; 2 Cor. 4:4-6; Heb. 1:3; James 3:9. For the significance of Horeb in contrast to Sinai, see our notes on Exodus 19.

VERSE 16

"Lest ye corrupt yourselves" — As the people had seen no form or figure when Yahweh spake to them, so they were to beware for their very lives (cp. v. 9) of acting corruptly by making any kind of image, whether of man or of beast, for the purpose of worship as did the nations of Canaan. It was basic to the covenant entered into with Yahweh that they should abstain from such pollution (Exod. 20:4-5). The people corrupted themselves with the golden calf (Exod. 32:7-8; Psa. 106:19-20); for it is degrading to worship God in that fashion (Rom. 1:21-25; Acts 17:29); true worship demands the manifestation of Yahweh in thought and deed, through

the motivation of the Word, and the determination of the worshipper to conform thereto.

"And make you a graven image" — The term denotes carved work or sculpture, whether of wood, metal or stone.

"The similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female" — Hero worship, and nature worship (v. 17) are alike condemned. The Pharaohs and their wives, as well as other leaders of nations were worshipped as they are today.

VERSE 17

"The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air" — These were all worshipped in the most degrading fashion. See Rom. 1:23. Such gods were common in Egypt, and among the Canaanites. See Ezek. 8:9-11.

VERSE 18

"The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth" — Insects and fish were worshipped. The plagues on Egypt were judgments directed against the gods worshipped by the people (Exod. 12:12 — see our notes on Exodus).

VERSE 19

"And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them" — The sun in all its majestic and dominant glory was commonly worshipped (Deut. 17:3; 2 Kings 23:4,5,11; Job 31:26-27; Ezek. 8:16), as was also the moon and the other heavenly bodies in their glory of natural creation. See 2 Kings 17:16; 21:3; Jer. 19:13; Zeph. 1:5. The moon was worshipped as the Queen of heaven, a title today given by Catholics to Mary.

"Which Yahweh thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven" — Yahweh has allotted, or imparted (see mg) these heavenly bodies for the benefit of humanity generally: "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). It, therefore, is incongruous for man to worship these inanimate objects of creation as gods, and ignore the

Creator Who has established them in their places. See Neh. 9:6; Psa. 74:16-17; 136:4-9.

VERSE 20

"But Yahweh hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt" — The reference is to a furnace designed to smelt iron. Egypt acted as such towards Israel. The affliction the people endured there helped to purge the nation and fit it for the destiny Yahweh had in mind. See 1 Kings 8:51; Jer. 11:4.

"To be unto Him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day" — The nation had been separated out of Egypt to be constituted Yahweh's "peculiar treasure" unto Himself (Exod. 19:4-6), His inheritance where He would dwell among the nations. See Deut. 7:6; 9:26,29; 32:9; Psa. 28:9; 33:12; 135:4; Isa. 63:17-18. That honoured status is now shared by believers taken out of the nations, as Israel was out of Egypt. See Eph. 1:18; 1 Pet. 2:9.

The Refusal of Yahweh to Grant Moses' Request To Enter the Land Illustrates How Careful the People Must Be To Obey Him — vv. 21-24

Moses again refers to his being refused permission to enter Canaan; on the basis of which he warns the people against forgetting the terms of the Covenant they have embraced.

VERSE 21

"Furthermore Yahweh was angry with me for your sakes, and swore that I should not go over Jordan" — This repeats the statement of Deut. 1:37. See notes at that place.

"And that I should go in unto that good land, which Yahweh thy God giveth thee for an inheritance" — See notes on Deut. 3:25; 11:10-12. The "good land" is styled the "glorious land" in Dan. 11:41. It is a land under Yahweh's special care (Deut. 11:10-12).

VERSE 22

"But I must die in this land" — Young renders this in the present tense: "I am dying in this land"; he was on the point of death.

"I must not go over Jordan" — The verb is from the Hebrew *'abar*, to "pass over". It is the root of the word "Hebrew", a *Passer Over*.

"But ye shall go over, and possess that good land" — Here the verb is in the plural *'abarim*, "Passers Over".

VERSE 23

"Take heed unto yourselves" — Once again the warning exhortation of personal responsibility is sounded by Moses; and this on the background of recording his personal failure, when temporarily he forgot!

"Lest ye forget the covenant of Yahweh your God, which He made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which Yahweh thy God hath forbidden thee" — "Lest ye forget" is a constant exhortation: Deut. 6:12; 20:25; 31:21; 1 Chron. 16:15; Psa. 78:11,42; Jer. 22:9. R. Young renders "covenant" as *eating* because it ratifies the agreement. The Hebrew *berith*, "covenant" is from a root that implies the selection, dividing and eating of a covenant victim. The bread and wine of communion conveys the same thought in the partaking of them.

VERSE 24

"For Yahweh thy God is a consuming fire" — A consuming fire will eat up all that it attacks. Yahweh is such to His enemies. See Deut. 9:3. When Israel was gathered at the mount, "the sight of the glory of Yahweh was like devouring fire" (Exod. 24:17). The purpose of the Law was to illustrate and destroy the lusts of the flesh that are contrary to God, and to purify His people for the Kingdom. All Scripture is designed to that end (Heb. 4:12-13). The fire of affliction will perfect faith, for gold, which is a symbol of tried faith (1 Pet. 1:7) is never destroyed but only purified by fire. Therefore God still remains as a "consuming fire" and is not to be trifled with (Heb. 12:28-29). The fire of divine scrutiny at the Judgment Seat will complete the process commenced by the Word (1 Cor. 3:13,15). Yahweh through the Redeemed will openly manifest Himself as "a consuming fire" against the world of the ungodly at the coming of the Lord (2 Thess. 1:8; 2 Pet. 3:12). Meanwhile, Moses' description of God at this time recalled the theophany of glory and of power at the Mount; as well as the "great sight" he had witnessed forty years earlier at Horeb, when he saw the bush encompassed with a divine fire, but not consumed (Exod. 3:2). Accordingly, among his last words, he exhorted Israel to seek "the goodwill of Him that dwelt in the

bush" (Deut. 33:16). Those who do so in faith may be purified but will never be destroyed by the "consuming fire".

"Even a jealous God" — The word "God" in this statement is rendered from the Hebrew *El*, Power; and the word Jealous is from the Hebrew *Qanna*. The subject of jealousy, as relating to God, is dealt with at length in our notes on Num. 5:11-31. Yahweh gives *Qanna* or Jealous (Exod. 34:14) as one of His names. This name reminds worshippers that God demands their undivided loyalty, and anything less than that can incite the spirit of jealousy in Him (see Ezek. 8:5). A believer's love waxes cold (see Matt. 24:21; Rev. 2:4) when alienation of affection is caused through worldly influences, and this becomes the cause of jealousy on the part of Yahweh. He clearly detects a lack of the true spirit of love which should motivate those who have embraced the covenant of faith in Christ. They become indifferent towards Him. What is the cause of this alienation of affection? Is it not the influence of the world in some way or other? Does not James teach that friendship with the world is the cause of enmity with God? And does he not indict such who are guilty of this as being "adulteresses" (James 4:4) whatever their sex? Hence, the terms of the parabolic law set forth in the Law of Jealousy (Num. 5:11-31), showed that the spirit of jealousy can come upon God, Who is described as Israel's Husband (Isa. 54:4). The warning words of Moses in the verse before us, directed the people back to the Law of Jealousy already set down in Numbers 5. This Law is to be interpreted spiritually as applying to God and His people as our notes at that place shows.

A Refusal To Heed Will Result In Israel Being Driven From The Land — vv. 25-28

Moses foresees a period of forgetfulness through lapse of time by the coming generations, and warns of the consequences of such indifference.

VERSE 25

"When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing" — The word translated "remained long", *yashen*, signifies *to be slack or languid*, and contains the idea of growing old and stale. This is always a danger. Familiarity can breed

contempt, so that people take privileges and benefits, and even status, for granted. In another place, Moses warns that such a state is almost inevitable, human nature being what it is. See Deut. 31:29.

"And shall do evil in the sight of Yahweh thy God, to provoke Him to anger" — Examples of such provocation are found in Deut. 9:18; 2 Kings 17:17. The people are warned against such actions in view of the character of Yahweh as a Jealous God (v. 24).

VERSE 26

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day" — Heaven and earth are the work of Yahweh's hands, and are subject to His will. His power manifested therein demonstrates His ability to accomplish His purpose, either in the scattering or regathering of His people. See Psa. 147:1-5.

"That ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed" — As Yahweh created the natural heavens and earth, so He did the political order in Israel. The people were utterly dependent upon His power to establish them in the land, which illustrated His equal ability to remove them therefrom. The success or failure of their venture depended not on their strength or skill, but upon faith in God and obedience to His will.

VERSE 27

"And Yahweh shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither Yahweh shall lead you" — So it came to pass because Israel proved disobedient. From such passages as Lev. 26:33; Deut. 28:64, it is obvious that Moses had the prophetic vision to see beyond all dispersions including that of A.D. 70. The word "heathen" is from the Hebrew *goyim* and denotes a foreign people, and so Gentiles, rather than indicating any heathen worship. The word has been rendered *nations* in the R.V.

VERSE 28

"And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone,

which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell" — To serve the nations is tantamount to serving their gods. Israel would be driven back to the servitude from which they had been delivered. See Deut. 5:15; 6:21; 28:36,64; Jer. 16:13. In contrast to Yahweh, the gods they would serve would be man-made and thus subject to flesh. They would be unable to see the distress of their worshippers, hear their prayers, eat their sacrifices, nor smell their incense. The worship of such is degrading, as is the worship of man-made covetousness today (Col. 3:5).

Yahweh Always Ready to Harken And Help — vv. 29-31

In contrast to the sightless, heedless gods of the nations, Yahweh is omniscient and omnipotent, and though manifesting Himself as a Consuming Fire, and a Jealous Power, is merciful and forgiving, and always heedful of His covenant.

VERSE 29

"But if from thence thou shalt seek Yahweh thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul" — See Lev. 26:39-42; Deut. 30:1,3,10; Jer. 3:12-14; 29:12-14. "Draw nigh unto God and He will draw nigh unto you", is the comforting instruction of Scripture (Jam. 4:8). Yahweh is always ready to accept the penitent approach of His people when they acknowledge their errors, and seek His forgiveness. They must approach in heart and soul: that is, with mind and intellect as well as with dedication of self. In his parable of the prodigal son, the Lord pictured the Father as always ready to receive back his wayward offspring; indeed, as anxiously awaiting his return! But the first action must be taken by the son. So it is in our relationships with God. Let us seek Him earnestly, intelligently, and reverently, and the benefits will be immediate. As Moses and Israel were forcibly reminded, *Yahweh lives* (Num. 14:21). To seek Yahweh "with all thy soul" as required in the verse before us, is to give our very lives over to His worship and His ways.

VERSE 30

"When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee" — The Hebrew more explicitly says: *have found thee*, personifying Tribulation as a hunter

seeking its prey in spite of every attempt to hide from it. Later, with prophetic vision, Moses declared that ultimately Israel will recognise the cause of their tribulation: that they had abandoned God, and He them (Deut. 31:17). Such realisation will cause them to seek Him out in penitent remorse.

"Even in the latter days, if thou turn to Yahweh thy God, and shalt be obedient unto His voice" — The R.V. makes this possibility a positive prophetic statement: "When . . . all these things are come upon thee, in the latter days thou shalt return to Yahweh thy God, and hearken unto His voice". Moses was not only Law-giver and Leader, but a great Prophet, like unto the greatest then to come (Deut. 18:15). He was given such insight into the character of Yahweh, and the frailty of his people, as to lay down the pattern of future events. He foresaw not only the punishment and scattering of the people, but their ultimate restoration and spiritual redemption (Deut. 30:1-8). For the "latter days" and its blessings, see Gen. 49:1; Num. 24:20; Deut. 31:29; Jer. 23:20; Hos. 3:5.

VERSE 31

"For Yahweh thy God is a merciful God" — This statement provides a further manifestation of *El*. In v. 24, Yahweh is described as a *Jealous El*; but here as a *Merciful El*. He demands the reverential fear that should be paid to one in His high and lofty position: but He is ever ready to extend Himself to the help of those who acknowledge and act upon it. See 2 Chr. 30:9; Psa. 86:5,15.

"He will not forsake thee" — This is a most comforting assurance. Yahweh's children are often forgetful and weak, but He is strong and ever mindful. Some wonderfully comforting words are given in Psalm 103:7-14, apparently based on the statement before us: "He made known His ways unto Moses . . . Yahweh is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will he keep His anger for ever . . . He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust". Those who desire to worship Him in spirit and in truth need to ponder such words, seeking the strength He will afford.

The word "forsake" in the verse before us, is from the Hebrew *raphah*, and signifies "to slaken". The *Berkeley Bible* renders it as *abandon*. Yahweh will not abandon

don His people. Despite the state to which Israel was ultimately reduced, the nation has never been abandoned of God: He is ever ready to accept the people back and extend help to them in their distress. Elsewhere, the word "forsake" is from the Hebrew *'azah* and signifies to *loosen*, as to let go, and thus to *relinquish*. It is used in the following subjects indicating that Yahweh will never relinquish His purpose in regard to the following:

Keeping covenant with Israel — Cp. Neh. 9:31; Ezek. 36:22-23.

Conquering His people's enemies — Deut. 31:3-6.

Providing faithful leadership for His people — Deut. 31:8; Josh. 1:5.

Accept them when they turn to Him in repentance — 1 Sam. 12:19-22.

Respond to their faithful worship — 1 Kings 6:13.

Assist them in their labour in His service — 1 Chron. 28:20.

Provide the spiritual wants of the poor and needy who trust in Him — Isa. 41:17.

Support those who live without covetousness — Heb. 13:5-6.

But He will turn from those who:

Forsake Him and break His covenant — Deut. 31:16-17; 2 Chron. 15:2; Ezra 8:22.

Ignore His word and revelation — Jer. 23:33-39; Jonah 2:8.

"Neither destroy thee" — Yahweh will never destroy the nation. His very name of Yahweh, being the covenant Name pronounced to Moses when sent to deliver His people, is a guarantee of that. He may punish or discipline the nation as it deserves, and purge out therefrom those who are wickedly indifferent to His requirements, as the previous generation had fallen in the wilderness, but Israel as a people will never be destroyed. Though in disobedience in Jeremiah's day, the nation was told: "For I am with thee, saith Yahweh, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished" (Jer. 30:11). Through Isaiah, He declared: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of Yahweh, and their righteousness is of Me, saith Yahweh" (Isa. 54:17). It is comforting to realise that all who embrace the covenants of Promise,

and so constitute the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16) are brought into that category.

"Nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He swore unto them" — The Covenant made to Abraham, and confirmed to Isaac and Jacob, is absolutely irrevocable. All history must conform to its provisions. The presence of Israel in the Land today is a token of the strength of the foundation upon which all rest whose faith is based upon those promises. Christ came to confirm them (Rom. 15:8-9), and therefore they will be fulfilled. Meanwhile, Israel, though outside the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus, is still "beloved for the fathers' sake" (Rom. 11:28), and ultimately the disobedience of its people will be purged (Rom. 11:26). The covenant which Yahweh "swore" unto the fathers, is that confirmed with an oath (see Gen. 22:16; Heb. 6:18).

Israel's Unique Privileges Demand Obedience — vv. 32-40

The people are called to reflect upon their blessings and obey Yahweh's Word. No nation has been granted such privileges, and had such experiences of God as Israel has; no other nation has heard His voice, no other God has taken for himself a nation under the grip of a greater power, nor manifested such evidences of power as has He. Israel has enjoyed divine love such as no other nation, and should repay by respect and obedience.

VERSE 32

"For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth" — An examination of the records of history will reveal that Israel occupies a unique position in relationship with God. See Deut. 32:7-9; 2 Sam. 7:23-24; Rom. 9:4-5.

"And ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?" — Let the search be extended to the limits of geography, throughout the whole world, to find if any people have had such grand privileges as have been granted them.

VERSE 33

"Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire as thou hast heard, and live?" — The word "people" is from the Hebrew *am*, signify-

ing a whole nation. Individuals may have heard the voice of God, but when Israel was assembled at the foot of Horeb, the entire nation was granted that privilege (Exod. 24:11; Deut. 5:24-26). The people heard the voice of Yahweh first hand, not second hand, an experience that should have greatly impressed them.

VERSE 34

"Or hath God assayed to go and take Him a nation from the midst of another nation" — It was not a mighty, powerful people in the fulness of national prestige and glory that Yahweh extended Himself to help, but a down-trodden rabble of slaves whom Yahweh condescended to call.

"By temptations" — The word signifies trials, and relates to the slavery experienced by the people of Israel. The power and love of Yahweh were illustrated in drawing the people from out of such a state. See also Deut. 7:19; 29:3.

"By signs" — These are significant acts; the figurative meaning of such miracles as the Passover, Baptism in the Red Sea and so forth. See Exod. 7:3; Deut. 26:8; Psa. 78:12; Jer. 32:21. It was the responsibility of Israelites to seek out the significance of such. That applies also to the miracles of the Lord Jesus, and of the Apostles. They were performed to teach the significance of the Gospel. The giving of sight to the blind, taught the power of Yahweh to reveal sight to those figuratively blind (Luké 4:18-21); the raising of the dead underlined the doctrine of the resurrection (John 11:25-26). Miracles were not performed merely to satisfy the curiosity of flesh, not to effect a temporary cure, but to teach the power of God as revealed in the Gospel.

"And by wonders" — Wonders are miraculous happenings, such as the miraculous victory of Joshua over the Amalekites so long as the arms of Moses were upheld.

"And by war" — Such as the overthrow of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea.

"And by a mighty hand" — The hand is figurative of the ability to accomplish a work. The "hand" of Yahweh took hold of the circumstances of the time, and bent them to His purpose. He brought Israel out of Egypt by sweeping aside all opposi-

tion to His will. (Exod. 3:19-20; 13:9; Deut. 6:21; 7:8; 26:8; Jer. 32:21).

"And by a stretched out arm" — By Yahweh extending His power wherever needed. See Exod. 6:6; Deut. 26:8. The Hebrews were taught to recognise the influence of Yahweh in normal affairs of life. Times of adversity were considered as His arm extended in disciplinary action, as a loving father will chastise his erring son for his ultimate benefit. Thus Naomi, in describing the distresses that had come upon her family, declared: "The hand of Yahweh is gone out against me!" (Ruth 1:13). She recognised in the distressing circumstances she experienced the disciplinary action of a loving Father.

"And by great terrors" — The reference is to the terrifying demonstrations of divine might, such as the plagues.

"According to all that Yahweh your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes" — The children of Israel had personally witnessed the power of Yahweh in redeeming the nation from Egypt, as believers do, today, in the sacrifice and resurrection of the Saviour. Their's was a national redemption; ours' is a personal one.

VERSE 35

"Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that Yahweh be is God" — The statement of this verse explains the purpose of the unique privileges granted the people: it was that they might "know" that Yahweh is God, for in such knowledge is bound up eternal life (John 17:3). Such knowledge is not limited to an academic appreciation of these matters, but should be manifested in a practical application of the principles involved: "He (the true Israelite) judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: *was not this to know Me?* saith Yahweh" (Jer. 22:16). Israel's experience in Divine goodness is matched by the blessings received in this life by those who fear and love Him. It is valuable to count those privileges so as to be thoroughly cognisant of them.

In the Hebrew, the definite article is connected with the word *Elohim*, "the God", indicating that the manifestation of divine power was through "the angel of Yahweh's presence" (Isa. 63:9), the one

elevated above other angels upon whom Yahweh's name was particularly bestowed (Exod. 23:20-23), and who is described as Israel's prince (Dan. 10:21; Josh. 5:14-15 mg.). His name is Michael: *Who like El*; a name also borne by the Lord Jesus Christ.

"There is none else beside Yahweh" — See 1 Sam. 2:2; Isa. 45:5,18,22; Mark 12:32.

VERSE 36

"Out of heaven He made thee to hear His voice that He might instruct thee" — One of the privileges granted Israel over all other nations was the supernatural revelations of the divine purpose that they received. In listing the great advantages given Israel, Paul wrote: "chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:1-2).

"And upon earth he shewed thee His great fire" — The fire was calculated to induce fear of Yahweh and consequent obedience. See Heb. 12:25.

"And thou heardest His words out of the midst of the fire" — The fire to purge and the Word to guide provided true instruction. The word in the Hebrew signifies to discipline or correct, and that by instruction.

VERSE 37

"And because He loved thy fathers, therefore He chose their seed after thee" — This statement explains the reason why special privileges are granted Israel. The nation is "beloved for the fathers' sake" (Rom. 11:28). Abraham's children benefit because of his great faith. That fact provides an incentive for parents in every age. They are to bring up their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). A good example of faith, plus sound instruction in the Word, are the greatest heritages that parents can give to their children. Because of their fathers, Israel has been cared for by Yahweh in spite of the disobedience of many of its people.

"And brought thee out in His sight" — Yahweh overshadowed His people in delivering them out of Egypt. The phrase "out in His sight" is literally "by his faces", a reference to His angelic manifestation. See Exod. 33:14; Josh. 5:14; Isa. 63:9. In the Hebrew, the word face is always in the plural, because there are two sides to the

face, and it can turn from side to side. Yahweh's face can reveal both goodness and severity (see Exod. 34:6-7; Rom. 11:22).

"With His mighty power out of Egypt" — See Psa. 114:1-8; 136:10-15; Isa. 51:9-11; 63:11-12.

VERSE 38

"To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance" — The victories of the past could give assurance of further successes in the future. The fact that Yahweh had brought Israel out of Egypt was guarantee that He could and would bring the people into the land, for His purpose demanded it. Those victories were fresh in memory for they included the conquest of Sihon and Og, enabling the people to look forward with confidence. See Deut. 7:1; 9:1,4,5; Psa. 44:2-7. In the *Song of Victory* composed by Moses following the crossing of the Red Sea there is expressed confidence in the ultimate "bringing in" of Israel (Exod. 15:16-17). And though the generation that sung that song so enthusiastically perished in the wilderness, and though the generation that entered the land under Joshua failed to thoroughly complete its conquest, the terms of Moses' song will be vindicated in the future (see Rev. 15:3). In Christ, through the mighty power of Yahweh, victory can be obtained over enemies "greater and mightier" than we (Heb. 2:14).

VERSE 39

"Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that Yahweh he is God in heaven above, and upon earth beneath" — The people are instructed to carefully consider the remarkable victories and blessings of Yahweh that they have experienced, and allow their lives to be motivated thereby. The word "consider" signifies to ponder well, to revert to the theme time and again, to let the mind constantly take it in. Note Moses' exhortation to that end in Deut. 32:29, and compare with 1 Chron. 28:9; Jer. 11:3-4. The phrase "Yahweh he is God" has the definite article as in v. 35.

"There is none else" — There are others in heaven beside Yahweh, but none equal to Him in glory and authority. See Psa. 95:3; 103:19-22. See note on Deut. 4:35.

whole. The subject headings are epitomised on p. 17 of our previous number.

We apologise for the lateness of this number. This is due to the pressure of work plus a bout of ill-health. The former swallows up time, the latter makes effort more difficult. Most of the copy has been prepared for some time, but the energy necessary to complete it has been lacking, as other labours and problems have obtruded on our attention. We have regretted this delay, and hope to make amends. But to that hope we must append the words "God willing". We often propose to do certain things, but circumstances interfere with our good intentions. Nevertheless, we will try to bring our work up to date.

Not that we have been unduly idle. We have, during the past three months, not only produced this copy, but have supervised the production of three books: *Is There A God? Is the Bible True?* and *Guidebook To The New Testament*. The first two are by Brother Roberts, and answer the questions in an interesting and unique manner. The last is by ourselves, and provides an outline of every book of the New Testament, biological notes on the characters recorded therein, and descriptions of the places mentioned in the Gospels and Epistles. The book (about 250 pp.) should be of value to students of the Word, as providing a working basis for their further studies.

Cost of the first two books is \$4.50 (Aust.) each plus postage (USA — \$5.00; Canada & N.Z. — \$6.00; U.K. — £3; Sth. Africa R5). We have not a price for the third book, which we are currently awaiting.

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Editorial

CORRECTION

Giants In The Land

The following comment has been received by us:

"*Expositor*, p. 48. Verse 20: 'The word translated 'giants' in the verse before us, is *Nephilim* in the Hebrew, and is found in Gen. 6:4.'

"This is incorrect. The word in v. 20 is *Rephaim*; the word *nephilim* is found only in Gen. 6:4; Num. 13:33 (twice). *Rephaim* is the word normally used for 'giants' in physique. What you write about *Nephilim* is correct, but is not appropriate in this place because this is not the word used in this verse." — E.W. (SA).

Though we are sometimes embarrassed by being reminded of our errors, we do take it as a compliment that readers feel free to forward such advices. It means that our correspondents have sufficient interest in us and our work to put us right, and we deeply appreciate such action. In this case we hasten to pass on the fact to our readers. We would appreciate them changing the statement to read: "The word translated 'giants' in the verse before us, is *Rephaim* in the Hebrew, and not as found in Gen. 6:4."

We thank E.W. for his help.

CHAPTER FOUR

VERSE 40

"**Thou shalt keep therefore His statutes, and His commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which Yahweh thy God giveth thee, for ever**" — This verse concludes Moses' exhortation at this part of his address. In doing so he reverts back to the statement and appeal he made at the beginning (v. 1). It is to be noted that Yahweh offered the land to Israel "for ever," but on conditions. This is a key statement of the Law, for it reveals that they possessed it only on the terms of a *tenancy at will*. Their occupancy of it was not absolute, or forever, as was promised Abraham, but conditional upon obedience. On this, Bro. Thomas has some important comments to make in *Elpis Israel* (pp. 248-250):

"While circumcision obliged Israel to keep the whole law, in which there was an annual remembrance of national offences, it gave them through that law only a *tenant at will occupancy* of the land of Canaan; and that *not to the extent* which pertains to its everlasting possession. This appears from the words of Moses, as it is written, 'If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it' (Deut. 28:58,63). The condition of their tenancy was their good behaviour. If they served God according to the law of the land He had given, He would bless them in their basket and store; but if they served other gods, He would let in the worshippers of those gods upon them, and expel them from the country. Israel has rebelled; and therefore they are in dispersion, until the time appointed shall come to remember the covenant made with the fathers; and therefore to remember the land (Lev. 26:40-42).

"The national tenancy of Canaan under the law being leasehold, no purchases of freehold estates could be made in the land. If Israel had been a freeholder, the case would have been different. But the land belonged to the Lord; and they had no more right to grant it away in parcels for ever, than the tenant under a twenty-one years' lease has to cut up his holding into lots, and sell them to purchasers for ever. Israel were the Lord's tenants; and the law said to them on the part of their Landlord, 'The land shall not be sold for ever; for the land is Mine, and ye are *strangers and sojourners* with Me'; so

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that 'in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land'. Hence, if poverty compelled a man to sell his farm, it was always redeemable by himself, or kin, according to certain conditions; but if neither could raise the money to redeem, the estate was not lost to the original owner; for though it remained in the hands of the purchaser, he was obliged to return it for nothing at the year of jubilee (Lev. 25:23-28). Even under the New Constitution, when the nation obtains everlasting possession, the servants of the Prince will have to surrender his territorial gifts at the year of liberty; while his sons will possess them for ever (Ezek. 46:16-18).

"The covenant of promise confers a more extensive holding of the country than the law of Moses. At no time of their occupation did Israel possess all the land from the Euphrates to the Nile, as promised in the covenant; and even if they had, such holding would not have been in the sense of the covenant, for they have not held possession according to the limits defined 'for ever'. 'All the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession' is the promise; but the indisputable fact is that Israel have only possessed a *part of it for a limited and turbulent period*. In Solomon's days, when the nation was at its zenith under the law, the land was jointly possessed by Israel, the Tyrians, and the remains of the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, etc.; but when the age of the covenant arrives, Israel under Shiloh will possess it all; 'and there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts' (2 Chron. 8:7; Zech. 14:21)."

The Appointment Of Cities Of Refuge — vv. 41-43

The final section of this first Discourse describes the appointment of three cities of Refuge on the eastern side of the Jordan, the territory already occupied. In all, six such cities were to be appointed: three on the east of Jordan and three in Canaan proper (Deut. 19:1-10). Yahweh's provision of mercy is dramatised in these cities, for they provide means whereby any who are under threat of death (as all sinners are) can find a refuge. Therefore they have a spiritual application; but they also, in those times, had a practical one as well. The proclamation of a general law by God following the Flood, demanded the death penalty for murder (Gen. 9:5). The Law of Moses allowed the nearest kinsmen of the

one who had been killed to wreak such punishment on the murderer. The Cities of Refuge, however, afforded protection for any who inadvertently took the life of another, pending his appearance before the congregation for trial and judgment. As a type the provision pointed forward to the refuge provided in Christ pending his appearance at the Judgment Seat (see Heb. 6:18-20).

VERSE 41

“Then Moses severed three cities on this side Jordan toward the sun rising” —

Moses evidently interrupted his discourse at this point to sever the Cities of Refuge on the eastern side of Jordan. This East is described as “toward the sun rising” because the Hebrews always considered the east as the front. The intention to provide for such cities had already been stated (Num. 25:6,14); whilst the final cities were appointed when Israel had won the right to the western section of the Land of Promise by conquest.

VERSE 42

“That the slayer might flee thither, which should kill his neighbour unawares, and hated him not in times past; and that fleeing into one of these cities he might live” — See Deut. 19:10-13; Josh. 20:2-6; and for the type as pointing forward to Christ — Heb. 6:18.

VERSE 43

“Namely, Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country, of the Reubenites” —

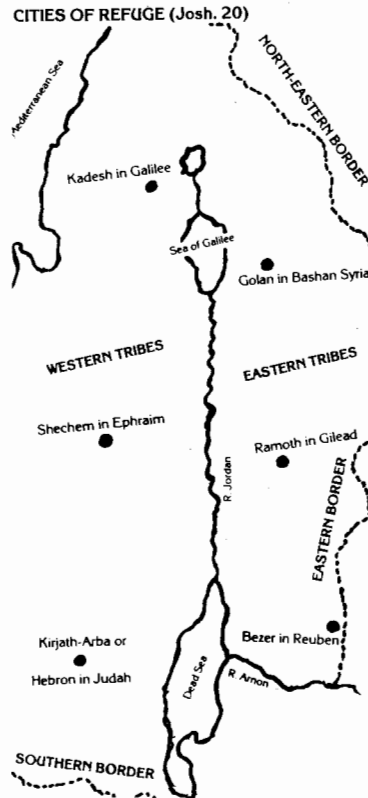
Bezer is from a root signifying an enclosed or fortified place. It is sometimes used to describe a place where goods are stored, or treasure is hidden or secured. Hence it signifies Enclosed. It was also appointed as a Levitical city (1 Chron. 6:78).

“And Ramoth in Gilead of the Gadites” — Ramoth signifies Height or Eminence. It was distinguished from other places of the same name by the location, Gilead. It was an important fortress city (converted to a Levitical City as well as to a City of Refuge) in the eastern section of the territory of Gad.

“And Golan in Bashan, of the Manasites” — The name is derived from the Hebrew *galah*, “to remove, transmigrate,

or pass away”, and therefore “to deliver”. Some derive it from *gal*, to “rejoice”. Hence the word can signify to deliver or to rejoice. Its exact location is uncertain, but it is usually identified with the present-day Sahem el-Jolan, about 17 miles east of the Sea of Galilee. The modern Golan Heights derives its name from this ancient site. It was a Levitical city (Josh. 21:27) as well as being appointed as a City of Refuge.

The three eastern Cities of Refuge foreshadowed the work of Christ. In order of their names they proclaim that he encloses us as his treasure; elevates us; gives us joy.



THE CITIES OF REFUGE
They were conveniently placed, with easy access for the one fleeing for his life. See Heb. 6:18-20.

DEUTERONOMY:

DIVINE FAITHFULNESS

IN DISCIPLINING AND DELIVERING

Discourse Two REVIEW —

WHAT THE PRESENT GENERATION SHOULD HEED AND AVOID

Ch. 4:44-26:19

SECOND DISCOURSE: REVIEW — WHAT THE PRESENT GENERATION SHOULD HEED AND AVOID — Ch. 4:44-26:19

This section of Deuteronomy sets forth a basic truth and a basic requirement. The basic truth proclaims the purpose of Yahweh in calling the people out of Egypt; and the basic requirement outlines what is expected of them in return.

The basic truth is stated in Ch. 6:23: "And He brought us out from thence, that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He sware unto our fathers."

It is a threefold statement: Separation — He brought us out; Purpose — "that He might bring us in"; Object — "to give us the land which He sware unto our fathers."

As far as Yahweh is concerned, the first reveals His requirement; the second provides assurance; and the third demonstrates His faithfulness.

Yahweh accomplished His part; it is up to the people to adequately respond. There is a basic requirement without which the purpose would not be fulfilled in that generation of Israelites. That requirement, that response is epitomised in Chapter 10:12-13: "And now, Israel, what doth Yahweh thy God require of thee, but to fear Yahweh thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve Yahweh thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul; to keep the commandments of Yahweh, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good."

This section of the book reveals what those Commandments and statutes require. Summed up, it is loving obedience flowing from respect of Yahweh, and grateful consciousness of what He had accomplished on their behalf. It has been pointed out that the word "do" occurs over fifty times in the book. Yahweh requires action on the part of His people. He is to be obeyed because of what He has done for them; what He is in Himself; and the perfection of His law and purpose. The same requirement is found in Christ: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me". "If a man love me, he will keep my words" (John 14:21-23). The Truth is a religion of action. Yahweh acts on the behalf of His people; they are expected to respond.

1. REVIEW OF THE DIVINE COVENANT Ch. 4:44-5:33

Having reminded the new generation of Israelites of the faithlessness of their fathers, and contrasted it with the consistent faithfulness of Yahweh to the promises He made, Moses proceeds to recapitulate the Law as the basis for successful living on their part. It is not a new Law, or a new Covenant that he gives them, but the old Law and the old Covenant, pronounced, and entered into at Sinai; as we have outlined in our introduction (pp. 13-15).

In this second Discourse, which takes up the major portion of the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses reviews the Divine Covenant made at Sinai (ch. 4:44-5:33); and then shows what it demands in personal dedication and application (ch. 6:1-26:19). His appeal is a very practical one, revealing the attitudes expected of true Israelites towards Yahweh, His Word, and their involvement therewith. Although those in Christ are not under the Covenant of Law, but that of Grace, the Law did express what Grace should reveal in living. Therefore, this section of the book has powerful lessons for those who have embraced the Abrahamic Covenant in Christ.

Introduction — vv. 44-49

These verses introduce the Law, which is the main subject of Moses' second discourse. Here he provides a more detailed description of it in its different parts, as consisting of ordinances, statutes, and rites; together with a reference to the place and time when the address was delivered.

VERSE 44

"And this is the Law which Moses set before the children of Israel!" — The verses that follow to the end of this chapter introduce the section of the Law that extends to ch. 26:19.

VERSE 45

*"These are the testimonies" — The word "testimonies" is from the Hebrew *edoth*, the plural of *edah*, signifying "witness". The word relates to ordinances which were attested or witnessed and confirmed by Yahweh. See ref. to the keeping of these in Deut. 6:17,20.*

*"And the statutes" — The Heb. word *choqim* is from a root signifying to engrave. The word relates to those laws that were enforced by commands or decrees. Some render it as the decrees.*

*"And the judgments" — The word *mishpatim* relates to verdicts that have been given.*

*"Which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, after they came forth out of Egypt" — The reference is not immediately to their exit from Egypt, but during the course of their wanderings until they arrived at the spot opposite Jericho. Literally, "after they came forth" — can be rendered in *their coming out*. It therefore defines the period of time from leaving Egypt until they arrived at the place of entrance on the eastern bank of the Jordan.*

VERSE 46

"On this side Jordan, in the valley over against Beth-Peor" — Beth-Peor was the

place of transgression (see ch. 3:29). The sin of Beth-Peor was fresh in their minds, whilst many must still have been mourning the result of the severe punishment they had received. It was a salutary warning of the grave consequences of such wickedness.

“In the land of Sihon, King of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, after they were come forth out of Egypt” — For further details of this victory, see Num. 21:24; Deut. 1:4. This verse significantly draws attention to two places; one, the place of transgression, Beth-Peor; and the other, the place of victory; the land of Sihon. The alternative before Israel presented by these two places was sin and failure, or obedience and victory.

VERSE 47

“And they possessed his land, and the land of Og, King of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, which were on this side Jordan towards the sun rising” — Reference to the victory over Og is found elsewhere; see Deut. 3:3-4. The occupation of the

lands of these two mighty conquerors, was a token that all of Canaan could be Israel's, if the people remained faithful to Yahweh, and obedient to the Law (see Josh. 1:6-8).

VERSE 48

“From Arer, which is by the bank of the river Arnon, even unto Sion, which is Hermon” — For further reference see Deut. 2:36. The word *Sion* signifies “elevated” or “lofty”. It was an additional name for Mt. Hermon (Deut. 3:8-9).

VERSE 49

“And all the plain on this side Jordan, eastward, even unto the sea of the plain, unto the springs of Pishgah” — The “sea of the plain”, or of the *Arabah*, is what is known today as the Dead Sea. The term “the springs of Pishgah” — can be better rendered *the outgoings of Pishgah*, that is, the mountain torrents that flow from the heights of Pishgah, eastward, to the Dead Sea. The latter is called the Salt Sea in the Bible; never the Dead Sea.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS THE BASIS OF THE SINIATIC COVENANT

This chapter commences with the recital of the Ten Commandments, as the basis of the Covenant between Yahweh and Israel. The Covenant, though confirmed at Sinai, is shown to include the present generation, as well as the one that dismally failed to discharge its obligations, and perished in the Wilderness. Many of the present generation, as children and adolescents, were present when the Covenant was made at Horeb, and therefore are familiar with the manner of its confirmation and the requirements of its principles. They could recall the manifestations of Divine Power, which had filled their fathers with fear, causing them to plead with Moses to act as mediator for the nation. The chapter concludes with expressing the concern of Yahweh that the new generation will fail to carry out the principles of the Covenant that it has agreed to observe. It terminates with

an exhortation that continued national prosperity and even existence are dependant upon the scrupulous observance of the terms of the Covenant.

Circumstances of the giving of the Covenant — vv. 1-5

These words are introductory to the Section, and claim that the Covenant made with the fathers of Israel at Horeb, is a national Covenant, and therefore involves the present generation, as much as it did the previous one.

VERSE 1

“And Moses called Israel, and saith unto them” — The statement does not mean that Moses gathered the people to him, in order to address them; but rather, that their representatives having been assembled, he commenced to speak to them. The words were addressed to them as representing the whole nation, for all were involved, and it was the responsibility of all to carry out the terms of the Covenant.

“Hear O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day” — Moses called the representatives of the nation to him to plainly set before them the responsibilities resting upon the people as they were about to enter the land. This comprised his final labour of love and duty of responsibility to them prior to his death. His instructions and exhortations have powerful lessons for believers today; for although the Law is described as a “ministry of death” it is not a dead letter (2 Cor. 3:7). The enactments of the Law were, and still are, designed to enliven true Israelites to the reality of sin, and the terms of righteousness leading to the Redeemer (see Rom. 7:7-10; 10:6-11; Gal. 3:24). They were incorporated in a Covenant of Law to impress the need of faith and grace, and the complete hopelessness of mankind to effect salvation without the aid of a Redeemer. In Christ, the curse of the Law is removed (Col. 2:14; Gal. 3:13); outside of Christ it still remains, and those seeking justification by it “are (i.e. still remain) debtors to do the whole law” (Gal. 5:3). Hence the curse of the Law still remains on Israel after the flesh, because the people refuse the God-given means to remove it. The Covenant of Faith, confirmed by Christ, enables the Law to be established or made honourable through him (Isa. 42:21; Matt. 5:17; Rom. 3:31). A modified form

of the Law will be introduced at the Return of Christ (see Deut. 30:5-6; Mal. 4:4), but then it will be blended with the Covenant of Grace (Jer. 31:31-34). The Mosaic Law will reveal the will of God; and the Covenant of Grace will ensure that it will be upheld, for “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31:34). Some speak of the Mosaic Covenant as though its principles are no longer binding, and that in Christ one can please himself. In Christ, the spirit of the Law is the rule of life, and that spirit is more binding than the letter (see 2 Cor. 3:6; Matt. 5:38-39).

“That ye may learn them, and keep, and do them” — There is a need to learn the requirements of the Law in order to keep it. There are three principles here expressed: learn, keep, and do. The word “keep” is from the Hebrew *shamar* and signifies “to hedge about, guard, or protect”. Once an Israelite came to “learn” the Law, he had to ever keep its commandments in mind, so that his life might be dominated by them. This is the sense of the word “keep”; it expresses a mental attitude to the Law which is followed by performance. Young renders the statement as “observed to do”. The Law was not intended merely as an academic exercise, but as a guide to the thought and conduct expected of true Israelites.

VERSE 2

“Yahweh our God made a covenant with us in Horeb” — The Covenant to which Moses refers was that made with the nation “in Horeb”. The “us” comprised the previous generation at the time, as representing all generations of the nation. The Mosaic Covenant was a national Covenant and not a personal one as is the Abrahamic Covenant. Having been made with the nation, the responsibilities attached thereto remain binding upon that nation in all its generations. The word “made” is from the Hebrew *karath* and signifies “to cut”. It relates to the confirming of a Covenant by sacrifice, and the only Covenant that was thus confirmed at that time, was the Mosaic Covenant made at Horeb. Horeb and Sinai are two peaks on one plateau as described in our notes on Exodus (pp. 215-216). The angel spake

to the nation from Horeb, but spake with Moses on Sinai.

VERSE 3

"Yahweh made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us" — The term "our fathers" relates not to those who came out of Egypt, and received the covenant at Horeb, but to the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as expressed in Deut. 4:37. The Abrahamic covenant is distinct from the Mosaic covenant, as Paul clearly shows in Hebrews 8. The Abrahamic covenant is there styled "a new covenant" (v. 8), and is contrasted with the covenant made with the people when they were taken out of Egypt and which is described as the "old covenant" (v. 9). The Abrahamic Covenant, although given first, is called "a new covenant", because it was not completed until confirmed by the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 15:8). When it was confirmed, it replaced the old covenant for those who are prepared to endorse it in Christ (see Heb. 8:13). "Our fathers" are defined elsewhere as "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Deut. 6:10).

"But with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day" — By "us", is meant Israel as a nation. It was to such that the covenant was made (see Exod. 19:9, 18, 19), and by "all of us" is meant all of the tribes. That is how Paul uses the expression in Rom. 11:26: and "so all Israel shall be saved". Paul does not mean that every Israelite shall be saved, but the nation as a whole, comprising 12 tribes shall be saved. Hence, in the verse before us, Moses reminded the people of Israel, that the whole nation, the twelve tribes, were involved in the covenant that was made at Sinai, and therefore, an equal responsibility rested upon each one to fulfil the terms of it.

VERSE 4

"Yahweh talked with you face to face in the mount, out of the midst of the fire" — This statement endorses our comments upon the previous verse. It shows beyond all doubt that the Covenant to which Moses referred was that confirmed at Sinai. In stating "Yahweh talked with you" he referred to the nation as a whole, and was not speaking of a new covenant made with the current generation in contrast to the previous one. He reminded the people that they owed their privileged position to the Covenant that was made

with them as a nation at Sinai.

VERSE 5

"I stood between Yahweh and you at that time to show you the Word of Yahweh" — As recorded elsewhere, Moses acted as a Mediator between Yahweh and the people, thus typing the work of the Lord Jesus Christ (see Exod. 19:16; 20:18-21; Gal. 3:19). The terms of his mediatorialship are further outlined in the chapter before us in vv. 25-27.

"For ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount" — See the historical details in Exod. 19:16; 20:18; 24:2.

The Ten Commandments As The Basis Of The Covenant — vv. 6-21

This recapitulation of the Ten Commandments, should be compared with that in Exod. 20:1-17. Although there are slight differences of expression, the two accounts are substantially the same. Additional interpretations, or explanations, are given in the account before us, that relate particularly to life in the land.

VERSE 6

"I am Yahweh thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" — The Ten Commandments are introduced by reference to the Divine Covenant Name. That Name forms the basis of the Mosaic Covenant, as well as the Abrahamic Covenant confirmed by Christ. The terms of either Covenants require separation from the world and dedication unto Yahweh. Hence, in the verse before us, Israel is reminded of their status as an Ecclesia (Acts 7:38). They were brought out of Egypt, from the house of bondage, or slavery. Similarly, those in Covenant relationship with Yahweh through Christ, are separated from the world unto Him. Simeon declared "God is taking out of the Gentiles a people for His Name" (Acts 15:14). The word Ecclesia defines a people called out by invitation. The verse before us illustrates that principle.

VERSE 7

"Thou shalt have none other Gods before me" — This is cited from Exod. 20:3, and forms the basis of such teaching as is found in Matt. 4:10; 1 John 5:21. The basic principle of the Law is that the people are to allow no other god to intrude between Yahweh and His redeemed people.

VERSE 8

"Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth" — See Exod. 20:4. This second command forbids idolatry the building of idols for the purpose of worship.

VERSE 9

"Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them" — This statement should be linked with that of v. 8. The prohibition is against carving statues, or painting pictures for the purpose of worship.

"For I Yahweh am a jealous God" — See Exod. 20:5; 34:14. Yahweh reveals Himself to the people in the terms of human relationships. He is represented as the husband of Israel, and the nation is treated as His bride (Isa. 54:5; Lev. 20:26). As such He is not prepared to share her affection with any other. Accordingly, He laid down the terms of the Law of Jealousy (see Num. 5:11-31). As a Jealous God, Yahweh demanded undivided loyalty. The word "God" *El* or *Power*. His mighty power is manifested in the creative sphere, and demonstrates His ability to rebuke and punish those who prove unfaithful to Him. The title reminds us that the same God who is capable of great love, is also capable of great jealousy. His people must choose between giving unto Him their complete dedication in order to enjoy the love which is so profitable to them, or the wrath that they will earn by unfaithfully sharing that love with other gods.

"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me" — See also Exod. 34:7; Jer. 32:18; Dan. 9:4-9; Matt. 23:35-36; Rom. 12:19. That children suffer for the sins of their parents is beyond doubt. They can also benefit from the wise guidance, upbringing, and discipline of Godly parents. These are the facts of life as God has made it: a social bond, that imposes a tremendous responsibility upon parents. Children are a heritage of Yahweh (Psa. 127:3), and as such should be brought up "in the nurture and admonition (discipline) of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). The greatest heritage that parents can grant their children is a knowledge of the Truth, together with an example as to how it should be lived.

VERSE 10

"And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments" — See Exod. 34:7, and note the additional explanatory comment of the verse before us: "of them that hate Me". There is no injustice with Yahweh. If a son of an impious Israelite turns to Him (as did Hezekiah, the son of wicked Manasseh), the sins of his father will not rest upon him (Ezek. 18:14-17). They will do so, however, if children imitate the actions of their godless parents, and manifest indifference towards Yahweh. But where He is honoured, His grace will prove to be greater than His anger. That is the encouragement of the verse before us. Whereas, iniquity is visited upon the third and fourth generations, Yahweh's mercy is extended to thousands of generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments (See also Jer. 32:18; Dan. 9:4). The word "mercy" is from the Hebrew *chesed*, and signifies special favour rather than mercy in the common sense of the forgiveness of sins. Some renditions give the word as *steadfast love*, or *loving kindness*, as expressive of the boundless love of God towards His own. In Psa. 86:2 one form of the word is rendered *holy*, though the margin gives it as *one whom Thou favourest*. This captions the special favour that Yahweh, as Father, extends towards believers as His children. It not only provides for the forgiveness of sins, but many other material and spiritual benefits including life eternal. The special position of favour enjoyed by such is expressed in Isa. 54:17; Rom. 8:28. However, this manifestation of Divine favour should call forth a response. Yahweh's children are described as those who "love" Him (see Deut. 6:4-5). Love demands more than mere sentimentality; it requires more than a pious emotion expressing itself in platitudes of praise. Love is manifested by self-sacrificing obedience to the will and commandments of Yahweh (See John 14:15,21-23; 15:14; 1 John 5:2-3; 2 John 6). It is expressed in deeds, not merely in words.

VERSE 11

"Thou shalt not take the name of Yahweh thy God in vain" — The third commandment prohibits the uttering of oaths in the Name of Yahweh, with no intention of fulfilling what is promised. One of the marks of true worship is the fulfilling of vows, or the faithful carrying out of

anything promised in the Name of God. To do so is to honour and reverence His Name, and therefore to elevate Him as One who is both faithful and to be respected. The verb in the verse before us is taken from the Hebrew *nasa*, "to lift", thus: "thou shalt not lift up (or elevate before others) the Name of Yahweh thy God in vain". To treat the worship of God lightly is to fall foul of this command. To promise something in the Name of God and not carry it out, is to elevate His Name as of small account. Yahweh's Name can be lifted up in vain or lightly esteemed before men in other ways than by the glib taking of an oath with no intention of fulfilling it. A believer living inconsistently with the moral principles of the Name is described as "taking it in vain" (see Psa. 139:20; Prov. 30:9). Israelites after the flesh are deemed to have "profaned the name" by their indifference to its requirements, even though their superstitious scruples forbid them to utter it (Ezek. 36:22). Though true believers have never hesitated to use the Name, they need to treat it with the greatest care, reverence and understanding. Its principles must be acknowledged and upheld by them in action. A believer should not enforce his words by an oath, in the name of God, or any other way. His word should be his bond, and should need nothing more to validate it (see Matt. 5:33-34; James 5:12).

"For Yahweh will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain" — The greatest care needs to be exercised in the use of the Name, as well as applying the principles of it. The third commandment, therefore, is designed to inculcate principles of reverence and truth.

VERSE 12

"Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as Yahweh thy God hath commanded thee" — In Exod. 20:8-11, the Israelites are called upon to "remember" this day, but here they are instructed to "keep" it. The Hebrew *Shamar* signifies "to hedge about, to guard"; and therefore to carefully reserve the day for the purpose set down by the Law. On the other hand "remember" is from *zakar*, — "to mark or engrave upon the mind, to bring to remembrance, to think upon". There was much in the inauguration and requirements of the Sabbath Law to understand and meditate upon (see Exod. 16:22-26; Isa. 58:3-14; Heb. 4:3-11); and all were expected to bear these matters in mind. However, all Is-

raelites were not included in its restrictions. Under the Law, the Priests "profaned the sabbath, and were blameless" (Matt. 12:5). As they were engaged in the service of Yahweh every day, the Sabbath only saw for them an intensification of labour. In that way they "profaned" the Sabbath, treating it as a working day, as it was for them. That is the relationship of believers today with regard to Sabbath keeping, and the reason why it is not specifically incorporated in the Law of Christ. For a true believer, every day is a Sabbath, in which he is expected to seek rest from the works of the flesh (Heb. 4:10); and, in that way, as a priest (1 Pet. 2:5), "he remembers", and "observes" the true significance of the day. Two principles are incorporated in the word Sabbath (*shabbath*). Firstly, "to sit down, to cease, to rest"; secondly, "to sanctify, to set apart for God's use". One commentator aptly observed: "We would need fewer tranquilisers, and have fewer nervous breakdowns, if we observed this Law of spiritual and physical hygiene." Although those in Christ are not bound by the Law of the Sabbath as set down by Moses, it is a wise provision to use that day for worship that Gentile Law has set aside as a day of rest. In Exod. 20:11, the Day is linked to Yahweh's physical creation which ceased on the seventh day; whereas here, it is related to His spiritual creation in Israel as a nation in the political world (v. 15). Figuratively and prophetically the Sabbath anticipated the Seventh Millennium when the whole world will experience rest (Isa. 14:3,7; Heb. 4:8-9; 2 Pet. 3:8).

VERSE 13

"Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work" — Six is the number of flesh; seven is the number of the covenant. In all fleshly labour the covenant should be kept in mind.

VERSE 14

"But the seventh day is the sabbath of Yahweh thy God" — On that day He rested (Gen. 2:2; Exod. 16:29-30). In commemoration of that fact His true worshippers are likewise expected to rest from their own works (Heb. 4:4).

"In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant, and thy maid-

servant may rest as well as thou" — The regulations demanded rest for the entire household (Exod. 16:29). It was unlawful to light fires (Exod. 35:2-3), to carry burdens out of the city (Jer. 17:21), or engage in any other form of activity. The penalty of disobedience was death by stoning (Num. 15:32-36). The Sabbath Law was a sign between Yahweh and Israel (Exod. 31:13), and therefore, could only be properly kept by Israel when constituted as a nation in the land. How else could they exact the penalty of stoning when it is broken! It is impossible for such communities as the Seventh Day Adventists to properly keep the Sabbath Law, for they lack any right to put anyone to death by stoning as it required. Notice, in the verse before us, that the Law includes "the stranger that is within thy gates", showing that in its completeness, Sabbath restrictions had application to Israel only whilst in the land. When driven therefrom they no longer were able to keep the Sabbath in its fullness, and this became a mark of contempt on the part of the Gentiles among whom they dwelt (Lam. 1:7). It is significant that when Israel is re-established as the Kingdom of God again in the age to come, the Sabbath Law will be re-instituted. See Ezek. 44:24; 45:17; 46:3; Isa. 66:23.

VERSE 15

"And remember" — The people of Israel were constantly called upon to remember their status of privilege as Yahweh's nation, and to contrast it with what they experienced in the land of Egypt (see Deut. 9:7,27; 16:12;24:18-22). In like manner, Gentile believers in Christ are called upon to "remember" their privileged position in contrast to their previous hopeless state (see Eph. 2:11-14). It is a very salutary exercise to ponder our privileges and blessings, and to contrast them with what we once were: "without hope and without God in the world". Our present blessings, let alone those to come, for outweigh the problems and adversities of our present life.

"For thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that Yahweh thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm: therefore Yahweh thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day" — It was invaluable for Israelites to recall the miracle that had brought them out of Egypt into the privileged state they now enjoyed (See Deut. 4:34-37). Yahweh had been very

gracious to them, and they should have responded with like actions of worship. Believers in Christ need to do likewise. Figuratively they, like Israel, have been called "out of" Egypt. Once slaves in the land of sin and death, the people had been separated from out of that state, into fellowship with Yahweh. In like manner, believers in Christ were once slaves to the flesh, but have been delivered from the domination of sin (the flesh) to the glorious liberty in Christ (Gal. 5:1). The term *ecclesia* (*called out ones*) proclaims this.

VERSE 16

"Honour thy father and thy mother, as Yahweh thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee" — This fifth commandment is quoted by Paul as "the first commandment with promise" (Eph. 6:2-3). Its requirements establish the foundation of true, acceptable worship and of healthy, national wellbeing. It is associated with the first four commandments, which deal with the attitude of the Israelites towards Yahweh, because parents stand in the place of Yahweh as far as their children are concerned (1 Cor. 11:3,7); and the same respect and love that is due to them should be paid to Him. In the nation, as in the Ecclesia the family unit is the foundation of a sound social society; and is only established and maintained by proper authority and discipline (see Deut. 27:16; Prov. 30:11,17; Matt. 15:4-6). The philosophy of modern life is diametrically opposed to the teaching of this Law. Modern juvenile psychology does not require children to honour their parents, but to express themselves in complete independence of them. As a consequence of this, the "perilous times" of these last days have been noted for juvenile rebellion, and "disobedience to parents" (2 Tim. 3:2). Those who would honour God, will bring up their children according to the divine standard of behaviour.

VERSE 17

"Thou shalt not kill" — See Exod. 20:13, and note the more stringent requirements of Christ (Matt. 5:21-22), and his endorsement of this law (Luke 18:20; James 2:11). The commandment should be rendered "thou shalt not murder". The Hebrew *ratsach* is always used in this way in the Old Testament.

VERSE 18

"Neither shalt thou commit adultery" — See Exod. 20:14; Matt. 5:27-28. Adultery is unfaithfulness, and strikes at the very basis of happy married life. Those who make themselves friends of the world are treated as adulteresses in the eyes of Yahweh (see James 4:4). Their unfaithfulness strikes at the heart of true religion.

VERSE 19

"Neither shalt thou steal" — See Rom. 13:9; Eph. 4:28. Thieving, however, is a relative term. The Lord described those who entered the sheep fold by some other way than that he has laid down as "a thief and a robber" (John 10:1). A person may have an impeccable reputation as far as normal honesty is concerned, but if he robs the Word of God of its power, he is Scripturally treated as a thief. His "thieving" is a greater loss for those who suffer therefrom than those who are dishonest with material things. Complete integrity in the Word of God is required.

VERSE 20

"Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour" — This is a fault that Yahweh hates. See Exod. 20:16; Deut. 19:16-21; Prov. 6:19; 19:5,9; Mal. 3:5. Yahweh as a righteous God, demands righteous dealings in human relationships. This fifth commandment heads the remaining ones, all of which have bearing on an Israelite's dealings with his fellow Israelite.

VERSE 21

"Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is thy neighbour's" — See Exod. 20:17. Covetousness breeds dissatisfaction and discontent. Paul likens it to idolatry (Col. 3:5), because the object coveted is given that thought and adoration that should be reserved only for Yahweh. He warned the Ephesians, that "no covetous man who is an idolator hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5:5). To us covetousness may appear as a little sin; but, in fact most of the evils of humanity are traceable to it. Paul exhorted "Let your way of life be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will

never leave thee, nor forsake thee; so that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I shall not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5-6).

The ten commandments listed in the verses considered, formed the basis of the Mosaic Covenant. But the Mosaic Covenant provided no scope for a Saviour. Hence it promised life, only on the grounds of perfect obedience, and that was beyond the ability of flesh to render. Paul taught that although the Law was good in that it set forth Divine Principles of righteousness, it was "weak through the flesh" (Rom. 8:3); weak because the flesh could not keep it. He concluded: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Experience teaches what the Law established, namely, that "by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the Law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). Hence, because all Israelites broke the Law in some particular or other, it illustrated the need of a Saviour who would provide forgiveness unto eternal life. In that way, it was a "schoolmaster leading unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24). Such a Saviour is found in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose righteousness insured his resurrection to life eternal, and whose mediatorial work can deliver those who accept him as such from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13; Col. 2:13-14), so as to enable them to receive "the promise of the spirit through faith" (Gal. 3:14). By the influence of the spirit word, Gentiles can have the law so "written in their hearts" (Rom. 2:15; Heb. 10:16), as to perform the things required thereby (Rom. 2:14), and rejoice in that love which is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:9-10). By refusing the grace and forgiveness that are offered in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Jewish nation as such came under greater condemnation. Moreover, the people to this day, by continuing to rest on the Law remain as "debtors to do the whole law", which is beyond their ability to perform (Gal. 5:3). So against them the law continues to thunder forth its judgments of condemnation, and will continue to do so until the nation accepts the offer of mercy in Christ (Jer. 31:31-33).

The fact that Gentile believers in Christ "are redeemed from the curse of the law" (Gal. 3:13) does not mean that they can ignore its requirements. As Paul told the brethren in Rome, the law "is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). Therefore the princi-

ples of the law remain as a guide for true Christian conduct, whilst the baptised believer has in Christ an Advocate with the Father, as "the propitiation for his sins" (1 John 2:1-2). For him, the Law loses its fear whilst providing instruction for the moulding of his character.

Moses The Mediator of the Covenant — vv. 22-27

This section recalls the historic occasion of the giving of the Law to Israel, with all the impressive accompaniments by which it was done.

VERSE 22

"These words Yahweh spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, and of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice; and He added no more" — The Ten Commandments alone were given from Horeb (Exod. 20:1; Deut. 4:10), the rest of the Law was given by the angel bearing the Name of Yahweh to Moses who conveyed it to Israel.

"And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me" — See Exod. 24:12. The two tables of stone were given to Moses on Sinai, and not Horeb. For the difference between Horeb and Sinai, see our comments on pp. 215-216 of *The Christadelphian Expositor* on *Exodus*.

VERSE 23

"And it came to pass when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness (for the mountain did burn with fire), that ye came near unto Me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders" — See also Deut. 4:11, and the exhortation that Paul bases upon this theophany in Heb. 12:18-21. In view of the awesome and frightening manifestations of Divine power in darkness, fire, and tempest, the people requested that Moses act as Mediator. In recalling the circumstances, these verses (vv. 23-33) provide an extended version of Exod. 20:19-21. At the request of the elders, Moses agreed to act as mediator, and Yahweh approved the appointment (v. 28), because it demonstrated their humility. The terror of the occasion filled them with fear, and made them aware of their sinfulness, and their unworthiness of direct approach unto Yahweh. Such a reverential fear is a good thing, and is indeed the firstfruits of true knowledge (Prov. 1:7). The familiarity which some manifest

in their approach to Yahweh in prayer is offensive. In appearing before Him, we need to ever bear in mind the high and lofty status of God. He dwells in unapproachable light, surrounded by glory of such extent as our finite minds cannot grasp. Let us then be very circumspect in our approach unto Him, bearing in mind our unworthiness, and His lofty remoteness. Let the attitude of Abraham be that of his faithful children: "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto Yahweh, which am but dust and ashes" (Gen. 18:27). The word "ashes" should not be related to the ashes of a fire, but to the original Hebrew word which is from a root signifying to *disintegrate*. Abraham in his humility expressed his recognition that he had originated from the dust, and will disintegrate into it again, unlike Yahweh whose Divine nature is incorruptible. In view of the tremendous manifestations of power at Horeb, the people humbled themselves before Yahweh, and besought Moses that he act as Mediator for them. That, therefore, became his status as Paul observes in Gal. 3:19.

VERSE 24

"And ye said Behold Yahweh our God hath showed us His glory and His greatness" — Yahweh's glory was revealed in lightning, thunder and storm, His greatness was indicative of His power (see Rom. 11:22; Deut. 11:2).

"And we have heard His voice out of the midst of the fire, and we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth" — See Exod. 33:20. Israel had been greatly privileged to hear the voice of God. The word "God" is *Elohim*, and is expressive of Yahweh manifested through His angels. The privilege of converse with God was denied other nations (v. 26), but the fact that the people of Israel continued to live after being granted that privilege and viewing the manifestations of Divine power and glory, was evidence of Yahweh's interest in their eternal welfare, whilst demonstrating the need of reverential awe by which He should be approached. See the expressions of Moses (Exod. 3:6), Manoah (Jud. 13:22), Elijah (1 Kings 19:13), Daniel (Dan. 10:9), John (Rev. 1:17).

VERSE 25

"Now therefore, why should we die? for this great fire will consume us" — The revelation of divine glory at Sinai induced

only fear in the people without any compensating grace. This experience revealed the Law to be a "ministration of death".

"If we hear the voice of Yahweh our God anymore, then we shall die" — The proclamation of the Ten Commandments accompanied by storm, lightning, thunder and darkness caused the people to tremble and to plead for it to cease. Any more would have been completely overwhelming. The open manifestation of Divine glory is always frightening to flesh, even though it may be partially hidden through an angel (See Dan. 10:5-19; Matt. 28:2-4; Acts 9:3-9; Rev. 1:17). Though the Law was actually designed as a guide to life (Rom. 7:10) flesh, being what it is, was put in fear of death by its demands.

VERSE 26

"For who is there of all flesh that hath heard the voice of the Living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?" — This is a repetition of the statement of Deut. 4:33. However, the verse before us, provides another Divine title in the Hebrew words *Chayim Elohim* here rendered "Living God". Though the fact of Yahweh's living presence had been directly expressed to Moses, in the declaration of Numbers 14:21: "Truly I live . . ." this is the first occurrence of *Chayim Elohim* as a title. According to *The Companion Bible*, it is always used, latent or expressed, in contrast with lifeless idols. For example, when the people of Lycaonia desired to worship Paul and Barnabas, they protested saying: "We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the Living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein" (Acts 14:15). Again, in writing to the Thessalonians, Paul commented: "Ye turned from idols to serve the Living and True God" (1 Thess. 1:9). As a Living God, Yahweh's presence should always be acknowledged. On the other hand, idols do not live, and therefore are impervious to the needs of their worshippers. This seems so obvious today so as to arouse a wonder that Israelites should ever turn from God to worship idols, but it should be borne in mind that the ancient Israelites did not worship the idol, but what the idols represented to them. To them the idol was merely a token of the god represented thereby, which they believed to be a god of power. There is widespread idolatry today, for Paul declared that "Covetousness, is idolatry"

(Col. 3:5). God knows the needs of His worshippers and will provide, and to effectively worship Him as the Living God they need to have faith to recognise this, and to be mentally conscious of His Living presence in their lives; even in the common humdrum circumstances of normal conditions.

The word "God" in the title under consideration, is the word *Elohim*, elsewhere used of the angels. They are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). Israel was very privileged to hear the Voice of the Living God, for that Voice was designed to lead them unto life. Believers in Christ have likewise heard the Voice of the Living God, as it is expressed in the Word, and that Voice likewise is designed to lead them to life.

VERSE 27

"Go thou near, and hear all that Yahweh our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that Yahweh our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it" — The awe-inspiring majesty of the Divine presence was overpowering to flesh, even though manifested through the *Elohim*. The leaders of Israel, fully convinced of the authenticity of the revelation, but feeling inadequate to act as intermediaries between the angel of Yahweh's presence and the nation, sought the help of Moses as mediator, lest they die. In accepting this position, Moses typed the "one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). There was such a deep spiritual accord between Moses and Yahweh, that he was able to approach the Divine glory to a degree impossible by others. Even so, there were limits even to his approach. See Exod. 33:20. Christ, as Mediator, is subject to no such limitation. He is at the right hand of the Father, completely at one with Him in all things, and in that regard enjoying a status superior to all others.

The closing words of this verse record the third time the people agreed to obey all the instructions of Yahweh. See Exod. 19:8; 24:3-7. But that generation failed to carry out its agreement, and perished in the wilderness. Their three-fold agreement foreshadowed the three times Peter confessed to his Lord that he would perform all things required of him, but like Israel failed to do so!

The People's Fear of Yahweh Commended — vv. 28-29

Yahweh commends the reverential fear of the people, and agrees to accept Moses as mediator.

VERSE 28

"And Yahweh heard the voice of your words when he spake unto me; and Yahweh said unto me, I have heard the voice of this people, which they have spoken unto thee; they have well said all that they have spoken" — There should be no easy, familiarity, in the approach of flesh to Yahweh. On the contrary, due consideration should be given to the great privilege of being permitted to communicate with One so lofty, remote and majestic. Scripture constantly reminds that "the fear of Yahweh is the firstfruits of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7). Such a fear, therefore, is the foundation of proper worship. Unfortunately, it is not frequently found. This is an age of disrespect; when children are often encouraged to please themselves even at the expense of their parents; and when individuals assert rights and liberties, and assume equality with those in authority, that is not conducive to good conduct, nor proper control. In worldly matters, this is comparatively unimportant, but in the things of God, it is reprehensible, and can destroy any hope of eternal life. Yahweh desires a reverential fear that results in the keeping of His commandments on the part of those who would approach Him aright. Moreover, experience teaches that such an attitude will bring blessings now, as well as in the future.

VERSE 29

"O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always" — The Hebrew of this verse is very significant. It reads: *mee yittain wehayah levavom zeh lahem* which has been rendered: "Who will give that there may be such a heart in them?" The implication of this statement is that the people's hearts were resistant to the appeal of Yahweh, and who could supply new hearts? David, at the time of his transgression, recognised that it must come from Yahweh. He pleaded: "Create in me a clean heart, O God" (Psa. 51:10). See also Deut. 32:28-29; Psa. 81:13; Isa. 48:18; Matt. 23:37.

The heart that Yahweh desires His worshippers to manifest is one governed by reverence and love. Emphasis is given to this

in the following chapter (Ch. 6:2,13,24). It is possible to revere or fear Yahweh without keeping His commandments; so fear should motivate obedience. The people were required to "keep" Yahweh's commandments out of both fear and love (Deut. 5:10). A contemplation of His eminence, power, majesty, remoteness and glory will induce a feeling of awe and fear; and when to this, thought is given to His great kindness, His many acts of grace and condescension in helping those who trust Him, fear or reverence is blended with love; and this is reinforced when His grand promises are brought to mind.

The word "keep" is from the Hebrew *shamar*, and signifies "to guard or protect". The word occurs some 55 times or more throughout Deuteronomy, and therefore constitutes one of the great text-words of the book. According to the *Theological Word Book of the Old Testament*, "The basic idea of the root is 'to exercise great care over' . . . Secondly it expresses the careful attention to be paid to the obligations of a covenant, or laws, and statutes. This is one of the most frequent uses of the verb. Thus in Gen. 18:19 Abraham is to command his children to keep the way of the Lord, that is, give careful heed to God's ways (cf. also Exod. 20:6; Lev. 18:26; Deut. 26:16; Ezek. 11:20). It should be noted that the observance of God's laws was not to be a matter of theory only or of perfunctory compliance. The expression 'to do them' is frequently appended, such as in Ezek. 37:24. Proverbs 4:21 states "they are to be kept in the heart".

To "keep" all Yahweh's statutes and commandments, therefore, is to always have them in mind, to watch over them as a guard might something precious given into his care; with the object, of course, of performing what is required. To "keep" them in that way implies pondering the meaning and purpose of the laws, as well as recalling the actual requirements of them.

"That it may be well with them, and with their children, for ever!" — The basis of a happy and successful life is to live in conformity with the will of Yahweh. To do otherwise, is to invite frustration and failure. The constant exhortation of Deuteronomy is to the former. Note the appeals of ch. 4:40; 5:16; 6:3,18; 12:25,28; 19:13; 22:7. See also Psa. 19:11; Isa. 3:10; Eph. 6:6-8; James 1:25. True happiness, both now and in the future is bound up in

discipline and obedience. Sacrifice is the gateway to satisfaction. Faith, hope and love, if merely considered as abstract, academic terms, are not sufficient. They must be transmitted into action. "Let us love, not in word only, but in deed and truth," is the exhortation of the Apostle (1 Jhn. 3:18). James taught that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26), and Paul declared that we are "saved by hope", that is if we are motivated thereby (Rom. 8:24). In Scripture these terms are given concrete meanings that demand action in the lives of believers.

Moses Stands Before Yahweh — vv. 30-31

The people are allowed to return to their tents, but Moses is detained to wait upon Yahweh to receive the full revelation.

VERSE 30

"Go say to them, get you into your tents again" — Yahweh accepted the petition of the people to speak with them through a mediator, and dismissed them to their tents.

VERSE 31

"But as for thee, stand thou here by Me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it" — Moses' appointment as Mediator for the people was confirmed by Yahweh. It is illustrative of the doctrine of God manifestation that whilst the verse represents Yahweh as speaking unto Moses (v. 28), in fact He spoke unto him through angelic mediation. Paul made this clear in Gal. 3:19 "It (the Law) was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator". Yahweh never left His abode in the heavens, but acted on behalf of His people through angelic intermediaries (See Psa. 103:19-22). Michael the archangel was placed over the others (see Exod. 23:20-23; Josh. 5:13-15), and was styled "the angel of His presence" (Isa. 63:9). Likewise, in the age to come, all the redeemed will possess Divine nature, but the Lord Jesus Christ, in status or name, will be supreme over all others (Phil. 2:9-11). Though all will bear the Name of Yahweh (see Zech. 14:9; Rev. 3:12), He will manifest Him in the completest sense. So with the angels who ministered to Moses and Israel at this time: there were gradations of rank among them.

The commandments delivered to Israel were designed to provide the basis of government and living conditions in the land which the people were to inherit. In similar manner, the commandments of Christ not only indicate what is expected of believers now, but also indicate the basis of living as it will be enjoyed on earth during the Millennium.

The People's Responsibility To Keep the Covenant — vv. 32-33

The chapter closes with a reminder by Moses of the obligation of the people to keep the commandments. Only by so doing would they find that their occupation of the land would prove successful.

VERSE 32

"Ye shall observe to do therefore as Yahweh your God hath commanded you" — As the Mediator requested by the people, and authenticated by Yahweh, Moses commands them how they should act. The word "observe" is from the Hebrew *shamar*, for which see note on v. 29. As there noted the word occurs some 55 times or more in Deuteronomy, and the frequency of its use was intended to impress every individual with his or her responsibility to constantly bear in mind what Yahweh required of each one.

"Ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" — A straight course is demanded of true Israelites (Matt. 7:13-14). See the constant exhortation to that end: Deut. 17:20; 28:14; Josh. 1:7; 23:6; Prov. 4:27. Deviations are always bad. Although they might commence with but a slight divergence, the further they proceed, the wider they spread. Success for Israel depended upon Yahweh's blessing, and that depended upon the nation walking the straight and narrow path.

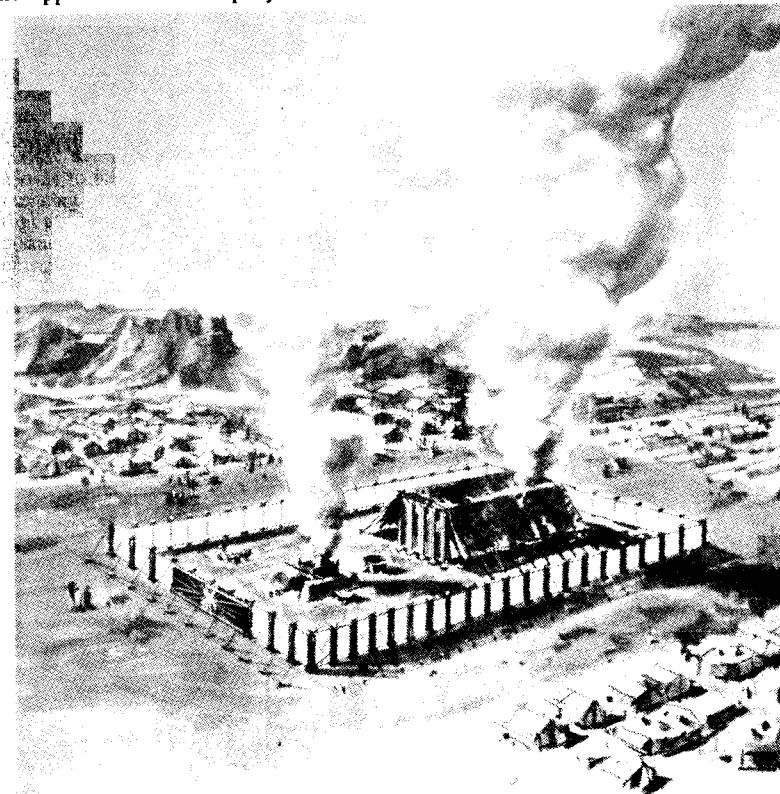
VERSE 32

"Ye shall walk in all the ways which Yahweh your God hath commanded you" — See Deut. 10:12; 30:16; Psa. 119:6; Jer. 7:23; Luke 1:6; 1 Tim. 4:8. It is worth noting that though the plural "ways" is given in the A. V. the singular *way* is found in the Hebrew. References to this *way* are frequent throughout the Word. The Cherubim were set up east in Eden in order to keep *the way* to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24). They acted as priests, both protecting and preserving open *the way* to salvation (Heb. 1:14). The term is used significantly throughout Scripture for

God's *way* of salvation. In Noah's day the people "corrupted His way" (Gen. 6:12); Moses pleaded, "shew me Thy way" (Exod. 33:13); David declared that the meek "will He teach His way" (Psa. 25:9); Isaiah spake of "The way of holiness" (Isa. 35:8); "the way of Yahweh" (Isa. 40:3); "the way of understanding" (Isa. 40:14); "a way for the ransomed" (Isa. 51:10); "the way of peace" (Isa. 59:8). Note how the Gospel message is frequently described merely as "the way" (Acts 9:2; 16:17; 19:9,23; 22:4). Now contrast Yahweh's way with the way of the sinner (Psa. 1:1); "a way that seemeth right" (Prov. 14:12); "his own way" (Isa. 53:6); "the way of Egypt" (Jer. 2:18); "the way of the heathen" (Jer. 10:2); "the way of Balaam" (2 Pet. 2:15); "the way of Cain" (Jude 11). The choice of "ways" is not exclusive to national Israel, but is open to all who would worship Yahweh in truth and the appeal is summed up by the Lord

Jesus: "Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat, but strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).

"That ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess" — These important words show that Israel did not occupy the land on the everlasting basis as promised in the covenant made with Abraham, but on a *tenancy at will* occupation. Their continued presence there was conditional upon obedience. The subsequent dispersion of Israel, therefore, did not denote a failure of Yahweh's purpose, but was in full accord with the terms by which they entered the land under Joshua. See note on Deut. 4:40.



2. WHAT THE COVENANT DEMANDS

Ch. 6:1-26:19

Having reviewed the Divine Covenant as given at Sinai, Moses now in a long discourse, shows what this covenant demands in acts of practical obedience. This long section of Deuteronomy can be epitomised as follows:

- Attitude Towards Yahweh — Ch. 6*
- Attitude as a Holy Nation — Ch. 7*
- Attitude Towards Yahweh's Word — Ch. 8*
- Attitude Towards Divine Blessings and Mercies — Ch. 9,10,11*
- Attitude Towards Matters of Divine Worship — Ch. 12,13*
- Attitude Towards Yahweh as His Children — Ch. 14,15*
- Attitude Towards Yahweh's Appointed Times — Ch. 16:1-17*
- Attitude Towards Crime — Ch. 16:18-17:20*
- Attitude Towards Yahweh's Ministers — Ch. 18*
- Attitude Towards Mutual Antagonisms — Ch. 19*
- Attitude Towards Warfare — Ch. 20*
- Attitude Towards Human Life and Rights — Ch. 21*
- Attitude Towards Civil Responsibilities — Chs. 22,23,24,25*
- Attitude In Presenting Tithes — Ch. 26*

This section of Deuteronomy, therefore, reveals the practical requirements of the Law in daily living.

CHAPTER SIX

ATTITUDE TOWARDS YAHWEH

'Israel is exhorted to observe all of Yahweh's commandments. In urging this Moses shows that the fear of Yahweh in the heart of worshippers is a most powerful incentive to obedience (see vv. 2,13,24). A key verse is verse 3, for therein Moses emphasises that the success of the impending invasion rests not with the military skill of the army, but with the attitude of the people towards the commandments of Yahweh. The exhortation is founded upon the Ten Commandments, since they are the basis of the covenant with God, and form the very nucleus of His Law to Israel. Yahweh is to be elevated in every avenue of life, and the people are promised if this becomes their motivation, prosperity will be theirs. The Chapter commences with an Intro-

duction (vv. 1-3), shows the need to elevate Yahweh in all avenues of life (vv. 4-15), and promises prosperity if this is done (vv. 16-25).

Introduction to Yahweh's Commandments, Statutes, and Judgments — vv. 1-3

Again Moses emphasises the need of the people to fear Yahweh, and keep His commandments, to ensure success in the impending invasion. The happiness, and continued prosperity of the people in the land, depends entirely upon their attitude towards Yahweh and His Law. It is important to notice the similar exhortation of the prophet like unto Moses, as expressed in his discourse on the Mount. See Matt. 7:24-29.

VERSE 1

"Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which Yahweh your God commanded to teach you" — The word "commandments" though given in the plural, is the word *mitsvah* in the Hebrew, and is in the singular number. It can be rendered "command" or "charge". The exhortation of Moses to Israel, prior to the nation commencing its war of conquest is similar to that used by Paul to Timothy; for the predominate theme of 1 Timothy is "the charge". His instruction is summed up in the statement: "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy . . . that thou mightest war a good warfare" (1 Tim. 1:18). References to the charge are found in 1 Tim. 1:3,5,18; 4:11; 5:7,21; 6:13,14. In his Second Epistle, Paul urged that the charge that he had committed to Timothy, should be passed on to others, that they may continue in the course Apostolically set down (2 Tim. 2:2). So the charge has passed on to believers, the Israel of God, throughout the ages.

"Which Yahweh your God commanded to teach you" — The word "teach" is *lamad* and signifies "to goad". The goad was a long instrument with a sharp pointed end that was used to prick animals into activity. It was not a pleasant means of locomotion; but it was a most effective one. It induced pain, and to avoid this the animal gave added effort to performing that which was bidden of it. Paul received his revelation on the way to Damascus, and he heard the voice of the Lord saying "It is hard for thee to kick against the

pricks" (of the goad) (Acts 9:5). An animal kicking against the goad only added to its discomfort and frustration whilst experiencing greater pain. So it is with the commands of Yahweh. To rebel against them is to experience greater pain, as the experience of Israel illustrates.

"That ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it" — The Law required performance on the part of those who had embraced the covenant of Yahweh. The truth is not a mere academic exercise. Its doctrines must be transmitted into action before its purpose is manifested in a believer's life. The latter part of the clause before us is better rendered in the Hebrew as "ye pass over to possess it". Israel had to *pass over* the River Jordan in order to possess the land of promise. Their action in so doing typed a believer's baptism into Christ: so necessary to obtain an inheritance in the age to come.

VERSE 2

"That thou mayest fear Yahweh thy God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments" — The basic purpose of Divine revelation is to create fear or reverence in the hearts of believers. This, says Prov. 1:7 according to the Hebrew, is the "firstfruits of knowledge". In other words, if the knowledge of God and His revelation does not induce this fear, it has failed to perform its basic purpose. The Law required that firstfruits be given unto Yahweh; and as reverence towards Him comprise the firstfruits of increase in the harvest of the Truth, it should be shown towards Him. The Proverbs declare that if a person will "cry after knowledge," he shall "understand the fear of Yahweh, and find the knowledge of God" (Prov. 2:5). This fear will manifest itself in a practical obedience to God's will. "The fear of Yahweh is to hate evil: pride and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate" (Prov. 8:13). However, whilst fear, or reverence comprise the *firstfruits* of knowledge, love is its *completeness*, the finality of it, the end in view. So Paul exhorted: "Above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness", or completeness (Col. 3:14). John

teaches that perfect love casteth our fear (1 John 4:18); but the problem is to fully manifest this positive divine characteristic! It is an attitude that needs to be developed through the word. For "love is of God".

"To keep all His statutes, and His commandments which I command thee" — Fear of God and love for God to be valid must be manifested in action, and not merely expressed in word. John exhorted: "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). And what is love? John answers simply and clearly: "This is love that we walk after His commandments" (2 John 6). Love of Yahweh is revealed by reverence and obedience, not in pious platitudes in the absence of action.

"Thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life" — This command makes the development of Divine characteristics a family project, which is as it should be. Children are described as the "heritage of Yahweh" (Psa. 127:3). Their education should be a matter of serious concern. Particularly in relation to the things of God. The Bible is insistent on this. Abraham was commended because he educated his family in Divine principles (Gen. 18:19); Moses ordered parents to explain the significance of religious services to their children (Exod. 12:26-27; 13:14-15); the Psalmist emphasised the importance of teaching children the facts concerning Yahweh's dealings with his people (Psa. 78:4-6); and Paul, expounding this need for the guidance of Ecclesias, advocated that parents should "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). The word "nurture" is from a Greek word signifying *to chastise with physical correction*, so the Apostle endorsed the wisdom of Solomon (see Prov. 22:6).

"All the days of thy life" — There is no age of retirement for such duties as these. Hence the law impressed upon parents that they should continue to instruct, not only their children, but their grandchildren as well.

"And that thy days may be prolonged" — See note Deut. 4:40; Prov. 3:1-2.

VERSE 3

"Hear, therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it" — The Hebrew word "hear" *shama*, signifies to hear with attention seeking to understand and with intent of

applying. Such a "hearing" demands a concentration of the mind on the object of it. But the instruction of Moses was not merely to hear with understanding, but to exert individual will to perform its requirements. The word "observe" is *shamar*, the meaning of which we have discussed in our notes on Ch. 5:29. Three things are thus commanded: Hear with understanding; Hedge it about so as to bring it ever to mind; Heed it by performing what is required.

"That it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily" — Prosperity is promised from Yahweh if performance is maintained by the people. Accordingly, their best investment for material increase was to develop their spiritual qualities! If they manifested self-sacrifice in so doing,



Bar Mitzvah, or Ceremony of the Son of the Commandment. At the age of 12 years, Jewish boys attain unto this status and assume a responsibility to observe the commandments of the Law. They are depicted above as reading from the Torah (the Pentateuch) during the ceremony. It is significant, that at the age of 12, the Lord was taken to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover (Luke 2:42). The upbringing of children was an important feature of the Mosaic Covenant.

Yahweh would make up any loss! Abram had been promised that he would develop into a great nation with a numerous progeny (Gen. 12:2; 15:5; 22:17), but whether that promise would be fulfilled in the generation of Israelites whom Moses then addressed, depended upon whether the members thereof built into their characters the qualities of their great patriarch. The previous generation had perished in the wilderness: a grim reminder that merely to lay claim to the name of Israel (or *Christadelphian* for that matter) is no guarantee that the promise will be fulfilled in such. This depends upon the development of divine qualities in flesh — whether Israelitish or Gentile.

"As Yahweh God of thy fathers hath promised thee" — The opportunity was theirs, but whether they gained the promise depended upon the extent they applied themselves to obeying Yahweh's will then. The promise had been made, and would be fulfilled, but they had to play their part in order to share its fruits.

"In the land that floweth with milk and honey" — The land before them was a land of fruitfulness and sweetness; its products both nourishing and strengthening. See the promise of this to Moses in Exod. 3:8.

Yahweh To Be Foremost In All Things — vv. 4-15

As Yahweh is to be foremost in the minds and lives of true Israelites that which is expected of them towards Him is first set down. Verse 4-5 comprise what Hebrews call the Shema (the Hebrew name for Hear!), and what is recognised by them as the foundation of all true Law and Morality. The things relating to the Shema are divided into two parts: The first section (vv. 4-15) demands that Yahweh be placed foremost in all things: homes, families and worship being governed by His will. In recognition of His goodness Israelites are to respond with reverential respect by excluding all idolatrous worship. Israelites are to love Him personally; to educate their children to do so; to dedicate their homes to Him; and to thoroughly exclude all idolatry such as might interfere with their worship before Him. They are to recall His power, and to fear His Name constantly.

VERSE 4

"Hear, O Israel" — The appeal is to Israel, for only true Israelites are invited to the worship of Yahweh. A Gentile can

only do so by embracing the Hope of Israel (Acts 28:20; Eph. 2:11-14). The term, *Israel* as signifying a *Prince with El* (God) is relevant to that relationship.

"Yahweh our God is one Yahweh" — This is the basic teaching of Judaism. True Israelites worship one God, and reject as fundamental error the trinitarian concept of so-called Christianity. And yet this very statement has been used by Trinitarians to support their teaching. What it does support, is not God in trinity; but God in multiplicity: that is, *God-manifestation*. It is claimed by some, that a better rendition is: Yahweh our God (*Elohim*); Yahweh is one. The Jewish Version of the Pentateuch renders it in that way. It does, perhaps, more clearly express the beautiful doctrine of God-manifestation incorporated in the Declaration than does the rendition of the A.V. The word "God" is *Elohenu*, or *Elohim* with the first personal possessive plural suffix appended, hence "our God" or *Elohim*. But the word *Elohim* is a plural word, signifying *Mighty Ones*, and Trinitarians seize on this, and declare that the "mighty ones" of the Declaration are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. However, fatal to this reasoning, Scripture knows nothing of such teaching. Brother Thomas, in *Elpis Israel* lays down a sound principle of interpretation concerning the Godhead. He wrote:

"A first principle with me in all reasonings upon this subject is, that 'there is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all' his spiritual family. Another axiom is, that 'He is the blessed and Only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who ONLY hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; WHOM NO MAN HATH SEEN, nor can see' (1 Tim. 6:15; 1:17). And again, 'God is Spirit'; (John 4:24); and He is 'incorruptible' (Rom. 1:23). THE INCORRUPTIBLE SPIRIT DWELLING IN LIGHT is the scripture revelation of the undefinable essence of the self-existent Eternal One, who is from everlasting to everlasting, God. What His essence consists in, He has not revealed; He has made known to us His name, or character, which is enough for men to know; but to say, that, because He is a spirit, He is therefore 'immaterial', is to speak arrant nonsense; for immateriality is nothingness; a quality, if we may so speak, alien to the universe of God.

"No man," says Jesus, 'hath seen God

at any time'; but Adam, Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, saw the Elohim and their Lord; therefore *Elohim* and the Everlasting Father are not the same.

"Elohim is a name bestowed on *angels* and *orders of men*. It is written, 'worship Him all Elohim' (Psa. 97:7). This is quoted by Paul in the first chapter of Hebrews, as a command of the Everlasting Father to the angels, that they should do homage to the Lord Jesus as His Son, when he shall introduce him into the world again at the opening of the Future Ages. It is also written concerning him, 'Thou hast made him a little lower than the Elohim'. Paul applies this to Jesus, saying, 'we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels'. He continued inferior to them a little upwards of thirty years, from his birth of the flesh to his resurrection; when he was exalted far above them in rank and dignity, even to the 'right hand of power', which is enthroned in light, where dwells the Majesty in the heavens". (*Elpis Israel* p. 182-183).

The word *Elohim*, most often translated God is rendered *angels* in Psalm 8:5, and this rendition is given inspired endorsement by Paul in Hebrews 2:7. The word is also applied to Moses in Exod. 4:16; 7:1. The fact that it is printed as *god* instead of *God* in the English Bible is of no consequence inasmuch as the original Hebrew doesn't distinguish the word in that way (the American Revised Version has *God* not *god*). When the Jews accused the Lord of blasphemy because he identified himself with Yahweh, he answered that it was no more blasphemous for him to do that than for the word "God" to be applied to those divinely appointed leaders of Israel (howbeit mortal men) to "whom the word of God came" (John 10:35). He was citing Psa. 82:6: "I have said, Ye are Gods (*Elohim*); and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men". Though the word is printed "gods" in the A.V., the word in the Hebrew is no different to that rendered "God" in Psa. 83:1. Very often, the plural noun *Elohim* is linked with a verb in the singular number in the Hebrew. A case of this is found in Gen. 1:1. A literal rendition would be: "In the beginning Mighty Ones He created..." Though it is contrary to the normal rules of Grammar, to link a plural noun to a verb in the singular number, Brother Thomas claims that it is doctrinal, and relates to the one spirit of God or Yahweh operating through the *Elohim*, or Angels of His power. Hence he wrote, in

the section quoted from *Elpis Israel* above (but changed in later editions): "Elohim and the Everlasting Father are not the same".

However, in Gen. 1:26, the plural noun *Elohim* is joined with a verb in the plural number, and so we read: "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..." The reference is to the Elohist angels as expressed in Psalm 8:5. Adam and Eve saw and conversed with such angels (rendered "God" in the A.V.) but never "saw God" in the absolute sense of the word. When the serpent declared: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods (the RV has *God*), knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5), the identical word is used, and printed exactly the same in the Hebrew: *Elohim*, signifying *Mighty Ones*. The serpent referred to the angels, who having attained their exalted positions through probation in a previously imperfect state had personal knowledge of "good and evil". In the same way, the chief of the *Elohim* (and there are gradations of orders among the angels, such as Michael the archangel having others beneath him) is represented as saying to his angelic associates: "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil..." How could it be said that Adam had become like the Supreme God, Yahweh Himself, "who only hath immortality", who has neither beginning nor end? That was not Adam's condition before or after sin. But apply the statement to the angels who attained their exaltation through probation, and it makes sense. They had passed through a process of trial and error, and by the grace of Deity, had risen above every disability to attain unto the high position they hold under Yahweh. Therefore, at the epoch of the Fall they could view Adam and Eve with sympathetic understanding.

So, in the Declaration of Deut. 6:4, the statement *Yahweh our God; Yahweh is One*, does not endorse the doctrine of the Trinity, but the doctrine of God-manifestation: God in multiplicity. The name of God, Yahweh, is prophetic of His purpose. It is compounded of a Hebrew root, *Ehyeh*, signifying *I will be*. Hence, although the name is given in Exod. 3:14 as I AM THAT I AM, it should be rendered (as it is in the R.V. mg. and elsewhere) as I WILL BE WHOM I WILL BE. The verb *ehyeh* is found in Exod. 3:12 and there rendered "I will be with thee". Yahweh, therefore, signifies *He who will be*, and in

the text before us, He declares that He will become *Elohim*, or *Mighty Ones*. That means that He will manifest Himself in those whom He selects out of the human race for that purpose. So Simeon declared that "God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts 15:14); and the Lord declared of those who "overcome", "I will name upon them the name of my God" (Rev. 3:12). Paul taught that such are "in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2), and Peter declared that they will become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4).

The wonderful doctrine of God-manifestation, therefore, teaches that mortal, sinning creatures can, in Christ, be transformed morally (Rom. 12:1-2), to ultimately become possessors of divine nature, divine glory, and the divine name. But it is obvious, that though they will bear the divine name, glory and nature, they will not be equal with the Creator. Nor is Jesus Christ, as Paul is careful to stress in 1 Cor. 15:28, for at the epoch of his greatest triumph, at the termination of his millennial reign on earth, he will be "subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). That being the case, those "in Christ" are said to be "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17), which places the status of the Lord beneath that of his Father. He has, of course, "a name which is above every name" among men (Phil. 2:9), for upon him, in a preeminent sense, has been placed the name and authority of Yahweh. His position among the "sons of God" is that of the archangel over the other *Elohim* as Scripture reveals. An example of this is revealed in the experience of Abraham when he "entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2). There were three such who enjoyed his hospitality (Gen. 18:2), one of whom he detained whilst he pleaded through him for mercy on Sodom (v. 23); whilst the two others moved towards Sodom (v. 22; Gen. 19:11). The one Abraham detained was obviously in charge of the mission, and occupied a higher status than the other two. So will the Lord Jesus over those who will be accounted worthy to form part of the glorified multitudinous Christ in the age to come. Such a Christ will manifest the glory of Yahweh in a multitude of people "whom no man can number" (Rev. 7:9). Yet that great multitude will be "as one" in objectives and will; unified by the power of the Truth then made manifest in their very natures.

All this is incorporated in the teaching of the great *Shema* of Deut. 6:4. It declares that though Yahweh will be manifested in *Mighty Ones*, "Yahweh is One". The word "one" is *echad*, and signifies one in a collective sense; not an absolute unity as expressing one person, but a compound unity, like members of one family, or the people of one nation, or the grapes that make up one cluster. The word for absolute unity, as expressing one person, is *yacheed*; and it is significant that such a word is not used here. The meaning of *echad* is given by *Strong's Concordance* as signifying *united*. So the declaration that Israel was called upon to hear and heed proclaimed that the God whom they served is He who will be manifested in those *Mighty Ones* who will be united as one in Him.

The partial fulfilment of that prophetic name as far as earthborns are concerned will be revealed at the return of the Lord. Zechariah declares of that day: "Yahweh shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Yahweh, and His Name one" (Zech. 14:9). Here, again, the word is *echad*: one in a collective sense; for in that day the name of Yahweh will be named on all the approved (Rev. 3:12). They will be spread throughout the world to rule in the name of Yahweh under the direction of Christ (1 Peter 3:22). Hence, though a great multitude, they shall constitute one body, which shall possess the Name of Yahweh.

"And thou shalt love Yahweh thy God"

— In this declaration the *Shema* proceeds to reveal what is required of an Israelite who desires to be united with God in the way previously described. The binding principle is love. But love in such a context as this must not be confused with mere sentimentality. The love in mind is a divine love that is not inherent in flesh, but must be superimposed upon it through the Word. Such a love is of God and "out (*ek*) of God" (1 John 4:7. See notes in *From James to Jude*), and is revealed only through the Scriptures (1 John 4:16). It is a divine quality, for "God is love" — and the very construction of this statement in the Greek signifies that love is incidental to the nature of God: He cannot help but love. So that all that is in us of God would teach us that love. It comes first from Him, and can be rendered back by us to Him (1 John 4:19). It is one of the great words of the Bible, the significance of which is hard to grasp, but the fact of

which is revealed in the offering of Christ: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). In this case, the offering of love was sacrificial, and at the expense of the giver of it. Christ died that we might live, and though he undoubtedly benefited himself through his own death, that does not minimise the debt of love we owe to him, and to the Father who made the perfect sacrifice possible. Such love demands that we should love in return: that is, sacrifice our own convenience in order to please the object of our love; in the case of the verse before us: Yahweh (see Exod. 20:6; Deut. 5:10). The love of God is the distinctive mark of a true worshipper, for such will unconditionally and lovingly surrender his heart and mind to God's holy will. This love will thus become the basis of his life and being. His great ambition will be to attain unto the likeness of God in the Kingdom to be set up on earth (Rev. 3:12; 1 Cor. 15:28).

Christ taught that the noblest manifestation of that love is to so act towards one's fellowmen as to make God and His ways, beloved in their eyes (Matt. 5:16; 1 John 4:20-21). A Jewish commentator has written:

"The meaning of the love of God is that a man should be longing and yearning after the nearness of God . . . and striving to reach His holiness, in the same manner as he would pursue any object for which he feels a strong passion. He should feel that bliss and delight in mentioning His name, in uttering His praises, and in occupying himself with the words of the Torah which a lover feels towards the wife of his youth, or the father towards his only son. The earlier saints attained to such disinterested love of God; as King David said in Psalm 42:2: 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God!'"

Christ summed up the teaching of the Law as manifesting love of God and one's fellowman (Matt. 22:37-40). Paul taught

"Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). Where such love is manifested a person will fulfil God's will to the best of his ability; and where he falls short, God, in love, will forgive him.

The basis of the Law, therefore, and the basis of all true religion is the love of God; and for that to be truly effective, it must be extended towards one's fellowmen, as John taught (1 John 4:20-21).

Love is not only listed as the "greatest commandment" (Mark 12:29), but is "commended" as an essential characteristic of all who claim to be God's children (Rom. 5:8).

"With all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" — To the Hebrew, the heart was the organ of intellect, the soul represented feelings, and might spoke of being or body. Love of God, as well as love towards others requires self-sacrifice, particularly when "all" the mind, feelings and strength of being are to be given unto manifesting it.

VERSE 6

"And these words" — The "words" is a title given particularly to the Ten Commandments. See Deut. 5:22.

"Which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart" — The Ten Commandments should be constantly kept in mind so as to discipline action. As there is but One God, there is but One Love. He demands total self-surrender. See Ps. 37:31; 40:8; 119:11; Isa. 51:7.

"In thine heart" is better rendered "on thine heart". The Hebrew is *al*, "on" and is so rendered by Dr. Young. This gives point to Paul's words: "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written . . . in (or on) fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Cor. 3:3).

VERSE 7

"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children" — It is a responsibility of parents to educate their children in the ways of Truth (see Ps. 78:4-6). That was the principle laid down by the Law, and confirmed throughout the Word (Ps. 127:3; Eph. 6:4). The teaching of children primarily should be a family project. Whilst other means, such as Sunday Schools and Study Classes are legitimate, the prime responsibility rests with the head of the house. It is an Abrahamic characteristic so to do (Gen. 18:19). In Egypt, Israel has been instructed to teach

their children the significance of the religious service they conducted (Exod. 12:26-27; 13:14-15), and in expounding the Law as Moses did as recorded in the Book before us, great stress was laid upon this important duty. Every Sabbath Year, the whole nation was expected to gather together to hear the Law read; and the instructions are explicit that this gathering should include "men, and women, and children, and thy stranger (proselyte) that is within thy gates" (Deut. 31:12). The command proceeds to show that young children must not be excluded from such a service, but should be required to listen together with the adults: "And their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear Yahweh your God, as long as ye live in the Land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it" (v. 13). This includes children who had not previously joined in such a gathering, and who, therefore, would be no more than 6 years of age. It is understood, and implied in Moses' words, that they would not comprehend the significance of those things they heard, but that they would be impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, and the reverence that would be paid to the Word and the Author of it. It is quite significant that whereas when Moses made reference to the general assembly (Deut. 31:12), he stated that the purpose is that people "may hear, learn, and fear Yahweh, and observe to do the words of the Law"; when treating with the young children (v. 13) he declared they are to be attentive to the proceedings that they may "hear, and learn to fear (or reverence) Yahweh". They may not understand the full meaning of the Law as would the adults, but they would be impressed by having to remain quiet whilst it was read. By such means that would "hear, and learn to fear". It is frequently urged that as children cannot understand the words of a speaker, they should be permitted to amuse themselves, or occupy their time by some other means during meeting, but that, certainly, was not the principle of the Law as laid down here. As one who had to sit and listen in meetings as a young child without fully comprehending what it was all about, I can testify to the value of the discipline. I "heard" and learned "to fear", for if I was unduly inattentive I was warmly reminded of it later!

The Law taught the need to "teach diligently" the words of the Law. The value of so doing is expressed in such passages as Deut. 32:47; 2 Chron. 20:20. The Hebrew



Aerial View Of The River Jordan. Almost the whole of the Jordan Valley is included in this panoramic view. The foreground is part of the deepest depression where it ends in the "round plain" north of the Dead Sea. The Israelites were camped on the eastern side of this plain at the time the Discourses of Deuteronomy were delivered unto them by Moses. On the far distance on the right, nearly 100 km (70 miles) away, is the Sea of Galilee. Beyond are the Mountains of Galilee. Throughout its length the Valley lies below the level of the Mediterranean. The river, swift-flowing and winding, is but a narrow, turbid stream for most of the year. About April, it is flooded by the melting snows of Anti-Lebanon to a width of about seventy metres (210 feet).

word rendered "teach" is *shanan* signifying "to sharpen" (*shenina*), and hence to speak sharply (the same root supplies us with *shen* for tooth and suggest words that bite). In Psa. 64:3, the verb is used of sharpening the tongue, and hence to speak sharply, to rebuke. The Hebrew idiom is expressed in the statement "thou shalt rub them in", which Young renders as "repeat". Present-day child psychology disagrees with Moses' teaching, claiming that to raise one's voice in rebuke is repressive. But the prevalence of juvenile delinquency today, as predicted by Paul (2 Tim. 3:1-5) surely teaches that "God's way is best". He has children to treat with, and "needeth not that any should testify of man, for He knoweth what is in man" (John 2:25). The injunction to "teach" is found also in v. 1, but there the word is different. It is *lamad*, and signifies to "goad", an analogy taken from the long-handled, sharp-pointed instrument used to urge on stubborn oxen. Repetitive teaching (rubbing it in), sharp words of rebuke, and the incentive of the "goad" are all methods advocated by Moses.

"And shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" — The constant topic of conversation is to be the things of the Truth. Of course it is not limited to that; but such is never to be entirely left out of mind. The talk is not mere aimless conversation, but carefully thought out, effective comment. The Hebrew word *dabar*, "talk" is from a word signifying "to arrange", and hence to talk effectively: the sort of talk that Boaz and his reapers engaged in (Ruth 2:4). See Psa. 37:30; 40:9-10; 119:46; 129:8; Prov. 6:20-22. Such talk "feed many" (Prov. 10:21), and "uses knowledge aright" (Prov. 15:2,7; Mal. 3:16). It dispenses treasure (Matt. 12:35), and avoids that which would corrupt (Eph. 4:25; Col. 4:6; 1 Pet. 3:15; See Psa. 39:1).

The command of the Law requires parents to be always ready to engage in such conversation, and to do so on all occasions. "Sitting" and "walking" suggest in whatever manner one may be engaged; whilst "lying" and "rising" suggests whether late or early. See also Deut. 11:19.

VERSE 8

"And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand" — The word "sign" is

from the Hebrew *oth*, and denotes a memorial or monument; something intended to attract the attention of true Israelites. The hand is the instrument of action and labour. Activity should always conform to the will of Yahweh. See Exod. 13:9,16; Prov. 3:3; 6:21; 7:3.

"And they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes" — The eyes are the organs of intellect and direction. See Exod. 13:16; Deut. 11:18. These words were not to be taken literally, but figuratively and applied mentally. The Law did not require that Israelites should literally wear a memorial upon their hands or between their eyes, but that their labour and their vision should conform with its requirements. The Jews, however, took these words literally, and made phylacteries which they wore to demonstrate their piety. Their phylacteries were strips of parchment on which were written the passages of the Law recorded in Exod. 13:2-10,11-17; Deut. 6:4-10,13-22. These pieces of parchment were then enclosed in an appropriate box, and were bound on the foreheads or left wrists of Judaisers when at prayer or attendance at the synagogue. The Lord criticised this practice, saying: "They make broad their phylacteries . . ." (Matt. 23:5). They did this so as to be seen of men.

VERSE 9

"And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" — At Passover time, the doorposts and lintels of homes were spattered with blood, implying that the lives of those within were dedicated unto Yahweh. In addition, Jews have observed the requirements of this verse by literally inscribing extracts from the Law upon their doorposts. The word *Mezuzah* properly denotes a doorpost, but by the Jews it is the name given to a square piece of parchment, inscribed with Deut. 6:1-9; 11:13-21, rolled up in a small metal or wooden cylinder and attached to the right-hand post of the door. The idea, of course, is that the home is dedicated to the principles of the Law (cp. Deut. 11:20), and as such is under the special protection of Yahweh, as were those homes in Egypt whose doorposts and lintels were spattered with the blood of the Lamb. The real meaning of the command is that the homes of true Israelites are based on the Law, and that their family relationships are governed by it. As the Psalmist commented: "Yahweh shall preserve thy

going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore" (Psa. 121:8).

VERSE 10

"And it shall be, when Yahweh thy God shall have brought thee into the land which He swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildest not" — The Israelites were on the point of quitting a nomad life for a fixed and settled abode in the land. A double danger faced them: (1) A God-forgetting worldliness in their prosperity; (2) A false tolerance of Gentile idolatry. The former Moses attempted to guard against by the instructions now being given; the latter he warns against in Deut. 7:1-11. Worldly prosperity and affluence always tests God's people (cp. Deut. 32:15).

VERSE 11

"And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full" — To suddenly inherit such material possessions and settled abodes after spending forty years in the wilderness would impose a tremendous test on the loyalty of the people of God. Man in affluence soon forgets his previous adversity, and his dependence upon his Creator. Therefore, Moses called upon the people to constantly call to mind the goodness of Yahweh in both the spiritual and even in the material benefits received. See Deut. 8:10,12.

VERSE 12

"Then beware lest thou forget Yahweh" — This is exactly what they did (Psa. 78:11; 106:13,21): "Jeshurim waxed fat, and kicked" (Deut. 32:15). Recognising the danger of affluence, Moses called upon the people to "beware". And because salvation is a personal matter, each Israelite had to give heed to himself, to be on his guard against the tendency of the flesh to forget one's need of God once trial and adversity have been changed for affluence and ease. Moses issued four important "beware's": (1) Beware of the overshadowing angels who record for future judgment such lapses (Exod. 23:21); (2) Beware lest Yahweh and His goodness are forgotten in the abundance of material blessings received (Deut. 6:12); (3) Be-

ware lest in times of affluence the requirements of Yahweh's Laws are overlooked (Deut. 8:11); (4) Beware lest covetousness and greed blind the eyes so that the needs of the poor are ignored (Deut. 15:9). Because flesh is not always conscious of the living presence of Yahweh, the tendency is to ignore His requirements, and set them aside as of no real consequence.

VERSE 13

"Thou shalt fear Yahweh thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by His name" — These words were cited by the Lord in rebutting the tempter in the wilderness (Matt. 4:10). In fact, the statement covers the full range of worship. The first act of acceptable worship is to learn the "fear of Yahweh". See notes on Deut. 4:10. This will lead one to "serve" Him, that is, to obey Him. Finally, to "swear by His name" is to have converse with others on the basis of His revelation. So "fear" looks inwards; "serve" looks upwards; and to "swear" looks neighbourwards! To "swear by His name" required that the worshipper publicly proclaim before others the integrity of his intentions in life. This verse therefore requires that all actions are performed as before and unto Him (see Eph. 6:5-6). But the injunction of the Law was abused, and men considered their word was only binding when confirmed by an oath. This Christ prohibited, for to one who lives his life truly before God, his yea is yea and his nay is nay (Matt. 5:33-37). Therefore, true believers do not need to confirm their words by an oath, for their lives are completely given unto God.

VERSE 14

"Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you" — This prohibition states negatively what is proclaimed affirmatively in v. 13. Though the blatant paganism of those times is not in evidence today, there are forms of idolatry practiced by the Gentiles, for covetousness is idolatry, being the worship of flesh to the exclusion of Yahweh (Col. 3:5). Hence the prohibition expressed in this verse, and the warning of John to "keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21) are relevant to any age. The tendency of flesh is to be influenced by current fashions and trends, to "follow a multitude to do evil" (Exod. 23:2); and when people descend to pompously glorying in personal and material attain-

ments to the exclusion of God's way, the temptation is for others to weak-mindedly attempt to match them, and so follow them "in doing evil". Most people worship the trinity of personal prestige, power and possession, which becomes the prevailing idolatry of those that "are found about" us today. The influence is strong for saints of God to be led astray by imitating them in their God-ignoring worship.

VERSE 15

"(For Yahweh thy God is a jealous God among you)" — See comments on Deut. 5:9. The expression "among you" signifies *in the midst of you*. The symbol of Yahweh's presence in Israel was the Tabernacle. The *Shekinah* glory in the Most Holy reminded the nation that He walked in the midst of Israel (Deut. 23:14). Though they could not see Him, He could see them; and because of His proximity knew their every action. These words are in parenthesis, so that the thought of v. 14 should be carried over to the latter part of v. 15.

"Lest the anger of Yahweh thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth" — This warning is constantly reiterated. See Deut. 7:4; 11:17 etc. Yahweh is not to be trifled with: He is not willing that we share our loyalty and love of Him with other gods. We must give Him first place in our lives; to do otherwise is fatal. We are exhorted to "consider the goodness and severity of God", but to enjoy the former demands that we "continue in His goodness", that is in His truth and the moral reactions it demands (Rom. 11:22-23). In describing Yahweh's anger as being "kindled", Moses again reminded the people that their God is a devouring fire (Deut. 4:24), and therefore to be feared and obeyed. The same God who would destroy the Canaanites because of their wickedness, would also destroy the people of Israel if they failed to live up to their responsibilities and privileges. The perished previous generation was a warning of that! Every additional privilege demands a greater measure of responsibility (see Amos 3:2).

Prosperity Is Promised If Yahweh Is Obeyed — vv. 16-25

Prosperity is bound up in performance; the former is dependant upon Yahweh's goodness, and this will only be bestowed upon an obedient people.

VERSE 16

"Ye shall not tempt Yahweh your God" — To "tempt" is to test, or put to the proof. One will only do that as far as God is concerned whose faith is so weak as to doubt His ability to perform, distrusts His Word, or is in ignorance of its teaching. In refuting the suggestion made to him by the tempter, that he demonstrate his credentials as Son of God by forcing God to work a miracle (Matt. 4:7; Luke 4:12), the Lord quoted this verse together with v. 13. Christ must have meditated deeply upon this as well as other Scriptures. Truly his pondering produced fruit to the glory of Yahweh, and fortified him to resist the temptations put to him. The meditation of Scripture can assist us to the same end.

VERSE 17

"Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of Yahweh your God, and His testimonies, and His statutes, which He hath commanded thee" — See notes on v. 2.

VERSE 18

"And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of Yahweh" — The word "right" is from the Hebrew *yashar* and denotes that which is straight, or upright, or consistent with the will of Yahweh. See Deut. 12:25,28; 13:18, and the exhortation of Paul (Heb. 12:13). The word "good" denotes that which gives pleasure to Yahweh, which of course, must be that which is consistent with His will.

"That it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which Yahweh swore unto thy fathers" — Success in life is dependant upon being at one with Yahweh in conduct. This is particularly so in the case of His people, for through angelic ministration He observes their conduct and state.

VERSE 19

"To cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as Yahweh has spoken" — Yahweh had promised success for Israel in its invasion of the Land, but the promise was conditional: faith in action had to be exercised to realise it. Moreover, the Israelites were warned to exercise care, for even after their enemies had been cast out, and they had obtained the land, they could lose it again, if they did not maintain "that which is good and right" (Deut. 9:4). History reveals that this is what happened.

VERSE 20

"And when thy son asketh thee in time to come" — The instructions to teach their sons the principles of the Passover were given before the people had left Egypt (Exod. 12:26; 13:14); but recognising the weakness of the flesh, and its tendency to relax in vigilance and to go astray in times of peace and prosperity, a further warning is given that this instruction must continue *in time to come*.

"Saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which Yahweh our God hath commanded you?" — The observance of Yahweh's laws and restrictions on the part of parents provides an example to their children which they will generally emulate. First, they will want to know the reason why Israelitish parents are different from those of other nations, and the reason why they observe such restrictions. This inevitably provides opportunity to explain and instruct. So Paul could trace the influence of parental upbringing and training in Timothy (2 Tim. 1:5), even though he came from a home that was divided in regard to the things of God. As new generations arise that have not so openly experienced the goodness of Yahweh, the need exists for more careful instruction. Chil-

dren brought up in the truth may take for granted the religious attitudes and actions of their parents, and with familiarity tend to treat them with contempt. There is a need, therefore, for careful and patient family instruction.

VERSE 21

"Then thou shalt say unto thy son" — The home instruction of a father can be a powerful influence in binding the members of a family together. The confidence of children in their parents is strengthened and confirmed as they learn the reason why the home is given over to God, and they will more readily learn to find interest and imitate that which they might otherwise despise. Yahweh's dealings with Israel were based upon God, Family and Land. But these principles are despised by the modern world, which shows no respect for God; is impatient of the restrictions of family life; and prefers an urban existence to a rural one. Because of this, wickedness, crime and immorality increase, and the world's troubles multiply. The re-establishment of the Kingdom of God will see the restoration of these basic principles of life (Micah 4:4-5).

"We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and Yahweh brought us out of



Yemenite Jews celebrating the Passover in Israel. On the table are various bitter herbs, and the father and eldest son are formally reading the question and answer relating to the meaning of the ordinance.

Egypt with a mighty hand — Israel constituted the Ecclesia of Yahweh brought out of the Land of Sin and Death, and hence separated from previous oppression by His mighty hand (Acts 7:38). The experience of the nation patterned the present “taking out of the Gentiles of a people for His name” (Acts 15:14). Israel was delivered by “a mighty hand”, or through manifestations of divine power. See Exod. 15:3; Deut. 4:34; 5:6, 15; 2 Sam. 7:23; Psa. 136:10-12; Jer. 32:19-22; Isa. 63:11-13. The same “mighty hand” is manifest today in the establishment of Ecclesias. See Paul’s comment: Eph. 2:11-12. Baptism performs a mighty miracle. Through it sinners leave behind the “old man” and reach forth to a new way of life in Christ. Further miracles are effected on them as the word takes possession of their minds, and changes their characters. They figuratively leave Egypt with its oppression for the wilderness, and ultimately the Kingdom. “In the world,” taught Christ, “ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Egypt was the Land of Tribulation. The word *Misrayim*, “Egypt” signifies “Oppressors”. In Israel, the sons of faithful parents were taught that the nation had come out of oppression to enjoy the great benefits to be experienced when they reached the Land.

So also in Christ. “God be thanked,” wrote Paul, “that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin (the original slave-owner), ye became the servants of righteousness” (the slave-owner in Christ — Rom. 6:17-18). Though delivered from Egypt, Israelites were not free to please themselves, for they then became servants of God. So also in Christ. Believers who separate themselves from Gentilism to serve God as Israel had been separated from Egyptian oppression, cannot please themselves, but must render obedience to Yahweh. There are great benefits in so doing. “What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?” asked Paul, “for the end of those things is death” (Rom. 6:21). How true! What lasting benefit is obtained by the world in following the flesh? It reaps as it sows, and brings forth an harvest of frustration, dissatisfaction, trouble and evil that finds rest at last only in an abiding place in the grave. Like Egypt of old, it suffers the results of its folly. Is the world a happy place? It is not! Does it provide the

earnest mind with the fruits of joy and satisfaction? By no means. Consider the aimless wanderings of youth today; the tragedy and anguish of broken homes; the fierce despising of that which is good, manifested in the increase of violence and crime on all sides. That is the heritage that the world of flesh, the modern Egypt, offers its sons.

But if the world is miserable, what of the fate of those who having separated themselves from it and so elect to become servants of God, continue to serve the flesh like the old generation of Israelites in the wilderness? Hopeless suffering and death is its lot: comparable to the hopelessness shown in the line of graves in the wilderness that traced the route of the doomed generation that had despised the goodness of God.

VERSE 22

“**And Yahweh shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes**” — Severe and awe-inspiring judgments were poured out upon Egypt; as they will be shortly, upon the world through the judgments of Armageddon and its aftermath. In expounding these judgments and their results to their children, parents in Israel were encouraged to be enthusiastic in their descriptions of what Yahweh had done for them in Egypt (see Deut. 4:34; Psa. 135:9). He had revealed “signs” and “wonders”, great and sore, upon the land and the nation, and upon Pharaoh and his house “before their eyes”. Do not Christ’s people today likewise experience the goodness of God? Then let them be enthusiastically vocal in regard to it. See Rom. 8:31-39. The word “signs” is from the Hebrew *oboth*, and signifies “evidences”, “signals”, or “omens”. The deliverance from Egypt not only demonstrated Yahweh’s power and divinity, but showed that He had the ability to establish the nation in the Land. Among the “signs” were the humbling of Egyptian gods through the plagues; the death of the firstborn; the opening of the Red Sea. All were miracles, and illustrated Yahweh’s power; but they were also signs that taught powerful spiritual lessons.

The word “wonders” is *mophethim*, proverbs, or extraordinary manifestations of power containing a secondary, hidden meaning of spiritual import.

VERSE 23

“**And He brought us out from thence, that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He swore unto our fathers**” — Mere separation from Egypt was not the end God had in view: the process was not complete until the nation had been established in the Land of Promise. So also today. It is not enough to accept Christ through baptism, and become a separated people. That is but the negative aspect of the divine purpose. The affirmative part is even more vital: the manifestation of divine characteristics. An active faith is needed for that, as providing the motivation (Heb. 11:1,6; 12:2). There is need to ever keep in mind “the joy set before us”, the end of the process: a place in the Kingdom. That necessitates the manifestation of divine glory in our characters now, so that a suitable foundation may be laid to perpetuate those virtues in a body of incorruptible glory. The children of Israel failed in that regard through “unbelief” or *lack of faith*, as the word signifies (Heb. 3:19), and so “were overthrown in the wilderness” (1 Cor. 10:5). Those circumstances provide types “recorded for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come”, declared Paul (v. 11). They are some of the “signs” and “wonders” recorded for the admonition of those living at that time.

This is all summed up in the significance of the word *Ecclesia*. The word denotes a group of people who have separated themselves at the summons of a herald. But that is not the end of the process Yahweh had in view. Israel as “the Ecclesia in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38) failed to enter the Land, and so aborted the purpose of Yahweh’s visitation and invitation, providing a solemn warning for all those who since have separated themselves for the purpose of Yahweh.

VERSE 24

“**And Yahweh commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Yahweh our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is at this day**” — See notes on vv. 1-2; and compare with Moses’ closing exhortation: “Set your hearts unto all 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 . . .” (Deut. 32:46-47). Believers need to set themselves an objective in life and aim for it. They cannot just drift

into the Kingdom of God, but must with zeal and energy strive to attain thereunto (Matt. 11:12). “With purpose of heart,” exhorted Barnabas, “cleave unto the Lord” (Acts 11:23). If there is no purpose or objectivity in striving, it will prove valueless. The first generation failed because their hearts were in Egypt whilst their hopes were in Canaan. They lacked faith, and therefore failed to obtain the victory (1 John 5:4). It is for “our good” that Yahweh has revealed His purpose to us, and shown what we must do to attain it. The word “always” is from two Hebrew words that signify “all the days” (*yomim*). But the latter word comes from a root signifying *to be hot*, and hence implying the heat of the day, when the burning sun (particularly in the East) can make life a little more difficult. Under those circumstances, Yahweh can provide a shade and a shield (Psalm 121:5-7; Rev. 7:16). With His help we can endure the difficulties of the way, and move on to ultimate victory.

Moses promised that the nation would be sustained in being if the people remained obedient to the will of Yahweh. Their national existence had been begotten out of an act of grace as stated in the teaching they were commanded to pass on to their children (vv. 21-22). The promise that those who did obey would be “preserved alive” could be contrasted with the old generation that had perished in the wilderness.

VERSE 25

“**And it shall be our righteousness if we observe to do all these commandments before Yahweh your God, as He hath commanded us**” — The Revised Version modifies this: “It shall be righteousness unto us” if we observe to do. The obedience of the people would constitute their vindication or justification (see Lev. 18:5; Luke 10:28; Rom. 10:3,4,6; Gal. 3:12), illustrating their right to continued national existence (v. 24). When the people failed in that regard, the nation was taken into captivity. Observance of the Law would demonstrate that the people were under the influence of the fear and love of God. Moses does not mean that they could render perfect obedience to Yahweh’s laws; indeed its sacrifices implied the contrary, and taught the thoughtful Israelite that he was in need of the promised Redeemer (Gen. 3:15; 22:18). Therefore the Law witnessed to the need of faith.

CHAPTER SEVEN

WHAT IS DEMANDED OF ISRAEL AS A HOLY NATION

Having instructed the people as to what is required of them in their personal attitude toward Yahweh, Moses now sets before them what is required of them as a holy nation. A sterner duty awaits them in the land. They are to be a separate people and to destroy existing nations. This will involve warfare, and the warfare will be one of severity. The object will be the extermination of the Canaanites, for their iniquity is now such that they must either be destroyed or they will destroy through moral pollution (Gen. 15:16). Israel, therefore, must enter the land as the executioner of Divine Judgment. The people are warned that they will suffer a like fate if they come to terms with the Canaanites and imitate their ways. In particular, they must be ruthless in their attacks on the Canaanitish religion. They must destroy its images and symbols, break down its temples and pillars, and purge the sites with fire. No marriages are to be contracted with the alien for they must be fully devoted to Yahweh, the God who has set His love on them (v. 7). The people are reminded of their weaknesses (vv. 7-8), urged to seek Yahweh's co-operation by obedience to His will (vv. 9-13), remaining undeterred by the strength of the opposition (vv. 17-21). The principle is stated that those who enjoy communion with Yahweh must have no communication with the unfruitful works of darkness; therefore, there is to be no fellowship of the Canaanites. A key verse is v. 6: "Yahweh thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself"; and related verses are verses 9, 12. The warfare of the Israelites against the Canaanites provides an illustration of the warfare of faith in which all Christ's people are involved. They are commanded not to let sin reign, nor to countenance it; but to hate it, and to war against it. God has promised that it shall not have dominion over those who do so (Rom. 6:12, 14), and Paul has listed the weapons and armour available, the effective use of which will ensure victory (Eph. 6:12-18). The key to victory is love of Yahweh revealed

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

through obedience. This involves the command to destroy the gods of the Canaanites and utterly abhor their worship.

Fellowship With The Nations Prohibited — vv. 1-4

There are both negative and positive aspects to the commandments and covenant of Yahweh. These are illustrated by the requirements of a marriage covenant. A woman separates herself from all others to be the loyal wife of one husband. A similar relationship illustrates the covenant existing between Yahweh and the nation of Israel. He is described as a Husband to Israel, and she as His bride (Isa. 54:5). Ezekiel with great frankness of detail, likens the Mosaic Covenant to a marriage contract, but also describes how the Bride proved unfaithful to her Husband (Ezek. 16). The chapter before us, in describing the responsibilities of Israel as a holy nation, emphasizes as a first principle the need for separation from the polluting influence of the Canaanites. There is to be no fellowship with them. On the contrary, Israel is commanded to ruthlessly exterminate them, in order to live peacefully with Yahweh in the land.

VERSE 1

"When Yahweh thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee" — Defeat and dispossession of the nations in Canaan is all attributed to Yahweh. He is to win the victory.



"The Hittites" — The word "Hittites" is from a root word, *heth* signifying *ether*. The Hittites were descendants of Heth, a son of Canaan from some of whom Abraham purchased the field of Machpelah, and two of whose daughters Esau married (Gen. 10:15; 23:16; 27:46; 49:32). The Hittites were a powerful, highly civilized nation that held sway in Syria, and Asia Minor from 1800-900 B.C. Their possessions in the Land of Canaan (for their chief centre was further north) were granted to Israel and taken by Joshua. (Josh. 1:4; 9:1; 3:10; 12:8). Some were converted, and became proselytes in Israel, serving as officers in David's army (Uriah was a Hittite — 2 Sam. 11:3; 23:39); some also were brought under servitude by Solomon (1 Kings 9:20-21). However there were independent Hittite kings north of Israel with whom Solomon conducted commerce (1 Kings 10:29; 2 Kings 7:6; 2 Chron. 1:17). Though the Hittites were a highly civilized and powerful nation, their might was completely broken by the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Subsequently, all trace of them was so completely destroyed, that critics of the Bible claimed that they never existed; that their existence was a figment of the imagination; a mythological invention. The spade of the archaeologists, however, has forever silenced such criticism. Today, the existence of the Hittites has been proved beyond all doubt. We even know that they were a short, stocky race, with thick lips, large noses, and retreating foreheads. Hittite monuments, show them as wearing heavy clothes and shoes with turned up toes!

"And the Girgashites" — The word signifies *Sojourners*. They were a tribe of Canaanites, that had evidently strayed into the Promised Land, hence their name. They were overthrown by Joshua. See Gen. 10:16; 15:21; Josh. 3:10; 24:11.

"And the Amorites" — The word is said to signify *talker* or *mountaineers*, (See Num. 13:29), *highlander* or *tall ones*. Amorite chieftans are represented as being confederate with Abraham (Gen. 14:7, 13). They assisted him in defeating the forces of Chedorlaomer, and rescuing Lot. Sihon was an Amorite of a different kind (Deut. 1:4), for he bitterly opposed Israel. The Amorites were known as a very warlike people, exercising great

THE HITTITES

Reference to the Hittites is frequent in Scripture. From them Abraham purchased the field of Machpelah including the cave which became a burying place for his family (Gen. 23); Esau married Hittite wives (Gen. 26:41; 36:1-3); Hittites are represented as occupying the hill country of Palestine (Num. 13:29), and apparently were spread throughout the Land of Promise (Josh. 1:2-4). Solomon imported horses from Egypt and sold them to "the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria" (2 Chron. 1:17); and the reputation of the fighting qualities of the soldiers were such that when a Syrian army imagined that the Is-



raelites had hired the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to assist them in battle, it fled in panic (2 Kings 7:6-7). At one time it was claimed that the Hittites were a mythological non-existent people; today archaeologists have established the fact that they formed a very powerful empire in Anatolia north of the Land of Promise, with a very advanced culture, and enlightened laws. Their Empire did not include the Land of Canaan, but it is known that they did invade it, and evidently left remnants of settlements throughout the land. The Hittites practised cremation, and their strict laws governing this rite have been discovered. Therefore, the purchase of the field of Machpelah by Abraham as a burying place for Sarah, must have struck them as strange; but to Abraham it was a witness to his belief in the resurrection, and his future inheritance of the land. The illustration is from an ancient monument and depicts a Hittite warrior. The beard is curled in the Assyrian style. The long sharp nose is characteristic. The main garments are a tight-fitting coat with half-length sleeves, and a braided kilt fastened with a broad belt. The pointed shoe and peaked cap with large pom-pom are typically Hittite. He is armed with a sword fixed at his waist, a long spear and an indented shield.

power. Reference to their military strength is made by Amos (ch. 2:9). Mainly occupying the hill country of Canaan, the Amorites were very difficult to destroy. They were so prominent that their name seems sometimes to be used for Canaanites in general (Josh. 24:8), and in the Tel-el-Amarna letters of Egypt. *Amurri* is the name given for Palestine-Phoenicia.

"And the Canaanites" — The Canaanites seem to have been the original aborigines of the land. The term appears to be a general one given to the dwellers of the plain. Probably the Canaanites were of Phoenician stock. The Hebrew word is from a root signifying to bend the knee, hence to humiliate oneself, signifying by

implication a trader. The term is used throughout Scripture in that sense, and is applied to those who made merchandise of religion. They were a people cursed by God (Gen. 9:25), and thus the enemy of the righteous. Abraham wandered throughout the land, surrounded by such enemies (Gen. 13:7). Zechariah prophesied that they are ultimately to be rooted out of the land (Zech. 14:21). The Canaanites were a very religious people, but they followed a most licentious form of worship. As religious traders, they foreshadowed the merchants of Babylon the Great referred to in Rev. 18:11. The decree that they should be exterminated was right and proper on moral as well as religious grounds.

THE CANAANITES

The terms "Amorite" and "Canaanite" seem to overlap, or to be interchanged. Thus in Gen. 10:15-16 the sons of Canaan include Amorites, while in Numbers 13:17-21 Israelite spies search the land of Canaan but eventually occupy the land of the Amorites (Josh. 24:15,18). Abraham is promised the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:5,6; 15:18-21), but there is a delay in occupation because "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete" (Gen. 15:16). The town of Shechem was in the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:5-6) under the rule of Hamor the Hivite (Gen. 34:2,30), but the territory of Joseph, which included Shechem, is called Amorite territory (Gen. 48:22). Perhaps this fusion is due to the Amorites holding the hill country, and the Canaanites the plains.

The word *Canaanite* has been rendered "traffickers" (Isa. 23:8), "traffic" (i.e. trade — Ezek. 17:4), "merchant" (Hos. 12:7; Zeph. 1:11). The prophecy: "There shall be no more the *Canaanite* in the house of Yahweh of hosts" (Zech. 14:21) is rendered a trader by the RSV. The Canaanites were a very religious people but their forms of worship were horrible and debasing, being a perversion of both truth and morals. The term *Canaanite*, therefore, is used throughout Scripture for those who engage in religious commerce, whose influence causes "the way of truth to be evil spoken of, and through covetousness and feigned words make merchandise" of God's people (2 Pet. 2:2-3). Like Rome, they traded in the "bodies and souls of men" (Rev. 18:13 mg.). Whereas the Amorites may have represented the military power of the flesh, the Canaanites prefigured the seductive influence of religious apostasy.

Like the Egyptians the Canaanites worshipped gods and goddesses many, but their religious rites were far more depraved. Among the goddesses were Anath, Asherah, and Astarte or

Ashtaroth, patronesses of sex and war. According to archaeologists, both sadism and sex were prominent features of this evil religion (it is significant that these are prominent features of these evil times, indicating that the iniquity of current Amorites and Canaanites is almost complete, and therefore on the eve of divine judgment). In *Archaeology And The Old Testament*, M. Unger writes:

“As a patroness of war Anath appears in a fragment of the Baal Epic in an incredibly bloody orgy of destruction. For some unknown reason she fiendishly butchers mankind, young and old, in a most horrible and wholesale fashion, wading delightedly in human gore up to her knees — yea, up to her throat, all the while exulting sadistically.”

Canaanitish worship was sexually most degrading. Every form of perversion was encouraged. The brutality, lust and abandon of Canaanite mythology was far worse than any other forms of religion at the time. And the astounding characteristic of Canaanite deities, that they had no moral character whatever, must have

brought out the worst traits in their devotees and encouraged many of the most demoralising practices of the time, such as sacred prostitution, child sacrifice and snake worship. They indulged in orgiastic nature-worship, a cult of fertility in the form of serpent symbols and sensuous nudity, served by male and female prostitutes on hand in their temples.

The goddess Anath was represented as both the sister and spouse of Baal, the patroness of war and sex including incest. She was worshipped as the “Virgin” and “Holy One” (*qudshu*) in the perverted sense of a sacred prostitute. Representations of her as a nude woman bestride a lion with a lily in one hand and a serpent in the other (symbols of sex in the Canaanitish religion), point her out as a divine courtesan. In the same sense the male prostitutes consecrated to the cult of the *Qudshu* and prostituting themselves to her honour, were called *qedesh* (“holy”), usually translated “sodomites” (Deut. 23:18; 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46). The feminine *qedeshah* is also found (Deut. 23:18; Hos. 4:14).

It was vital to the success of Joshua’s campaign, and the continued existence of Israel as a nation, that such influences should be completely eradicated. It is without sound reason to question Yahweh’s justice in ordering the extermination of such a depraved people, for their moral influence was dangerously contaminating. In fact, the failure of the Israelites to execute God’s command fully was one of the great blunders which they committed, as well as a sin, and it resulted in lasting injury to the nation, culminating in it ultimately being driven from the land.



This image of Baal was covered with gold leaf. Standards of morality were completely unknown to the Canaanitish gods. The fertility of crops was linked with religion, and in religious ceremonies the loves of Baal, the god of fertility, were dramatised in the temples. In an act of sacred prostitution a man was identified with Baal and a woman with Baal’s consort Ashtarte. The Canaanites supposed that such sexual union would incite Baal and Ashtarte to come together, with the fertility of crops thus assured. The modern decline of morals and sexual licence is a reversion to Canaanitish practices, and warrants the judgment of God that shall fall on this generation as it did on that current in the days of Joshua.

"And the Perizzites" — The word signifies "villager". It relates to a tribe sharing the hill country. In Josh. 17:15, they are associated with the giants, or *Rephaim*.

"And the Hivites" — In Gen. 10:17, the Hivite is given as one of the sons of Canaan. His descendants were located in the Lebanon hills (Jud. 3:3) and in the Hermon range (Josh. 11:3). In the reign of David the Hivites are listed after Sidon and Tyre (2 Sam. 24:7), implying their location near those cities. Hamor, the father of Shechem, who experienced the treachery of Simeon and Levi was a Hivite (Gen. 34:2). The inhabitants of Gibeon to the N. of Jerusalem who deceived Joshua are called Hivites (Josh. 9:7; 11:19). However, because there is no identification of them outside the Bible record, some list

them with the Horites, assuming that the word originally read as such. In confirmation they point out that Zibeon the Hivite (Gen. 36:2) is described as a Horite in vv. 20-24. But it is not impossible that both titles were applicable to him. As to the meaning of the word, Strong gives *chawwah* (Eve) as a possible root, signifying *life-giving* or *living-place*. *Pick's Concordance* gives the meaning as *A Declarer* or *Pronouncer*. The Hivites were obviously a shrewd people, with ability to *declare* their case, as Jacob's experience with Hamor, and Joshua's negotiations with the Gibeonites reveal. They evidently were not as billigerent, or as skilled in war as other of the tribes, and sought to save their lives by diplomacy rather than by war.

"And the Jebusites" — The Jebusites

were another powerful tribe. The word signifies *trader down* and among the cities they trod down, or dominated, was Jerusalem (Josh. 15:63) then called Jebus (Josh. 18:16,28; Jud. 19:10-11; 1 Chron. 11:4). They were a warlike people, and occupied Mt. Zion until David expelled them therefrom. Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem headed the confederacy against the Gibeonites (Josh. 10:1-4), but was defeated and his city taken by Joshua (Josh. 12:10). But evidently the Jebusites returned to, and occupied the royal city (Jud. 1:21) until the time of David. Living on the border of Judah and Benjamin, they are represented as dwelling both with Judah (Josh. 15:63) and with Benjamin (Jud. 1:21), to which tribe Jerusalem belonged (Josh. 18:28). From Ezra 9:1 it would appear that Jebusites continued in the land to the times of Ezra, indicating that the Israelites had not exterminated them. They dwelt mainly in "the hill country" (Josh. 11:3), and were recruited by Jabin of Hazor to assist him in resisting Joshua (Josh. 11:3). Perhaps some of them lived in the northern sector of the land.

"Seven nations greater and mightier than thou" — This statement by Moses reminded Israel that victory depended upon the people seeking a strength greater than flesh in order to conquer. In such a seeking all could perform a part: both soldiers, priests and common people, men and women. Faith was needed to gain the victory (see Deut. 4:37-40; 2 Chron. 32:7). Though each of these nations was greater and mightier than Israel in warlike ability and fleshly attainments, Israel had access to a Power that was more than capable of overthrowing them. And to do so was vital to their national existence. Already Moses had warned the people of the consequences if they failed in their duty to exterminate these dwellers in the land. Those they allowed to remain would be "pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell" (Num. 33:55). History reveals that Israel failed to carry out Moses' instructions (Jud. 1:28,30,33), and suffered as a result. In grace, Yahweh sent a messenger to remind Israel of its duty and to warn the people of the consequences of failing to do so (Jud. 2:1-3). In response to this appeal, Israel again tried, but again through lack of faith the people failed to successfully carry out the project set them (Jud. 3:1-7).

Yahweh's command ordered the extermination of nations not necessarily indi-

viduals. There was opportunity for any of the latter to seek Yahweh by accepting the Mosaic Covenant, and so becoming incorporated into Israel. Rahab of Jericho, Ruth the Moabitess, and Uriah the Hittite are cases in point. Any could follow in their footsteps, and so experience the grace of Yahweh. But the nations as such, had to be annihilated. Israel's future, the purpose of Yahweh, and the salvation of the world depended upon it.

VERSE 2

"And when Yahweh thy God shall deliver them before thee: thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them" — The war to be initiated was a holy war. It was war to the death, because of the moral corruption of the people of the land. To Abraham, God had given notice that He would initiate such a war when "the iniquity of the Amorites is come to its full" (Gen. 15:16). Now that time had come, and the nations were so polluted and polluting that the land itself was accounted as defiled (Lev. 18:24-25). Israel, therefore, was commanded to "utterly destroy" them and cleanse it. The word "utterly destroy" is from the Hebrew *charam* and in this context signifies "to devote to destruction as a religious duty". Anything so devoted had to be put to death, or, if it could be preserved (as gold), had to be purified, and given unto Yahweh (Lev. 27:28-29). The city of Jericho and all that it contained was devoted unto Yahweh, and because Achan "took of the accursed (i.e. *devoted*) thing; the anger of Yahweh was kindled against the children of Israel" (Josh. 7:1). That which he took, being devoted, belonged to Yahweh, and had to go through the fire and so purified, to be fit for His use. Achan failed to do this, and instead robbed Yahweh of His due. In consequence Israel was defeated in its initial attack on Ai, and the nation had to be cleansed of his polluting presence to ensure future victory. When this became known, Achan, and his family were put to death. This should have witnessed to the solemn necessity of faithfully carrying out Yahweh's requirements in regard to the Canaanites. It was a solemn duty, on the part of Israel, to completely destroy the serpent-power nationally manifested in Canaan; and to fail to do so, when Yahweh had put it in their power to accomplish His will, was a sin of the greatest magnitude.

"Thou shalt make no covenant with



THE ROUGH ANCIENT WALL OF JEBUSITE JERUSALEM. The square-built tower with the letters is identified as the work of Solomon following David's occupation of the site. Jebusite Jerusalem lay on the eastern hill of the modern city, south of the Temple area and above the Gihon Spring. The site the Jebusites developed as an impregnable bastion was a small triangle bounded by the Kidron, Tyropoeon and Zedek Valleys. Its bold rock escarpments made an ideal fortification site and its water supply from the Gihon Spring made it secure. Subsequently the Zedek and Tyropoeon Valleys were filled up, so the dominance of the original fortress is not apparent today.

them, or shew mercy unto them" — Israel must not enter into any national agreement, or covenant, with the nations of Canaan, but maintain a state of strict separateness. The same attitude is expected of believers today towards those who are without (2 Cor. 6:14-18). If they show sufficient faith, they will conquer the enemy. "This is the victory that overcometh the world", wrote John, "even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

VERSE 3

"Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son" — There would be little opportunity for marriages between Israel and the nations, if the hostility that was commanded were maintained. But Yahweh realised that flesh is weak, and so this further prohibition is made. Marriage with the alien is wrong. In Christ, marriage is commended, but "only in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39). Believers must not "become unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14). It was basic to the covenant made with Israel at Sinai that this separateness be maintained (Exod. 34:14-16). Therefore, constant warning is given against entering into such alliances. Thus Joshua, on the point of death, solemnly warned Israel of the consequences of ignoring these basic requirements of the Covenant (Josh. 24:11-13); and the pagan wives of Solomon turned his heart, so that in spite of his great wisdom, he showed in this matter, great folly. Marriage with the alien is bound to disrupt the dedication to the Truth that is required of every true believer.

VERSE 4

"For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods" — Yahweh is represented in Scripture as the great shepherd of Israel (Psa. 80:1), and it was the responsibility of Israelites as sheep of the fold, to follow the voice and guidance of the Good Shepherd. This requires complete dedication, and nothing can so quickly turn away a man from following Yahweh, than adverse influence in the home. The basis of true religion is established there, not what is done at meetings. The influence of a wife can help or hinder a person from rendering proper service unto Yahweh.

"So will the anger of Yahweh be kindled against you, and destroy thee sud-

denly" — The word "destroy" is from a verb signifying to cut off (See Deut. 6:15; 32:15-16). The word "suddenly" signifies quickly and unexpectedly, and is rendered as *quickly* in the R. V. Yahweh warned the people that if they failed to carry out His instructions, they would be cut off suddenly and swiftly.

Canaanitish Religious Centres To Be Ruthlessly Destroyed — vv. 5-8

The Israelites were to manifest unrelenting belligerency in attacking the worship of the Canaanites. Their religious centres were to be completely destroyed.

VERSE 5

"But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars" — The word "destroy" is *nathats*. It is one of three different words rendered "destroy" in these verses. In v. 2 the word is *charam* and signifies to "devote to destruction" as a religious duty. In v. 4 the word is *shamad* and denotes "to cut off". Here the word is *nathats* which means to "break down", and therefore to smash into pieces. All these various forms of destruction were designed to purify the land, so that Yahweh and His people may dwell therein (Deut. 23:14; Josh. 10:24,42; 21:44).

"And break down their images" — The word "images" signifies *statues*, or *pillars*. It relates to religious objects which were set up to remind the people of their duty to their gods; and differed from an altar upon which sacrifices were placed. The instruction "break down" is from the Hebrew *shabar* and it signifies to "shiver into fragments". The Israelites were to attack these objects of religious delight with the greatest hostility, smashing them to pieces.

"And break down their groves" — The term *groves* which frequently occurs in the Word, has nothing to do with the planting of trees. The Hebrew *Asherah*, which is uniformly and wrongly rendered "grove", most probably denotes the wooden symbol of a god or goddess, so that the R. V. has rendered it *Asherah*. Such objects were generally so shaped as to suggest the most lewd rites of the vile Canaanitish worship. Prostitutes of both sexes were devoted to the temple worship of these pagan gods, and the most licentious and debasing practices were associated therewith. The nations of Canaan had become a festering cancer in the human corpus, practicing child sacrifices, sodomy, bes-

tiality, idolatry, and witchcraft (see Lev. 18:21-25; Deut. 18:9-12). In *The Pentateuch In Its Cultural Environment*, G. Livingstone writes:

"The popular fertility cults as practised in the worship of the local gods, were grossly immoral. They were based on mythological stories, centred around the amorous relations of the gods one with the other. Artifacts of fertility and phallic import have been found in abundance all through the ancient eastern ruins. The major festivals, especially the New Year feasts, focussed on sexual activity. Prominent in each of the ancient religions, were hosts of male and female prostitutes, who were an integral part of the temple personnel.

"Their fertility cult was grounded in male and female reproductive functions, which were considered inherent in the universe and nature . . . Many scholars believe that the sacred marriage of the king at the New Year's feast, and the orgiastic revellings of the masses at the conclusion of the festivals, were an essential part of the fertility cult ritual. Activities of the cult prostitutes may also have been basic to the fertility emphasis."

The Canaanites worshipped gods whose mythological records described them as engaging in the most licentious and abandoned conduct. If the gods could act like that, so could their worshippers. Accordingly immorality and wickedness of every kind was rife throughout Canaan, for such acts were considered virtuous. As Genesis 15:16 anticipated, when Joshua entered the land, "the iniquity of the Amorites was at its full". Therefore, it was either a case of destroying such worship and worshippers, or succumbing to their evil and defiling influences. The command of Yahweh was that they should be violently destroyed. The reason for this is given in the next verse.

VERSE 6

"For thou art an holy people unto Yahweh thy God" — The term *holy* defines a "person or object separated for a special use". Israel was a holy people unto Yahweh. That is to say, the nation had been separated from all others, that it might be given unto God for His special use. This status had been pronounced on the people when they accepted the Covenant at Sinai (Exod. 19:6; see also Deut. 14:2; 26:19; 28:9; Jer. 2:3).

"Yahweh thy God hath chosen thee to

be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are on the face of the earth"

— Israel was chosen of God to reveal unto all mankind, His glorious characteristics, and His purpose with the earth. The same wondrous privilege is bestowed upon those who today, separate themselves from the world as a people "for His Name" (see John 15:16; Acts 15:14; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 17:14). The adjective "special" is of particular interest. It is from the Hebrew *cegullah* and signifies "to shut up, or hide", and therefore defines wealth or objects closely shut up and treasured as being of particular value. The idea of purchase is also implied so that Peter describes saints as a "peculiar" or "purchased people". The word is rendered "peculiar" in Ecc. 2:8, and there is related to the *peculiar treasure* of kings. In Mal. 3:17 the word is rendered "jewels": "In that day when I make up My jewels; I will spare them". The margin renders this *special treasure*. See also Exod. 19:5; Deut. 14:2; 26:18. In the New Testament, the term is applied to Christ's followers as the Israel of God (Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9). The "Israel of God" is a term that applies to both Jews and Gentiles who accept the Hope of Israel in Christ Jesus (Gal. 6:16). The unique position of Israel in comparison with all other nations is stated in the verse before us: "A special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth". That unique position of privilege is shared by those who embrace Christ in these times of the Gentiles (Isa. 54:17).

VERSE 7

"Yahweh did not set His love upon you, or choose you because ye were more in number than any people" — The word for love in this place is from the Hebrew *chashaq* and signifies "affection". It has been described as a love which joins one in relationship to what is loved. This statement therefore, teaches that Yahweh drew the people of Israel into a close relationship with Himself to make them His people. Thus, He "set His love" upon them. He did not do this because of their numerical strength, their national glory, or personal ability, for, at the time He selected them, these attributes were conspicuous by their absence; they were slaves in Egypt.

"For ye were the fewest of all people" — Israel was beloved of Yahweh "for the fathers' sakes" (Rom. 11:28), and not be-

cause the people manifested any greater spiritual aptitude or potential than other nationalities. Originally they were numerically negligible. Abraham was without any natural heir to carry on the family name; a fact commented upon by Isaiah (Ch. 51:2). In the days of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, the family only numbered 70 people, and was forced to go down into Egypt for sustenance, as Moses reminded the nation (Deut. 10:22). Therefore the election of Israel was purely a matter of grace. The very poverty of their national grandeur at the time they were called out of Egypt by Yahweh, provides encouragement for Christ's "little flock" to this day. The Lord Jesus made the point that "few there be that find" the way of truth (Matt. 7:14); and he encouraged his few disciples with the words "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

VERSE 8

"But because Yahweh loved you" — The word for "love" in this statement is *Ahabath* in the Hebrew. It describes the drawing of two persons together in mutual affection as in marriage. It is a word in the feminine gender which is appropriate to the circumstances, for Yahweh is described as the Husband of Israel (Isa. 54:5). In highly figurative language, but that normally used to describe natural love, Ezekiel describes the manner in which Yahweh made choice of the nation when it was in Egypt. *Ahabah* describes a love that delights in its object, as a man in love delights in the young woman who is the choice of his affections. Dr. Young renders the word in the place as *delighted*: "because Yahweh delighted in you". Moses thus reminded the people, and the lesson extends to believers today, that the first consideration of their state of privilege should be recognition of the unmerited love which Yahweh had shown towards the nation, and which should be reciprocated by the people towards Him. See Deut. 6:5; 7:9, and the words of Paul who "commends" the Divine love to the consideration and emulation of his readers (Rom. 5:8,10). Paul taught that Yahweh's love is maintained under all circumstances towards His people, because "they are beloved for the fathers' sakes" (Rom. 11:28). This love is manifested, not because of great righteousness on the part of the people, but because of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

(Deut. 9:4-5). It is the relationship of the nation to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that makes it precious in Yahweh's sight (Isa. 43:4). His purpose with them is bound up in His name (see Exod. 3:14-15; 1 Sam. 12:22; Ezek. 36:22); and His love is everlasting (see Jer. 31:3; Zeph. 3:17).

"And because He would keep the oath that He had sworn unto your fathers" — The oath made to Abraham is recorded in Gen. 22:16. It was confirmed to Isaac and Jacob (see Exod. 32:13; Psa. 105:9-11). Paul declared that "by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope before us" (Heb. 6:18). The two immutable things that must be fulfilled, are the promise and the oath. When first the promise was made to Abram, it was conditional upon him responding, but later it was confirmed unconditionally (Gen. 22:16-18). To emphasise the immutability of it, Yahweh pronounced His intention of fulfilling it with an oath. On that basis, taught Paul, it is impossible for God to fail to bring to consummation His proclaimed purpose with Israel. Israel's presence in the Land today is a token of this.

"Hath Yahweh brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt" — With manifestations of mighty power, Israel was delivered out of the house of slavery, and from the hand of Pharaoh. Hence the nation constituted the "Ecclesia in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38). The plagues poured out upon the Egyptians, the opening of the Red Sea, the destruction of Pharaoh's host, the protection and guidance granted Israel in the wilderness, were all miraculous evidences of Yahweh's omnipotence. So also was the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, which exceeded all the miracles in Egypt, in wonder, power, and significance. Therefore, the redemption of Christ's brethren likewise exemplifies Yahweh's mighty power, as they are drawn out of spiritual Egypt, to constitute an "Ecclesia in the wilderness". They also leave the house of bondage, for a glorious liberty in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:7; Gal. 6:1).

To summarise this sub-section, the Israelites were reminded that the purpose of the call of God was to separate them unto Himself or make them holy, so that they would be His (v. 6); to humble them (v. 7), so that they might be elevated to the status of heirs (v. 8).

Israel's Responsibility to Obey — vv. 9-11

As Yahweh has shown that He will faithfully perform whatever He promises, and that already great benefits are enjoyed by the people, they are called upon to ever bear this in mind and to respond by fulfilling His will in action. The wilderness wanderings demonstrate two great facts: 1. That Yahweh is able to redeem, for He brought the people out of Egypt in spite of incredible difficulties; 2. He will not tolerate faithlessness, for which cause the first generation perished in the wilderness. The present generation is urged to learn from the errors of the past, and manifest in action their confidence and trust in Yahweh who then will fulfil in them His good pleasure.

VERSE 9

"Know therefore" — This introduces a note of emphasis, reminding Israelites that they should carefully bear in mind that which Moses is about to put before them.

"That Yahweh thy God, He is God," — The Hebrew has the definite article before God: "Yahweh thy God, He is the God." He is the only true God. The word is *Elohim*, signifying "Mighty Ones", and relates to the angels, through whom Yahweh has revealed His will.

"The faithful God" — In this statement the word "God" is *El* signifying Might or Power. The addition of the adjective faithful teaches that Yahweh is not only powerful, but thoroughly reliable. See Exod. 34:6-7; Psa. 119:75; Isa. 49:7; 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor. 1:18; 1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:13; Heb. 11:11; 1 John 1:9. The faithfulness of God, and thus His reliability is emphasised throughout Scripture.

"Which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him, and keep His commandments to a thousand generations" — The covenant referred to is the agreement made between Yahweh and Abraham. This covenant is not one that a person who is offered it can accept, or reject at will. It is one that was incorporated into a command, and so confirmed unto Jacob for a law (see Psa. 105:8-10). Therefore, the responsibility rests upon those who have been called to a knowledge of it to accept its provisions. To do otherwise, is to incur the wrath of Yahweh. The word "mercy" is the word *chesed*, to which reference has been made above. This word denotes the favour that Yahweh shows to-

wards those whom He endorses as His own. A cognate word is rendered "holy" in Psa. 86:2, but in the margin is given as "one whom Thou favourest". The covenant promises a future inheritance to those who abide by its terms, and the mercy of Yahweh reveals the grace that He shows to those who accept it. The word "love" is the same as that used in v. 8, and expresses the delight of the one manifesting it in the object of it. The use of the term in this statement shows that God's true people must delight themselves in Yahweh. They should rejoice in their relationship with Him, and show their appreciation of it in a responsible manner by keeping His commandments. They will find a pleasure in doing so, because they love Him. The reference to "a thousand generations" indicates eternity. Yahweh will keep His covenant, and express his favour towards His people throughout eternity.

VERSE 10

"And repayeth them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them" — This statement joined with that of v. 9 shows that Yahweh must not be trifled with. Paul teaches: "Behold the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell severity, but toward the goodness if thou continue in His goodness" (Rom. 11:22). However those who hate Him, He will repay "to their face", that is, openly and obviously (Psa. 21:8-9; Prov. 11:31; Isa. 59:18; Rom. 12:19).

"He will not be slack to them that hateth Him" — The word "slack" in the Hebrew denotes to "loiter" or "delay". Men may imagine that Yahweh has forgotten, but that is merely an illusion (see Ecc. 8:11).

"He will repay him to his face" — That is, He will do it in his very presence, so that His displeasure is openly manifested to all. The scripture elsewhere says "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God". The repetition of this statement is for the purpose of solemn warning.

VERSE 11

"Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day to do them" — For the significance of the expressions used, see notes on Ch. 6:1. The good of Israel was bound up in keeping Yahweh's commandments (Deut. 4:1; 5:32). By so doing true love is manifested (John 14:15; 2 John 6).

Obedience Will Bring Blessing — vv. 12-15

Promises of blessing will pour like a river over the people if they prove obedient and faithful. They will include increase of population, fertility of the land and cattle, and immunity from disease. Egypt was notorious for its unhealthy conditions, but protection from the effects of such had been promised by Yahweh Rophe'eka, if the people responded to His commands (Exod. 15:26).

VERSE 12

"Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them" — Instead of if this statement should be rendered *because* as in Deut. 8:20. It is so rendered in the R.V. Three things Israelites were called upon to do: hearken, keep and perform, according to the judgments of Yahweh. The word "keep" is from the Hebrew *shamar* "to hedge about, protect" and therefore to always maintain as a standard, and to ever keep in mind. The three requirements, therefore, required study (*hearken*), maintain as a standard (*keep*), and apply in action (*do*). The word "judgment" is from the Hebrew *mishpat* and denotes verdicts, justice, rights or privileges. Yahweh, as supreme monarch of the heavens, has His rights revealed in His judgments and decisions which should be meticulously respected and carried out by His subjects.

"That Yahweh thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which He swore unto thy fathers" — In this statement, Yahweh promises to respond in like fashion as the people of Israel perform. If they will "keep" their part, He will "keep" His. He promised to scrupulously carry out His part of the covenant. He will view them with delight, and lavish upon them His favours. The word "mercy" is from the Hebrew *chesed*, and denotes the favoured position of grace enjoyed by those whom Yahweh acknowledges as His own. See v. 8 for a further use of this word. For the permanence of the covenant which He "swore unto the fathers", see Psa. 105:8; Luke 1:55,72,73.

VERSE 13

"And He will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee" — The word "love" is *ahab* as in v. 8. This love will find its ex-

pression in the material benefits subsequently listed. See also Prov. 10:22; Mal. 3:10-11. The Lord urged his disciples not to be bowed down with over-anxious concern for the material needs of today, "for after all these things do the Gentiles seek; and your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things". He promised that if first consideration is given to the things relating to "the kingdom of God and His righteousness" all such needs will be supplied (Matt. 6:31-34). If life is faced in faith it will reveal Divine blessings now as well as in the future. That was the promise made to Israel at this time.

"He will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which He swore unto thy fathers to give thee" — The term "flocks of thy sheep" is better rendered "ewes of thy sheep". The Hebrew word is *ashtoreth*, the name also given to the goddess of the Zidonians, the goddess of fertility (1 Kings 11:5). The word is derived from a root signifying to increase.

VERSE 14

"Thou shalt be blessed above all people; there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle" — The word "people" is rendered from *amim*, a plural word "peoples". Wherever it occurs in the plural in the Scriptures, it denotes the Gentiles in contrast to Israel. The singular form of the word *am* can relate to both Israelites or Gentiles. The blessing of this verse repeats the promise of Exod. 23:26.

VERSE 15

"And Yahweh will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee" — This partly repeats the promise of Exod. 15:26, there proclaimed by *Yahweh Rophe'eka*, or *Yahweh the Physician*. The Hebrew is more literally rendered as Yahweh will *turn aside* the sicknesses of Egypt, that is He will prevent them afflicting the Israelites. As it reads in the A.V. it would appear as though the people were already suffering from the diseases of Egypt, but they would be removed. The alternative rendering makes clearer the meaning. Contrast with this promised blessing the warning of Deut. 28:59,61. The term "sickness" is from a

word signifying malady, anxiety or calamity. From all these evils Israel would be free if the people honoured their covenant with Yahweh by obedience.

The Folly of Fearing The Gentiles — vv. 16-24

The people of Israel are urged to give themselves to the absolute annihilation of the enemy. There is no need for fear, for Yahweh will be with them to grant victory, and the God who wrested His people from the grasp of Pharaoh is capable of ensuring victory in the forthcoming battle. He will also provide natural means to instil fear in the hearts of the Canaanites, enabling the Israelites to more easily accomplish the occupation of the Land of Promise.

VERSE 16

"And thou shalt consume all the people which Yahweh thy God shall deliver thee" — Unremitting hostility was to be manifested towards the Canaanites. The object of the war was their extermination. This was necessary, for otherwise their polluting influence would destroy Israel. See v. 2.

"Thine eye shall have no pity upon them, neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee" — With anxious care Moses reiterates the need of Israel to remain in hostile separation from the polluting influence of the Canaanites. See Josh. 23:13-16; Jud. 2:3,12; the sad comment of Psa. 106:36, and the warning exhortation of Christ to ruthlessly eliminate any influence that might detract from the requirements of the Truth (Matt. 18:9; Mark 9:47).

VERSE 17

"If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations are more than I, how can I dispossess them?" — Moses states the possibility of the Israelites, moved by fear or lack of courage, secretly doubting their ability to conquer. He refers to them as questioning this in their hearts, rather than openly stating it. When the first symptoms of unbelief or lack of faith arise, and before they are openly expressed in words or actions, it is common to doubt whether success is possible. It is then that corrective measures should be taken. Failure to do so caused the first generation of Israelites to turn back (Num. 13:32).

VERSE 18

"Thou shalt not be afraid of them" — This is one of the great themes of Deuteronomy. See Ch. 1:29; 31:6. Faith will destroy fear.

"But shalt well remember what Yahweh thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt" — Recalling the remarkable events that took place in Egypt could well stimulate faith. Let us recall the help of God in incidents of the past, as well as in our lives, and our faith will likewise strengthen. Yahweh destroyed Pharaoh's power in the Red Sea, and sent all Egypt into mourning by the slaying of the firstborn. Recalling the mighty Power they had access to could greatly strengthen the faith of Israelites.

VERSE 19

"The great temptations which thine eyes saw" — The word "temptations" is better rendered *trials*. These relate to the plagues which constituted contests with the gods of Egypt. See Exod. 12:12; Neh. 9:10-11; Jer. 32:20-21.

"And the signs" — *Othoth* or "appearings"; manifestations of Yahweh's presence in the Angel of death, the Angel of protection, the guiding cloud by day, and fire by night.

"And the wonders" — The word *mophethim* denotes amazing miracles, such as the opening of the Red Sea etc.

"And the mighty hand" — *Yad chazakah*, "a strong hand" capable of administering devastating blows, and therefore indicative of irresistible power. The term suggests one powerful enough to overwhelm the strongest enemy, whilst clutching a friend to safety. Yahweh's ability to do so was exhibited in the severance of Israel from Egypt when the plagues were sent upon the latter, and the deliverance of His people from the hands of their oppressors.

"So shall Yahweh thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid" — Yahweh recognised that flesh can be made afraid by powerful and ruthless enemies, but sought to strengthen His people to overcome such emotion by recalling that "His strength had been perfected in weakness" before, and would be so again. Let them recall His mighty acts in the past and they would be fortified against a lack of faith in the Future.

Seven Things To Be Well Remembered By Israel To Fortify Faith See vv. 18-19

1. Pharaoh's power destroyed in the Red Sea.
2. The firstborn of Egypt slain whilst those of Israel are unharmed.
3. The Plagues that devastated Egypt but not Israel.
4. The signs (*othoth*) such as the cloud by day and fire by night which were manifestations of Yahweh's presence.
5. The wonders (*mophethim*) such as the opening of the Red Sea.
6. The reverses suffered by Egypt, such as the destruction of the army, evidences of Yahweh's mighty hand.
7. His stretched out arm, revealed in the mighty acts by which He saved Israel.

Consider similar acts of saving power by which Christianity was established: "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will" (Heb. 2:4).

VERSE 20

"Moreover Yahweh thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed" — This statement repeats the promise of Exod. 23:28 and the fulfilment recorded in Josh. 24:12. What was "the hornet" that played such a disastrous role against the Canaanites? We repeat what we have stated in our comment upon Exod. 23:28.

The "hornets" were designed to weaken the resistance of the Canaanites towards the conquest of the land by the Israelites. But opinion is divided as to what is meant by the statement, and as to whether it should be interpreted literally or figuratively.

In regard to the former, there is not direct evidence as to swarms of hornets being used to drive out the Canaanites from before the Israelites, whilst figuratively, the term has been aligned with the Egyptians. It is said that the hornet was the badge of Thotmus III and his successors. Garstang, the archaeologist, claims that Thotmus (recognised as Egypt's greatest warrior) invaded the land and overthrew Megiddo, following which a policy of devastation was maintained for

sixty years causing great fear throughout the land. The attack on Megiddo is dated 1479 B.C., but such dates should be treated with caution. Thotmus III, however, reigned a considerable time before Joshua's entrance into the land, whereas the statement of the verse before us implies something as yet to take place in the time of Moses.

There is a third explanation. The Hebrew *tsirah*, hornet, comes from the root *tsara*, "to scourge," which is rendered *leper*. The *tsirah*, therefore, could relate to a scourge apart from hornets. It could denote fear induced by plague, pestilence or anything that might sting or scourge the enemy, and so lower his powers of resistance. This could cause the hearts of such to melt in consternation and so pave the way for an Israelite victory (Jud. 2:11; 9:3; 10:2).

VERSE 21

"Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for Yahweh thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible" — This verse records three names and titles of Deity that are appropriate to the circumstances. "Yahweh thy God" is the covenant name of God (Exod. 3:14-15) that guarantees

the continuity of Israel, for it is His memorial for ever. It proclaims His purpose in calling the people out of Egypt, namely to reveal Himself in them as a Father to His family (Exod. 3:16). See the use of this name in 2 Chron. 32:8. The manifestation of His characteristics by His people was visible demonstration that He was "among" them (see 1 Cor. 14:25).

"Mighty God" is a rendition of *Gadol El*. The former word denotes that which is high, strong and exalted above all flesh, whilst *El* is expressive of might and power, and when related to God, such power as is expressed in bold relief. The title proclaims Yahweh's ability to fulfil His covenant. See its use in Deut. 10:17; Neh. 1:5; 4:14; 9:32. Nehemiah addressed Yahweh with this title to express his complete dependence on Him to succeed in the task before him. It was beyond the ability of this great man to accomplish it in his own strength, so he sought divine help by approaching Yahweh through the title of the "mighty God" of Israel.

Yahweh is also described as "Terrible". The Hebrew word is *Yarey* and signifies to fear, revere and hold in awe.

Combined, these titles express the thought that Yahweh manifested in Mighty Ones is the nucleus of the true Israel of God, and is capable of conquering the most powerful enemies; and will do so if His people hold Him in sufficient awe and reverence to obey His laws.

VERSE 22

"And Yahweh thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little" — The term "put out" can be more literally rendered as "pluck off"; an action that suggests the deliberate removing of the more obnoxious and powerful nations of Canaan. The promise to do this "little by little" illustrates the thoughtfulness of Yahweh. Despite His majesty and power, He condescends to those of low estate. He knows and understands the weakness of flesh, and provides accordingly. As the Psalmist says: "He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" (Psa. 103:14). Recognising the limitations of flesh, He makes provision for them. Though mighty and terrible in power, He is kind and condescending in His thoughtfulness as this statement reveals. He promised to destroy the nations "little by little" because Israel lacked the ability to absorb them more quickly.

Such consideration for others is a divine

characteristic which Yahweh's children are called upon to manifest, and which was revealed to the fullest extent by His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. His example teaches that we, too, should exercise thoughtfulness and consideration towards others, bearing with them in their weaknesses, and leading them "little by little" to conquer the difficulties that beset them in the understanding of the Word, and the manifestation of it in their lives. "When ye come together . . . tarry one for another," exhorted Paul in his exposition of the Memorials (1 Cor. 11:33). There is no place for overbearing criticism of others, when we recall our own deficiencies.

"Thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beast of the field increase upon thee" — It may have been considered an advantage if the Canaanites were quickly and immediately destroyed, but if that had been done, and the land remained uninhabited, wild beasts would increase to the danger of the Israelites. And at that time, the wild beasts of the land included such as the lion and the bear. Yahweh gave every thought for the welfare of His people, and this should have found response in faithful obedience on their part.

VERSE 23

"But Yahweh thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed" — Let Israel manifest faith in action, and it would experience victory and success in spite of the strength of the enemy.

VERSE 24

"And He shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven" — In this statement, Israel was reminded that Yahweh did not propose to remove one nation merely to make room for another of like mind; His purpose was to remove the polluting presence of those whose excesses had become so vile as to defile the very land. His object in destroying the nations was to purify the Holy Land from the unspeakable evils by which it had become defiled. See Ezek. 36:13-15. The same process will precede the complete restoration of Israel at the coming of Messiah, for once again the land shall be cleansed (see Ezek. 39:7-12). This future cleansing will be followed by the purging of all nations (Psa. 9:5; Prov. 10:7; Jer. 10:10-12). "Hol-

iness to Yahweh" will be a characteristic of even Gentiles in the age to come (Isa. 23:18).

"There shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them" — The Hebrew word for "man" in this place is *ish*, and relates to a man, not according to his nature (*adam*), nor according to his weakness (*enosh*), but man in his ability to think and act. No man, whatever ability he may possess, would be able to resist the Israelites, providing the latter obeyed God in the way commanded. This was the repeated promise of Yahweh (Deut. 11:25; Josh. 1:5; 10:8), and its validity was shown by the success of Joshua's campaigns (Josh. 23:9). Unfortunately, Joshua's faith was not emulated by those who followed him; and so the succeeding generation came to terms with the remaining Canaanites with disastrous results (Jud. 1). A promise similar to that of this verse is made to those of faith (Isa. 54:17; Rom. 8:37; 1 Cor. 15:57), but the condition of performance is consistency of faith manifested in obedience.

Canaanitish Gods To Be Destroyed — vv. 25-26

The evil characteristics of the Canaanites stem: from the vileness of their worship, Moses warns the people. Their gods are evil inciting and encouraging the worst passions of human conduct. Outstanding hostility is to be maintained towards them; for not only does national success depend upon this, but continued national existence as well. The Israelites are about to engage in a holy war, and not merely in a war of conquest. They are called upon to seek out the gods of their enemies and ruthlessly destroy both them and the religion associated therewith.

VERSE 25

"The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire" — The Israelites were to destroy the images of the Canaanitish gods as completely as Moses destroyed the golden calf at the foot of Horeb (Exod. 32:20; See Deut. 12:3).

"Thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them" — Unfortunately, Achan ignored this command, and brought trouble upon Israel and disaster upon his family (Josh. 7:1,21). There are idols of silver and gold today (including the almighty

dollar) which flesh worships, but which are shortly to be revealed as useless to save from the avalanche of trouble that will engulf the world. The deluded worshippers of such will cast them away in the panic that shall overwhelm humanity (Isa. 2:20). Among the wealth to be then abandoned will be that of Roman Catholicism (Rev. 17:4; 18:11-12).

"Lest thou be snared therein" — Yahweh well knows the weakness of the human heart, and so, through Moses, sought to put the people on their guard. Unfortunately, the following generation forgot the warning, and succumbed to the temptation. And lest we become over-critical of their weakness, let us recall that even so notable a man of faith as Gideon became ensnared by this means (Judg. 8:24-27). Obviously, Gideon justified his action according to his own reasoning, and doubtless his motives were sound; but his action became a snare unto himself and to his house. Paul's words are relevant: "Therefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). Elsewhere the Apostle likens covetousness to idolatry (Col. 3:50), and in that context has some solemn words of warning for those "who would be rich" (1 Tim. 6:9-10).

"For it is an abomination to Yahweh thy God" — The Hebrew word denotes something disgusting, and is in the feminine gender. To act as Moses warned against, was to commit spiritual infidelity, adultery against Yahweh as the Husband of Israel (Isa. 54:5). Such wickedness would be abhorrent to Yahweh.

VERSE 26

"Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house" — An Israelite might be induced to take such an object into his house merely as an item of curiosity, an antique of interest. This was prohibited. It would be to honour something that was abhorrent to Deity.

"Lest thou be a cursed thing like it" — The word "cursed" denotes something *shut in*, and therefore *a net*. And as that which is taken in a net is taken to be destroyed, it also represents a thing to be exterminated. Those guilty of taking to themselves the gold and silver that had been lavished upon pagan idols, would be accounted foolish enough to identify themselves with that which is doomed, and which likewise would be their fate.

THIS ISSUE

We move into the main section of Deuteronomy with this issue of *Christadelphian Expositor*. Having impressed the lessons of the past upon the new generation, Moses commenced with Ch. 4:41 to provide a Review of the Divine Covenant, expressing what this required in practical behaviour. This occupies the main section of the book from Ch. 4:41-26:19, and provides a general outline of the requirements of the Law in the realm of daily living.

Basic to this is the fundamental command: "Thou shalt love Yahweh thy God ..." Love, therefore, formed the foundation requirement of the Mosaic Covenant and Law as it did also the Covenant and Law of Grace in Christ Jesus. Israel had to learn to love Yahweh, as we must also. Without that love, their striving to fulfil the Law would be in vain; so Paul reasoned that "love was the fulfilling of the Law". Love, however, to be genuine, must be manifested in action.

A NEW VOLUME

This number completes our Ninth Volume. That means that subscriptions are due for Volume 10. Some have already remitted these, and we deeply appreciate this. We also apologise for the delay in issuing the numbers. We try to keep up to date. But the physical work of preparing the exposition, writing it, checking it in print, re-checking it, and all the additional labour of seeing it through the printing process occupies much time — and with other labours pressing their claims on us, delay seems inevitable. We try to keep up to date, and wish to acknowledge our appreciation of the help of Sis. R. Scolyer in typing much of the copy per medium of a Dictating Machine purchased for this purpose. However, 1983 proved to be extremely busy for us; we offer that fact as a partial excuse!

In reviewing the year's work as far as *Christadelphian Expositor* is concerned, we have found it a great pleasure to study the Word in preparation for the Periodical, and in sharing our pleasure with readers.

GENESIS

Some have asked for back numbers of Genesis. We can only supply odd copies — and not too many of those. Readers can have them without cost to make up a Volume if we have the numbers required. At the same time, we are currently reviewing the copy, and hope to re-issue it in bound form during 1984 — God willing.

Meanwhile, the signs of the times proclaim in clarion tones that Christ is at the door. Events taking place in the M.E. combined with developments in Russia, Europe and the Papacy indicate how true are the prophecies of the Bible — especially when interpreted in the line of such expositions as *Eureka* and *Elpis Israel*. Christadelphia has a wonderful heritage in the writings of the pioneers.

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The Christadelphian Expositor

A Verse by Verse Commentary Upon the Scriptures

Editorial

OUR NEW VOLUME COMMENCES WITH THIS ISSUE

This copy of *The Christadelphian Expositor* commences Volume Ten of our periodical. This means that your subscription is again due — if you have not already paid. Many have paid, so if you are among that number, please ignore this notice. But if you are not, please forward the subscription immediately, as this saves us a good deal of time in unnecessary book-keeping.

You notice, of course, that this number, and new volume commences halfway through Deut. 7:26. That is because *The Christadelphian Expositor* is a part-publication magazine, continuing on to complete the Books of the Bible. When the numbers are assembled together they form into a book to make a most helpful addition to the Christadelphian Book-shelf, providing complete expositions in depth of the Word of God.

Where To Send Your Subscription

On the inside front cover, we have listed agents in U.K., South Africa and N.Z., and in those countries we recommend that you remit through those sources. But we suggest to US and Canadian readers that they remit directly to us in Australia, and that they do so by personal cheque. We can easily negotiate US and

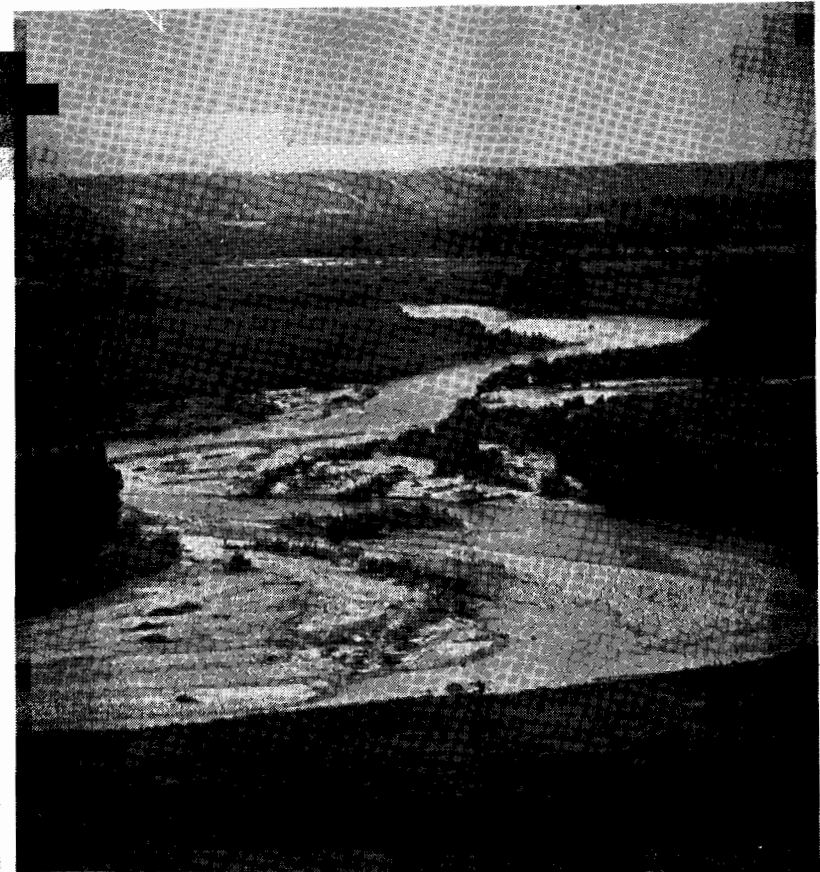
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

"But thou shalt utterly detest it" — The worship of false religion may appear quite moral according to normal standards of conduct, but, in fact, is decried as adultery and fornication by God (James 4:4; Rev. 17:1-2). Such acts of infidelity are detested by healthy-minded people who are able to discern right from wrong, but are sometimes condoned by those who are ignorant of, or indifferent to the ways of God. To "utterly detest" the wickedness of society both religious and social, it is necessary to immerse one's mind in the word of God,

and view life from its standpoint. Then the utter depravity of human society will become evident.

"And thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing" — Israelites were invited to bear in mind the fate of the idols worshipped by the Canaanites. Such objects of worship, like the modern forms of false religion, are to be given over to complete destruction. That, also, would be the fate of those who identified themselves with such objects of worship.



"On this side Jordan in the wilderness" (Deut. 1:1) was the place where Israel encamped, and Moses delivered his speeches recorded in the *Book of Deuteronomy*. During portion of the year, the river is easily fordable, but at the time the Israelites arrived it was in flood and presented a formidable barrier. Faith was required to pass over the river and conquer the fort of Jericho.

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THE ATTITUDE REQUIRED TOWARDS YAHWEH'S WORD

Israelites are exhorted to remember Yahweh's paternal love and care manifested through both His discipline and provisions. Their very trials were designed to perfect them. They had hungered, but as He had promised, He fed them so that they might learn to rely upon His word. They received manna, that pointed forward to the Bread of Life; their clothes did not wear out, typing the covering found in Christ (Gal. 3:28); their feet were effectively shod with shoes that lasted throughout the wilderness wandering, like feet shod with the gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15); the land before them is a land of fruitfulness, well watered by the rain of heaven, typing the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Yahweh permitted trials to overtake them, but also sustained them with tenderness. His care and guidance were always in evidence through the wilderness (Isa. 63:9). And now the Israelites are urged to recall these evidences of Divine Goodness (vv. 1-6), that they in turn might learn to love and obey, whilst also bearing in mind their own forgetfulness and acts of rebellion as time and again they had turned away from God (vv. 7-29). The dominant thought of the chapter is expressed in the statement: "Remember, and forget not" (v. 7).

**Lesson of the Wilderness Wanderings:
Success Dependent on Obedience — vv.
1-6**

Yahweh proves His servants by trial (Gen. 22:1), miracle (Exod. 15:25:10:20), afflictions and calamities (Jud. 2:22; 3:4; Ps. 17:3) as well as by blessings bestowed (Exod. 16:4). Reverses humble man, reveal his impotence and dependence on God; destroy his self-conceit and induce him to more readily submit to Divine guidance. The recognition of Divine goodness, mercy, and bounty in life, leads him in love to serve God. Hence the need to heed the words of Paul: "Behold the goodness and severity of God, towards thee goodness if . . ." (Rom. 11:22). These are principles Moses invites the people to con-

sider as he reviews the difficulties of the wilderness wanderings.

VERSE 1

"All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do" — This is the constant exhortation of Moses. See Deut. 4:1; 5:32-33; 6:1-3, and compare with Ps. 119:4-6. Unfortunately, the previous generation failed to do this.

"That ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which Yahweh swear unto your fathers" — The previous generation spiritually and literally died in the wilderness, Israel's population during the years of wandering decreased (see note on Num. 26), and possession of the land was delayed for 38 years. Therefore,

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though that generation was delivered from Pharaoh and baptised in the Red Sea by divine, miraculous intervention, it yet perished. See Paul's solemn warning (1 Cor. 10:11). Nevertheless, ultimate possession of the land by Israel had been promised and confirmed by Divine oath, and therefore had to be fulfilled.

VERSE 2

"And thou shalt remember all the way which Yahweh thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness" — Those years had witnessed the overshadowing care of Yahweh in spite of His severity towards the disobedient. See Deut. 1:3,33; 2:7; 29:5; Ps. 136:16; Amos 2:10. Israel was called upon to "remember" these incidents, as the followers of the Lord are called to remember their past state in comparison with their present one of privilege (Eph. 2:11). The word "remember" is from a Hebrew word signifying to *mark (so as to be recognised)*, and therefore to recall it to mind by making mention of it. The incidents of the past were matters to be figuratively pondered and viewed as lessons to be applied so as to avoid any repetition of mistakes.

"To humble thee, and to prove thee" — Man is by nature self-centred and arrogant. Reverses humble him, and make him more amenable to Divine instruction and guidance. The follower of the Lord needs ever to be on guard against this tendency, and not imagine that he is immune therefrom. Even a man of the spiritual calibre of Hezekiah allowed "his heart to be lifted up" and so brought trouble on the nation (2 Chron. 32:25-26). On the other hand, the arrogant and grossly disobedient Manasseh was so humbled by reverses as to prostrate himself before Yahweh and plead His help — which he then received (2 Chron. 33:12,19,21). The purpose of God in providing man with His word, or by subjecting him to reverses, is that "He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from him" (Job 33:16-17). In view of this, consider the significance of the following statements: Job 42:5-6; Luke 18:14; James 4:6,10; 1 Peter. 5:5-6. Yahweh's future intention is to humble all flesh in order to establish His kingdom in the earth (Isa. 2:17; 2:2-4).

God's purpose in humbling man, therefore, is to "prove him"; that is to determine whether he is a fit subject for the great benefits held in reserve for those who pass the test. For that purpose He

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proved Abraham by command (Gen. 22:1); He tested the people of Israel by leading them to bitter water to see whether they had sufficient faith to put their trust in Yahweh to provide (Exod. 15:25:16:4); He tested Hezekiah by prosperity and fleshly praise (2 Chron. 32:31). Such experiences can "prove" God's people to this day, calling forth the warning exhortation of Malachi: "Who may abide the day of his coming? who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap" (Mal. 3:2).

"To know what was in thine heart" — What a person may hide in his heart can be entirely different to what he proclaims with his lips. The hidden heart of man reveals the true motives of his life. Hezekiah was tested in that way, and it was found that his heart was lifted up. Christ warned the Ecclesiast that "he who searcheth the reins (emotions) and hearts (intellectual motives), will give unto every one according to their works" (Rev. 2:23). External appearances will be ruthlessly torn aside in that day. The friends of Job falsely implied that he was guilty of secret sin, of "covering his transgressions as Adam, by hiding his iniquity in his bosom" (Job 31:33). Unable to convince his friends of his innocence, Job denied the accusation before the Judge of all the earth with Whom we have to do and to Whom "all things are naked and open" (Heb. 4:13). From Him, Job received vindication, so that his friends had to make reconciliation.

"Whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no" — The very privations of life experienced by Israel, and the relief constantly granted by Yahweh were calculated to induce a state of humbled dependence, submissive obedience and hopeful trust in Him. So they should with us today, if we recall the blessings of Yahweh in our lives, and count them one by one — as it is profitable to do. This Paul did. He "gloried in tribulations (pressures)" having discerned the purpose of them: "knowing that tribulation worketh patience" (endurance), a commencement of progression in Godliness (Rom. 5:2-5). Endurance, in turn, developed "experience", but "*dokime*, the word Paul used, signifies *proof by trial*. Metal is purified by being subjected to trial, by fire and so are disciples. The word Paul used, therefore, signifies *approval*. It provided the basis for "hope". If disciples, in faith, surmount

the pressures to which they inevitably will be subjected, their characters will be purified, and they will be bouyed up with hope that He who has sustained them in the past, and to the present, will do so in the future even to eternal life.

The generation of Israelites that had left Egypt had been put to the proof of discipleship, but had failed. Now the opportunity was there for the new generation to succeed. Success demanded obedience, and still does today.

VERSE 3

“And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know” — The circumstances are recorded in Exod. 16:2-3, 12, 14, 15, 35. See also Psa. 78:21-25; 105:40; 1 Cor. 10:3. Israel was taught that it is not nature that nourishes God’s people, but Yahweh who established the laws of nature. He is not limited by nature, nor tied to its laws to satisfy the needs of His people. Hence He supplied manna for bread which is not in accordance with nature.

“That He might make thee know” — There was nothing capricious in Yahweh’s actions towards Israel; the nation had to be made ready for entrance into the Land, and training and testing were needful for that purpose. He provided for their needs, but not necessarily their wants. He brought them into the greatest extremity, and then delivered them, to teach them the important lesson of reliance on Him.

“That man doth not live by bread only; but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of Yahweh doth man live” — This important lesson, necessary to learn for the attainment of eternal life, was impressed upon the children of Israel by the trials and tribulations they were called upon to bear. Therefore, when properly viewed, those trials were the chastening hand of love on the part of their heavenly Father who had their ultimate welfare as His anxious thought and care (see Isa. 63:9). As a father seeks to educate his child, and guide him through the tortuous labyrinths of life’s journey, so Yahweh did His people. He knew the problems awaiting them in the land, and sought to strengthen their resolve by discipline and training. They hungered, and at the prayer of Moses, they were given manna. This should have taught them that success in life, whether in the present or the future, does not depend upon natural resources

or ability, but upon the blessing of God (see Psa. 37:3; Matt. 6:25-34; Heb. 13:5-6). “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” and all necessary things for this life will be added, for “the Father knoweth that thou hast need of these things”. Obedience to this is a challenge of faith: a challenge in which Israel failed. Their experiences in the wilderness should have taught them that “man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Yahweh”. Note that *word* is in italics, which is the translators’ means of indicating that there is no comparable word in the Hebrew. Literally, the Hebrew reads: “but by every *outgoing* of the mouth of Yahweh”. This related, of course, to the words of inspiration that provided advice and guidance through the wilderness; and the same Source provides scope for disciples today. Paul taught that “all scripture is given by the inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16). In the Greek this is one word: *theopneustos*, “God-breathed”. The Scriptures, comprise in written form the out-breathings of God, for no word can be spoken without the emission of breath. In the spiritual realm, therefore, they comprise the “breath of life”. In the beginning, God formed man of the dust of the ground, and *breathed into* his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul (Gen. 2:7). This shows that all life comes from God; and as man is dependent upon God for his physical life, so he also is for his spiritual existence. This was brought home to Israel in the vivid manner described in the verses before us, but the first generation failed to profit by the lesson. Since then, many Gentile believers have likewise failed to recognise that their spiritual life is dependent upon the God-breathed Scriptures of truth. All need to learn the lesson brought home to Israel.

In the wilderness, the Lord was tried by the tempter inviting him to turn into bread the stones that were scattered before him. But he refused to do so, quoting the words of this verse (Matt. 4:4). Christ did not dispute in thought as to whether the request was right or wrong, harmless or evil; his mind took in the tragedy of the wilderness wanderings, the complaining of the children of Israel, their lack of faith; and as he thought of these things, and cited the words that Moses used to sum up the failure of the people he led, the suggestion of the tempter faded from his thoughts. He illustrated the way in which to conquer sin: by driving it from the mind.

VERSE 4

“Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee” — This miracle of provision and preservation experienced by the Israelites in the wilderness, is the subject of further comment by Moses in Deut. 29:5; and by the Levites in the days of Nehemiah as they summarised to the people, the wonderful care the nation had experienced from Yahweh (see Neh. 9:5, 21). During the period of forty years their garments were miraculously preserved from decay. They were reminded that Yahweh recognised that they had “need of these things” (Matt. 6:31-32), and so were provided with them. However, they were taught to use the things that God gave them: and not to waste them. The preservation of their clothing was a contrast to the wastefulness of today that disposes of garments not because they are worn out, but to satisfy fleshly vanity in obtaining something “new”. Whilst it is legitimate to enjoy the affluence with which God has placed in our hands, we need to avoid going to extremes in wastefulness. Let us remember that most of the economic and other problems of daily living stem from that fact. Moreover, let it be borne in mind that we, too, have been provided with a covering that does not “wax old”, one that is “put on” in baptism (Gal. 3:27), and let us make certain that we do not tire of that clothing! The experiences of Israel have many typical lessons to bring home to us.

“Neither did thy foot swell, these forty years” — The Hebrew word *baiseq* is not the usual verb to denote swelling. It signifies “to soften or melt”, and *The Cambridge Bible* suggests that it could be rendered “to rise in blisters”. This would have been the case if the Israelites lacked sandals; but their feet were adequately shod for the journey before them. In Deut. 29:5 Moses declared “thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot”. This typically points forward to the “feet” of those who preach the Gospel: “feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:15).

VERSE 5

“Thou shalt also consider in thine heart” — That is, ponder this fact very carefully.

“That, as a man chasteneth his son, so Yahweh thy God chasteneth thee” — Why does a loving father chasten his son? Certainly not for his own enjoyment, nor, for that matter, merely for punishment.

He chastens his son to discipline him for his profit, in order to change him and adequately equip him to face the problems of the future he knows he will have to endure. He realises that unless his son is properly trained, he will fail in the business of life, and incur many heart-breaking frustrations, and lack of success. Even Christ had to submit to this discipline (see Paul’s comment: Heb. 12:3-11). As a child benefits from discipline and training, so will those who in faith submit to the “chastening of the Lord”. It is for “our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness” (Heb. 12:10); and when the purpose of such is kept in mind, the benefits will be apparent: “it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which *are exercised thereby*”. Of Christ it is said, “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb. 5:8). Christ endured suffering. Why? That he might learn what it means for others, not so well equipped as he was, to give themselves to obedience. Therefore he learned what obedience entails on others by the things he suffered; and the experience equipped him to faithfully minister on the behalf of those he came to save (see Heb. 4:15). The nation of Israel was treated as Yahweh’s firstborn son, but failed to properly respond to the privileges granted it.

VERSE 6

“Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of Yahweh thy God, to walk in His ways, and to fear Him” — The statement requires three things of Israelites: to “keep”, “walk”, and “fear”. The word “keep” signifies to *guard* — or *protect*, and therefore implies an intellectual understanding of their requirements. To “walk in His ways” is to apply those commandments in action; and “to fear Him” is to hold Him in such awe and respect, as to fear to ignore Him. These are essential steps to eternal life, as the Psalmist commented: “Blessed is everyone that feareth Yahweh; that walketh in His ways” (Psa. 128:1).

Lessons Learned in Adversity Must Not Be Forgotten in Prosperity — vv. 7-20.

The people of Israel are about to enter a pleasant land of promising prosperity, such as will provide for their material well-being. The danger is that affluence might induce forgetfulness of God’s goodness. They are to beware of this, and apply the

lessons learned during their wilderness wanderings in the new circumstances they are about to enjoy. Primarily, this requires response to the guidance of the Word of God. They are warned, lest they forget (v. 11), and are exhorted to constantly recall to mind Yahweh their God (v. 18). Granted they do this only success awaits them in the land.

VERSE 7

“For Yahweh thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills” — The qualities of this good land are listed in the statement that follows. All the attributes and products of it are elsewhere used figuratively of the influence of the word, and its fruit. Rain from heaven, figuratively represents the word of God (Deut. 32:2). Fountains out of the depth of the earth, symbolise the refreshing water of life obtained by digging deep into the word. The fruits of the land are used figuratively of the fruits of the Spirit-word (see Hab. 3:17; Gal. 5:22-23). This “good land” is described as a “pleasant land” in Dan. 8:9, and “the glorious land” in Dan. 11:41. The reason for these adjectives is given in the description of it that follows: “A land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates” etc. In Deut. 11:10 the Land of Promise is contrasted with that of Egypt. In large measure, Egypt is confined to the valley of the River Nile. Its average rainfall is only one inch per year, which is quite inadequate for any form of normal growth. The people were absolutely dependent on the water of the river for drinking, and the flooding of the waters over its banks to irrigate the land for crops (Zech. 14:18). The flood waters of the Nile brought fertility to the Delta, the richest agricultural tract of land in Egypt. In contrast to the Nile flats and the waterless desert beyond, the land of Canaan was noted for its hills and valleys, and its extremely regular rainfall. Indeed, the rainfall of the holy land is more dependable than that of any other country. In addition and supplementing the natural rainfall, the land is noted for its many fountains and springs that gush out of its valleys and hills.

VERSE 8

“A land of wheat, and barley, and

vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates” —

This is a description of the land as promised by Moses earlier. It will be recalled, that when the whole congregation came into the desert of Zin, in the first month of the 40th year, and the people saw the arid conditions adjacent to Kadesh, they complained to Moses: “Wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us into this evil place? It is no place of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates, neither is there any water to drink” (Num. 20:5). They were on the verge of the Land of Promise but complained because they saw no evidence of its glory. Their lack of faith made Moses impatient, he spake inadvisedly with his lips, and smote the rock instead of speaking unto it. Now towards the end of that same year, as the new generation encamped on the eastern side of Jordan opposite Jericho, it did so in anticipation, for it had already seen the promise of the prosperity of the land beyond, in the fertile plateau of Moab, and glorious highlands of Gilead. Moses describes the Land of Promise in the very words that the previous generation had used in their complaint. Now, however, he did so without contradiction.

“A land of oil olive, and honey” — The word “honey” in this verse is rendered, by many as “dates”. The Jews render it as such, for the verse generally is referring to the fruitfulness of the land. If “honey” is retained it would relate to the profusion of flowers and blossom that provide the means of honey. But the context seems to require “dates”. All of the grains and fruits mentioned are used elsewhere to symbolise spiritual qualities.

VERSE 9

“A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it” — The Hebrew word for “scarceness” signifies poverty, misery. There would be no poverty or misery in the land, if the people of Israel, as a nation, followed the instructions of Yahweh.

“A land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass” — The *Cambridge Bible* has a note at this place: “Some have denied that the promise to Israel of iron in the rocks of their own land, is justified by the geological facts, but ancient sources of the ore have been discovered at Izkim, on Mount Carmel, and near Burme, north of the Jab-bok”. Josephus, also, speaks of iron in the



The Israelites stumbled over broad areas of parched and cracked surfaces, during their years of wandering. Yet their raiment waxed not old, neither did their feet swell (Deut. 8:4), foreshadowing the durable clothing of Christ (Gal. 3:27; Eph. 6:15).



A contrast to the arid desert, the Land of Promise is described as one of hills and valleys, of springs and running water: foreshadowing the fruitfulness of the Truth fed by the water of life.

land. He refers to an iron mountain running as far as Moabitus. Black basalt stone is common in the Middle East, and contains about 20% content of iron.

“And out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass” — In the Bible, brass relates to either bronze (copper with an alloy of tin) or pure copper. It has been suggested that bronze was made directly from a copper ore containing tin long before the two metals were artificially mixed. See note in the *Cambridge Bible*. The Heb. *Nechoseth* is rendered copper in Job 28:2, where it is related to a metal smelted directly from the ore. Both copper and bronze utensils have been found at Lachish, as at Troy, and evidently comprised copper hardened with tin to make the alloy known as bronze. The Land of Promise was rich in minerals, as well as fertile in the productivity of its fields.

VERSE 10

“When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless Yahweh thy God for the good land which He hath given thee”

— The word “bless” is from the Hebrew *barak* and signifies “to kneel” or by implication, “to bless vocally as an act of adoration”. Paul ordered that disciples should “in everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thess. 5:18). Solomon exhorted: “Honour Yahweh with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thy increase” (Prov. 3:9). Vocal thanks should be supplemented by material grants to the furtherance of God’s work. If this is done conscientiously, a further increase will be reaped. *The Book of Proverbs* continues: “So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” If the firstfruits of time, strength, or material possessions are willingly and copiously given to Yahweh, a rich reward will be received in return.

VERSE 11

“Beware that thou forget not Yahweh thy God” — It is a tendency of human nature to move from scarcity to plenty with an initial gratitude which after a time gives

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place to a spirit of self congratulation, complacency, and sometimes haughty arrogance (See Deut. 32:15; 1 Tim. 6:9-10). The Psalmist sorrowfully recalls: “They forgot God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt” (Ps. 106:21). The Book of Proverbs states, “the prosperity of fools shall destroy them” (Ch. 1:32), and elsewhere adds: “lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is Yahweh ...” (Prov. 30:9). The tendency of flesh is towards self-sufficiency in times of material prosperity; therefore the greatest care needs to be taken in times of affluence.

VERSE 12

“Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein” — Yahweh had promised them these blessings (Deut. 6:11-12), but at the same time, had called upon them to serve Him with joyfulness and gladness of heart for the things granted them (Deut. 28:47). Nevertheless, though a blessing, Moses warned that material possessions and affluence constitute a test (See Deut. 32:15). His words are supplemented by those of Proverbs ch. 30:9 cited above, and the lament of Hosea: “According to their pasture, so they are filled; they were filled and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten Me” (Hosea 13:6). It is needful to bear in mind that the events recorded of Israel “were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Cor. 10:11). Affluence is enjoyed by many in these latter days, and constitutes a serious trial against which we must constantly be on guard. The Lord warned that it is only with difficulty that the rich will enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 19:23); and the resources enjoyed by many today would have been considered possessions of affluence in previous ages. In another place, he asked the question; “When I come shall I find the faith?” He did not provide any answer to that question; it being left to those living at the time of his coming to individually do so. Many lament the forgetfulness and decline of Israel as recorded in the Word, but extreme care needs to be exercised less a repetition of this is not found in the lives of believers and Ecclesias today. When a person is “full” as described in this verse, he has a tendency to develop a spirit of self-sufficiency of self-centred independence towards Yahweh. There is a need to ponder the solemn parable of the wealthy fool, and

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avoid the fate that awaited his end (see Luke 12:16-21).

VERSE 13

“And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied” — It is significant that this describes the material prosperity of Abram and Lot, at the time that the herdmen quarrelled (Gen. 13:1-7). It resulted in Lot leaving Abram for the fleshly pleasures of Sodom, and the isolation of his encampment in the highlands for the more heady environment of the cities of the plains which ultimately proved disastrous to his family. The same tendency was manifested in Israel when the nation entered into its inheritance, and prosperity blinded the eyes of some to their need of God. Happy is the one who can balance material prosperity with a thankful and lowly heart. Too often the tendency is the other way. Affluence is often interpreted as the result of personal ability, and Yahweh is forgotten. The sad result often is that one’s heart is lifted up in arrogance and to the forgetfulness of the humility of mind so essential for true worship.

VERSE 14

“Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget Yahweh thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage” — As these verses constantly remind, it is the tendency of flesh to be lifted up in pride and arrogance in times of prosperity. To counter this, the law laid it down as necessary for the King to write himself a copy of Deuteronomy in a book, and to read constantly therefrom every day, “that his heart be not lifted up” (Deut. 17:20). Many have failed in that way. Uzziah was greatly helped of Yahweh, but the elevation he enjoyed caused his heart to become uplifted in pride to his personal disaster (see 2 Chron. 26:16). Hezekiah, that outstanding king of Israel, so far forgot his humility that when interviewed and praised by the Babylonian envoy, his heart was lifted up (2 Chron. 32:25). If such an outstanding man can so easily fail in that way, who can rest confident in his ability not to do so? (see Jer. 2:31; 1 Cor. 4:7-8). The verse before us suggests that when a person’s heart is lifted up he should consider his humble origin and his utter dependence on Yahweh’s help. The Israelites had been slaves in Egypt, and had been delivered

therefrom by Yahweh. Let them bear that well in mind when they enjoy affluence on the other side of Jordan, that, with prosperity, their hearts be not lifted up.

VERSE 15

"Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness" — Israel is called upon to bear in mind their months of abject poverty, the bitterness of the wilderness, the long and weary journey during which they had been sustained by Yahweh (see Deut. 1:19; Ps. 77:20; 136:16; Isa. 63:12-14). Unfortunately, the people forgot to do this. See the lament of Jeremiah regarding this very matter Jer. 2:6.

"Wherein were fiery serpents, scorpions, and drought, where there was no water" — See references to this in Ps. 78:15-16; 105:41; 114:8 Num. 20:2; 21:5-9.

"Who brought thee forth waters out of the rock of flint?" — The answer is that Yahweh did. He did so at the beginning, and at the ending of their wilderness wanderings (see Exod. 17:6; Num. 20:11).

VERSE 16

"Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end" — The purpose of Yahweh's dealings with the Israelites in the desert, both the trials to which they were subjected, and the benefits that they received, was that He might ultimately do them good. The manna was designed to sustain them, to enable them to reach the promised land, and enter into their inheritance. What He did then, was typical of what He will do for them at the latter end, for He is going to "set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left" (Isa. 11:11). Manna will be supplied them, not as it was in the wilderness, but as it was 1900 years ago, when the Lord appeared in their midst, and proclaimed himself to be the bread of life (John 6:48). In thus setting himself before the people, the Lord contrasted the eternal benefits derivable from him, with the temporary existence they received in the wilderness. Not only Moses, but also Balaam saw the prosperous latter end of Israel (Num. 24:14). In Deut. 4:30 Moses predicted that the people of Israel will again turn to their God in the latter days, and will partake of the hidden Manna which He will then supply them. In Deut. 30 Moses lists some of the blessings which

will accrue to them at that time. They will be caused to recall their privileged status (v.1.); will return and obey Yahweh (v.2.); will be restored to divine favour (vv. 3-4); will again enjoy prosperity in the land (vv.5-9); will submit to true conversion (vv. 6-8); will see their enemies subdued before them (v.7.). In view of these tremendous blessings, and of even greater ones which will accrue to spiritual Israel, the afflictions of the present are but light and fleeting in comparison with the far more exceeding weight of glory awaiting them in the future (2 Cor. 4:17). See also Heb. 12:10-11; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:7.

VERSE 17

"And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth" — Whilst giving verbal accent to God's goodness in the blessings received, it is possible for one to secretly admire himself for his ability to accumulate wealth. That tendency is implied by Moses; and, in fact, was manifested in the days of Hosea. In his days Ephraim boasted that it was rich, increased in goods, and in need of nothing (Hos. 12:8). The prophet's words match those of the Lord to the Laodicean Ecclesia recorded in Rev. 3:17. Whereas the Ecclesia claimed to be "rich, increased with goods, and in need of nothing", in fact as warned by the spirit through John, it was "wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked". It is ominous that in Rev. 16:15 the Lord warns those living contemporary with his return, that if they did not exercise care, they too will be found walking naked to their shame. His words imply that the times would be Laodicean in character as far as Ecclesias are concerned.

VERSE 18

"But thou shalt remember Yahweh thy God" — Yahweh Elohim is the covenant name of Deity, and the reason why blessings are heaped upon Israel, both natural and spiritual.

"For it is He who giveth thee power to get wealth" — That Yahweh is the Giver of every good and perfect gift was evident to the generation of Israelites that stood poised to enter the land. All that they had was obviously due to the blessing of Yahweh. At that point they faced difficulties. The river was a barrier to them; in the distance they could see the formidable fortifications of Jericho; the land was filled

with powerful enemies. Therefore, a successful conquest depended upon the Divine blessing. Later, after a measure of success, their dependence on Yahweh's blessing was not quite so evident. As they became used to the riches then lavished upon them they took them for granted, and vainly imagined that it was their own ability that had obtained for them the wealth and power they then enjoyed.

"That He may establish His covenant which He swore unto thy fathers as it is this day" — The principle stated by Moses is that emphasised by Paul in Rom. 11:28: "They are beloved for the fathers' sakes". The blessings Israel inherited were not granted because of outstanding righteousness on the part of the nation, but to vindicate Yahweh's name by fulfilling the promises He made unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

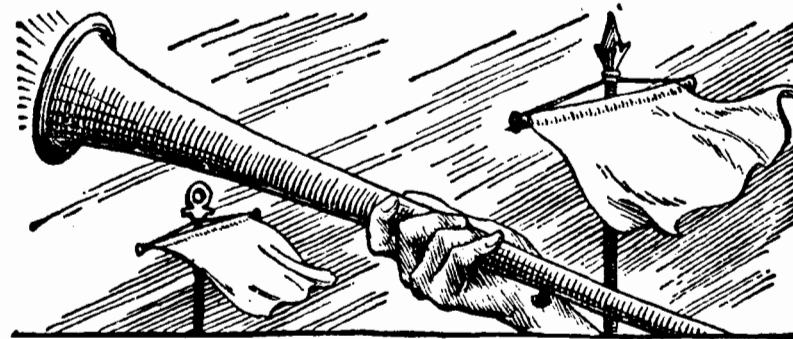
VERSE 19

"And it shall be if thou do at all forget Yahweh thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish" — See this warning repeated (Ch. 4:26; 30:18). Yahweh decreed that the Canaanites should perish because they had walked after the evil, pernicious ways of their gods, and filled the land with immorality. Their decreed fate constituted a warning to Israel. If the inhabitants of the land who had not under-

stood the ways of Yahweh, were to be thus punished, how much more would His own people be deserving of punishment if they failed to perform His will. Privilege brings added responsibility as Amos the prophet declared (See Amos 3:2). Later, when the Israelites entered the Land and enjoyed the good things provided them of Yahweh, they forgot their responsibilities toward Him, and were evilly influenced by the people of the land. Yahweh pleaded with them, but in vain (2 Chron. 36:15-17; Ps. 81:13; Isa. 48:18). So, as warned, they were driven from off the land.

VERSE 20

"As the nations which Yahweh destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the words of Yahweh your God" — Yahweh's pleading voice, proclaimed through the prophets (2 Chron. 36:16-17), and ultimately through His Son (Luke 20:13; Heb. 1:1-2) was heard in vain. The people refused to respond, but continued to transgress as Daniel later confessed (Dan. 9:11-12). The result was that in A.D.70 the prophetic words of the Lord's parable were fulfilled: "He destroyed those husbandmen, and gave the vineyard to others" (Luke 20:16). The cause of the nation's overthrow was summed up by Hosea in the statement: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).



ATTITUDE REQUIRED TOWARDS DIVINE BLESSINGS AND MERCIES CHAPTERS 9 to 11

This section of Moses' discourse continues to the end of chapter 11. Israel is reminded that their entrance to the land is not the result of their own personal righteousness, for if they recall the past, they will be reminded of rebellion and sin, rather than obedience. The mercy of Yahweh is recalled in restoring the two tables of stone (ch. 10:1-5); in maintaining the priesthood (vv.6-7); in separating Levi to the work of the tabernacle (vv.8-9); in agreeing to Moses' intercession (vv.10-11). This is followed by recommendations as to how Israel can repay the Divine mercy and love, and so call out a response of loving obedience to Yahweh's mighty acts on their behalf. As the land of promise depends upon rain, this will be provided if the people give themselves to God in the way appointed. There is the need to revere and teach God's word as the basis of success. Accordingly, they are to proclaim the blessings and cursings of the Law when in the land, so that the people may be cognisant of their responsibilities and react accordingly.

CHAPTER NINE ENTRANCE TO THE LAND IS BY GRACE NOT BY RIGHT

Israel is reminded that its conquest of Canaan will not be due to any meritorious ability of the people, but to the wickedness of the inhabitants of the land; and because of Yahweh's promise to the patriarchs. It is through promise and grace that they have been brought to the borders of the land, and invited to inherit it.

Entrance to the Land Not Through Personal Righteousness — vv1-6

The opening verses of this section constitute a warning against self-righteousness. Moses warns the people that once the apparently impossible task of conquering the land has been successfully executed, they must not attribute their victory to their own powers. The nations of Canaan are

doomed, not because of the righteousness of Israel, but because of their own wickedness.

VERSE 1

"Hear, O Israel: thou art to pass over Jordan this day" — The Hebrew expression frequently denotes a time rather than a specific day, much the same as we might

CHAPTER NINE

denote action by use of the word "now".

"To go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven — These are the very things and descriptions that deterred the spies of the previous generation (see Num. 13:28-33). The nations concerned are listed in Deut. 7:1, together with the assurance that in the strength of Yahweh Israel will overcome them (v.2.)

VERSE 2

"A people great and tall, the children of the Anakim whom thou knowest" — The word *Anakim* signifies "long necked ones", probably relating to their height. Reference to the chieftains of this tribe are found in Num. 13:22. The obvious might of these giants, the strength of their fortifications, and their dominance over the southern section of the land, greatly perturbed the spies of the previous generation. Controlling the southern entrance to the land, they presented an immediate obstacle to the Israelites in their advance north, and was one of the main causes of them turning away.

The progenitor of the Anakim was Arba (Josh. 14:15; 15:13). His headquarters appeared to be Hebron which was originally called Kirjath-arba, or *The City Of The Four* (Gen. 23:2,19). The numeral *Four* related to the three chieftains mentioned in Num. 13:22 together with Anak their father, so giving meaning to the name of the city.

"And of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak?" — This was the comment of the spies when they returned from searching out the land some thirty-eight years previously (see Num. 13:33). Now the people of Israel are stimulated with the conviction that they will overthrow these formidable foes, though not in their own strength. Yahweh promised to be with them and grant them success (See Deut. 7:24; 11:23).

VERSE 3

"Understand therefore this day, that Yahweh thy God is He which goeth over before thee" — The reference is not to Yahweh personally, but to the Angel that was placed over the affairs of Israel (See Exod. 23:23-27). This Angel later revealed himself to Joshua on the other side of Jordan, introducing himself as the captain of Yahweh's host (Josh. 5:13-14). When the previous generation had at-

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

tempted its unauthorised invasion of the land against the will of Yahweh, it was plainly told by Moses that "He (ie. the Angel) is not among you" (Num. 14:42). Now, in contrast to that time, the new generation of Israelites was to go over in full assurance that Yahweh, manifested through His *Elohim*, would be with it in its attempts to conquer. Therefore success awaited it on the other side of the river Jordan.

"As a consuming fire" — In Deut. 4:24, Yahweh is described as "a consuming Fire", or as Nehemiah expressed it: "the great and terrible *El*, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love Him and observe His commandments" (Neh. 1:5-6). He manifested Himself, then through His angel as a consuming Fire to destroy the Canaanites; and He will do likewise through Christ and the saints, destroying the modern Canaanites that are spread throughout the earth (See Isa. 27:4; 30:27,30,33; 33:40; 2 Thess. 1:8; Heb. 12:29). Yahweh is a Shade and a Shield to those who put their trust in Him, but a consuming Fire to those who defy Him (Ps. 84:11).

"He shall destroy them and He shall bring them down before thy face" — This reiterates the promise of Deut. 7:1,2,16,23,24; Exod. 23:29-31. As Yahweh destroyed in the past, so He will in the future in order to establish His kingdom (See Isa. 41:10-16). In view of this fact we can well reason with Paul: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

"So shalt thou drive them out and destroy them quickly, as Yahweh has said unto thee" — There would be no delay in the conquest of the land, though it would not be done piecemeal, but little by little. See Deut. 7:22.

"As Yahweh has said unto thee" — Yahweh promised to send an angel before them who would overshadow their efforts, and bring success. See Exod. 23:23-27.

VERSE 4

"Speak not thou in thine heart, after that Yahweh thy God hath cast them out from before thee, For my righteousness Yahweh hath brought me in to possess this land" — Thus the Law, but not Judaism, discounted righteousness by works, that is by mere ceremonials. The Law warned Israel against boasting of numerical strength

(Deut. 7:7-8); material possessions (Deut. 8:17); personal righteousness (Deut. 9:4). Yahweh redeems His people for His holy name's sake (Ezek. 36:22-32); in other words, to vindicate His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore, salvation is by grace, through forgiveness, because it is beyond the ability of man to render perfect obedience (see Rom. 3:23 11:6, 20). The verse before us, though from the Law, clearly teaches the doctrine of grace through faith, and deprecates all claims of self-righteousness (Eph. 2:8-9). In Deut. 30 11-14, Moses again emphasises the need of faith. Paul cites this statement in Rom. 10:6-8 to illustrate that boasting is excluded for Jew or Gentile for both depend upon grace for salvation (see 1 Cor. 4:4-7; Eph. 2:4-5; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:4-5).

"But for the wickedness of these nations Yahweh doth drive them out from before thee" — See Gen. 15:16; Lev. 18:24; Deut. 18:12. This summarises Moses' teaching. Israel was granted possession of the Land, not through its righteousness, but because of the covenant made with Abraham, and the righteousness of Yahweh demanded the destruction of the depraved Canaanites, and their worship.

VERSE 5

"Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thy heart, dost thou go to possess their land" — The word "righteousness" is from a Hebrew root signifying *right conduct*, whereas "uprightness" is derived from one signifying "right motives or purposes". The declaration does not allege that the people of Israel were particularly unrighteous, nor that their motives were evil, but it warns them against boasting of qualities they did not possess.

"But for the wickedness of these nations Yahweh thy God doth drive them out from before thee" — As stated elsewhere the excavations of archaeologists, and the gruesome testimony of historians, witness to the savagery, and foul uncleanness of the religious rites of the Canaanites. Their wickedness deserved the fate reserved for them by Yahweh.

"And that He may perform the words which Yahweh sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" — Once again Israel is reminded that deliverance and inheritance were offered them, not because of personal merit, but because of

the covenant that Yahweh made with Abraham (See Rom. 11:28). That was the real reason they gained the land then, and why they are in it today. See Gen. 12:7; 13:18; 15:7; 17:8; 26:4; 28:13; Exod. 32:13; Ezek. 36:22; Mic. 7:20; Luke 1:54-55; Acts 3:25; 13:32-33; 26:6; 28:20; Rom. 11:28 etc.

VERSE 6

"Understand therefore, that Yahweh thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people" — This is the third time that this statement has been made, the repetition being designed to completely impress it upon the people of Israel. See Israel's general reaction as summarised by Zechariah (Ch. 7:11-12), and Stephen (Acts 7:51-52). The stiff-neckedness of Israel is constantly emphasised throughout Scripture. See Exod. 32:9; Deut. 9:13; 10:16; 2 Kings 17:14, and the warning of Prov. 29:1. It should be clearly recognised, however, that Israel has not a monopoly of stiff-neckedness! The Gentiles are just as guilty as Israel, or even more so, in this department of human conduct. Hence Paul warns "Boast not against the branches" (Rom. 11:18).

Israel Urged To Ever Remember Their Rebellions — vv. 7-29

Moses reminds the people of the many instances of rebelliousness by which they have provoked Yahweh. They extend from the time of their escape out of Egypt, until their arrival in the plains of Moab. Even at Horeb, where had been seen awe-inspiring manifestations of Divine majesty, and the voice of Yahweh had been heard rebelliousness had been manifested. Moses had gone up to receive the tables of the Law, on which the covenant of Yahweh with Israel was based, and even whilst that covenant was being completed, the people had sinned grievously as to make to themselves a golden calf, which they worshipped with idolatrous rites. They are reminded of these things, and of how Moses interceded on their behalf, pleading for them on the basis of Yahweh's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This sad and sorry record is indicative of the weakness of human nature. Gentile believers are as prone to this as was Israel. There is warning for all in these words of Moses.

VERSE 7

"Remember and forget not, how thou

provoked Yahweh thy God to wrath in the wilderness" — In order to completely destroy the thought that the people of Israel of their own righteousness were about to enter upon their inheritance, Moses saw the need to call to their attention some of their more notorious provocations and rebellions, that they may be humbled before God.

"From the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against Yahweh" — As the record in Numbers shows, even the new generation had been rebellious at times. It was its stubbornness that provoked Moses to speak unadvisedly, as recorded in Num. 20:10. Again, some of this same generation were found "speaking against God, and against Moses" as recorded in Num. 21:5. But at least the people had the grace to recognise their failings, and confess before Moses "we have sinned" (Num. 21:7).

VERSE 8

"Also in Horeb, ye provoked Yahweh to wrath" — The R.S.V. renders this as: "even in Horeb". Even when encamped before Horeb, where the awe-inspiring manifestations of Divine power and majesty were evident in thunder, lightning, earthquake, and the voice of Yahweh was heard pronouncing the Ten Commandments, even there the people had rebelled. See Exod. 32:4; Ps. 106:19.

"So that Yahweh was angry with you to have destroyed you" — It was only the intercession of Moses that saved the nation.

VERSE 9

"When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which Yahweh made with you" — From expressions such as this, it is quite obvious that the covenant referred to in the book of Deuteronomy, in such passages as Ch. 5:3, relate to the covenant made at Horeb, not to any new covenant apart from the Mosaic. This covenant was that which was done away in Christ (2 Cor. 3:6-15), and replaced by the new covenant of grace in him (Heb. 8:7-13).

"Then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread or drink water" — Moses was so ashamed of the attitude of the people, that he entered into a long, preparatory fast of forty days, in order to properly make intercession for

them. See Exod. 24:18; 34:28. Elijah (1 Kings 19:8) and Christ (Matt. 4:2) likewise fasted for forty days. Forty is the number of probation.

VERSE 10

"And Yahweh delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God, and on them was written according to all the words which Yahweh spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly" — See further reference to the writing of God in Deut. 10:2. The miracles that Christ performed are also said to have been done with "the finger of God" (Luke 11:20), elsewhere described as the "spirit of God" (Matt. 12:28; see also 2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:10).

"The day of the assembly" was the day when the people were gathered together at the foot of the mount to meet with God (Exod. 19:17). The word "assembly" is from the Hebrew *qahal* and signifies "a people called out", the equivalent of the Greek *ecclesia*. Representatives of the nation were gathered together before the mount to hear the voice of God, and to enter into covenant with Him.

VERSE 11

"And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that Yahweh gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant" — See also Deut. 4:15; Heb. 8:6-13. It is significant that the two tables of stone, are described as tables of the covenant. In other words the Ten Commandments written thereon, comprised the basis of the Mosaic covenant that was done away in Christ. This is made abundantly clear by a comparison of Heb. 8:13 with 9:4. The covenant of Law was done away in Christ, and replaced by the covenant of grace. No change was made to the eternal verities that were proclaimed in the Ten Commandments, the difference being, that through Moses they formed the basis of a covenant of law, whereas in Christ, the same truths provide the foundation of a covenant of grace. The Law taught that flesh is a sinner; the covenant of Grace in Christ, provided the means whereby sin could be forgiven and removed. Therefore the covenant of Grace complemented and fulfilled the covenant of Law.

VERSE 12

"And Yahweh said unto me, arise, get

thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted themselves" — In describing Israel to Moses as "thy people" Yahweh repudiated Israel as belonging to Him. Their faithlessness showed them as being of the flesh. See also Exod. 32:7-8.

"They are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them" — The "way of Yahweh", is the way to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24). In the days of Noah, "all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth" (Gen. 6:12). So in doing as they did, Israel acted as unenlightened Gentiles act, it being a characteristic of the flesh to repudiate God's way (Jud. 2:17). So prone is flesh to go astray, that the last words of Moses, include his conviction that after his death, the new generation of Israelites would go astray (Deut. 31:29). Many hundreds of years later, Hosea lamented: "O Ephraim what shall I do unto thee? O Judah what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away" (Hos. 6:4). It is valuable to bear in mind this tendency of the flesh, in order to guard against it. The history of the Truth since the days of Christ, illustrates that believers of the Gentiles are just as susceptible of straying as was Israel. The warning words of Christ to the seven ecclesias in Asia (Rev. 2:3), illustrate that fact.

"They have made them a molten image" — The reference is to the Golden Calf that was made at the foot of Horeb, whilst Moses was in Sinai. How could a people so easily and so flagrantly turn from God? Because of the seductiveness of the appeal by which the matter was introduced to them. The people were told that the Golden Calf was but a visible token of the ministrations of the angels in caring for them under the direction of Yahweh in order to bring them out of Egypt. They were encouraged to worship Yahweh, but to do so through the Golden Calf. This aspect of the great sin of Israel should be carefully considered, because it is possible for Gentile believers to fall into the same error, they can demand visible tokens of God, or claim that they cannot worship Him effectively unless they have some visible support for doing so; whether in a hall, or some other external and visible means. When the Golden Calf was made by Aaron the *leaders of the people* said, "These be thy Elohim, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt".

In reply and endorsement of that statement, Aaron declared: "Tomorrow is a feast to Yahweh" (Exod. 32:4-5). The making of the Golden Calf contravened the express command of the Law: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exod. 20:4). Neither Aaron nor the leaders of the people, intended to turn away from the worship of Yahweh, for the Calf was designed as a visible token of His presence. How important it is to be on guard lest the things that we commit similarly cause us to turn from the purity of divine worship.

VERSE 13

"Furthermore, Yahweh spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people" — This is a further illustration of the statement of v. 6. Note the exhortation of Deut. 10:16; and the warning expressed in Deut. 31:27; 2 Kings 17:14. In order to put individuals on their guard, Scripture constantly warned of the tendency and strength of flesh to lead worshippers astray. See Gen. 8:21; Jer. 10:23; Mal. 3:5; Rom. 7:19-20.

VERSE 14

"Let me alone, that I may destroy them" — Rather than being a direct threat, this statement comprised an invitation for intercession. It signified that the offence of the nation was so serious as to deserve complete annihilation. But Moses immediately interceded for the people, and was heard. See Exod. 32:11-14). He did so on the basis that Israel were Yahweh's people and heritage and that He had promised the land to the patriarchs. The first was an appeal to the goodness of Yahweh (Exod. 32:11-12); and the second rested on His faithfulness (see Exod. 32:13).

"And blot out their name from under heaven" — That is, to destroy them utterly as though they were Gentiles. See Deut. 7:24; 29:20; Ps. 9:5.

"And I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they" — This offer imposed a public test on Moses; and his refusal of the honour, demonstrated to the people his disinterestness in leading them. Moses assumed the responsibility of leadership because he was deeply interested in their welfare, not in his personal glory. The threat to destroy that

generation was no idle one, for, in fact, it did perish in the wilderness.

VERSE 15

"So I turned and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire" — See Heb. 12:18. The fearful, awe-inspiring manifestation of Yahweh was designed to create fear in the hearts of the people. Unfortunately, familiarity bred contempt, and so they became indifferent to it.

"And the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands" — The Ten Commandments inscribed in the two tables of stone comprised the basis of the Mosaic covenant that the people had made with Yahweh. They had promised to be obedient but they failed to do so whilst Moses was in the mount.

VERSE 16

"And I looked, and behold, we have sinned against Yahweh your God, and had made you a molten calf" — For details see Exod. 32:19; and our notes at that place. See also Acts 7:40-41.

"Ye have turned aside quickly out of the way which Yahweh commanded you" — So quickly had they turned, that within the period of six weeks of Moses leaving them the people had made the golden calf.

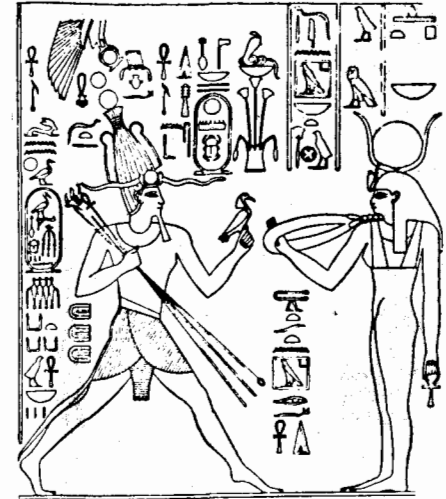
VERSE 17

"And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and break them before your eyes" — Moses did not act thus in petulance, but to solemnly dramatise what the people had done: broken the covenant of Yahweh.

VERSE 18

"And I fell down before Yahweh as at the first, forty days and forty nights" — This second fast took place in the Mount to where Moses subsequently returned to plead for the people, for Aaron, and for replacement of the covenant (see Exod. 34:28). His return with a new set of tablets indicated that pardon had been granted.

"I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of Yahweh, to provoke Him to anger" — The circumstances were so urgent and solemn as to demand the greatest concentration of mind and feeling on the object before Moses. He saw Yahweh as great and dreadful, and recognised the need of flesh



The goddess Hathor was worshipped in Egypt as a calf or a goddess with the horns of a cow. She was considered the goddess of love, beauty, pleasure and fertility; and evidently the golden calf was reminiscent of such worship which would be familiar to the Israelites. It is significant that today the archaeological remains of temples dedicated to the goddess Hathor are found in the Sinaitic Peninsular. The illustration above, from an Egyptian temple inscription, depicts King Thothmes III dancing before the goddess Hathor.

to be thoroughly humbled in preparation for proper approach to Him. The seriousness of the occasion is outlined in the verses following.

VERSE 19

"For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith Yahweh was wroth against you to destroy you. But Yahweh hearkened unto me at that time also" — See Exod. 32:10; Deut. 10:10. Yahweh's anger burned against the people, and threatened to destroy them. At that moment of fearful crisis, Moses truly acted the part of mediator for the nation (see Gal. 3:19).

VERSE 20

"And Yahweh was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him" — These circumstances in the wilderness must have surely tried Moses. But, in fact, they were incidents that developed his character, fit-

ting him for a high position in the Kingdom of the Age to Come. The Psalmist states that at that time of national crisis, Yahweh would have destroyed the people, "had not Moses His chosen stood before Him in the breach, to turn away His wrath" (Psa. 106:23). The incident illustrates that statement of James: "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). Because Moses under stress proved himself faithful on such occasions, there is reserved for him a wonderful position in the Kingdom of God (see Psa. 99:6).

"And I prayed for Aaron also the same time" — This incident is not recorded in Exodus. Included here, it reveals that Israel could not boast in the righteousness, even of its most prominent priest, and that Aaron's investiture of the high priesthood, and the maintenance of that institution were established after this incident, as matters of Divine grace. These facts show how fallacious it would have been for the Israelites to claim that it was the righteousness of the nation that guaranteed them an inheritance in the land (see v. 4).

VERSE 21

"And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burned it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, till it was small as dust" — Moses purged the metal of the calf with fire, and destroyed its shape by stamping upon it, or beating it into thin plates, and finally ground the gold into fine dust. This demonstrated to the people that such a god had no power to save them, as it could not save itself!

"And I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount" — Apparently Moses ground the gold into dust so fine, that it floated upon the stream that provided Israel with their drinking water. This stream of water flowed from the rock that Moses had smitten earlier (See Exod. 17:6 and cp. with Ps. 78:16-20; 105:41). Gold is the emblem of a tried faith. Faith, however, is generated by the word of God (Rom. 10:17), and not by such disobedience as the people had shown in worshipping at the golden calf. The gold of that calf could only represent a false faith and had to be washed away with water. The water from the smitten rock, typified the life-saving doctrines that flowed from the smitten Lord, the anti-type of the rock (see John 7:37-38). Moses' action demonstrated that a true follower of the Lord must be pre-

pared to replace false faith with a true faith, wash away his sins in the means provided by Yahweh and partake of the reviving water of life.

VERSE 22

"And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-hattaavah, ye provoked Yahweh to wrath" — The circumstances are recorded in Num. 11:1-3; Exod. 17:7; Num. 11:4,34.

VERSE 23

"Likewise when Yahweh sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, Go up to possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of Yahweh your God" — The details of this great rebellion are recorded in Num. 13, for which see our notes. The faithless report of the spies was matched by the rebellion of the people who appointed a new leader unto themselves, and with the perversity for which human nature is noted, determined after all to invade the land. They did this without the approval of Yahweh, and suffered severe defeat (see Num. 14:1-4; Neh. 9:17; Isa. 63:10).

"And ye believed Him not, nor hearkened to His voice" — See the comments on this incident in Deut. 1:32-33; Ps. 78:22; 106:24-25. Upon the facts of this incident, Paul brings home an important exhortation to the Hebrew believers. See Heb. 3:18-19; 4:2. He reminds them that that generation of Israelites did not enter the land "because of unbelief". The word "unbelief" does not signify "a lack of knowledge", but a "lack of faith". The word is better rendered *faithlessness*. It was the faithlessness of the people that destroyed them, as faithlessness can destroy the people of God of any age. That faithlessness was indicated by the request for permission to send out the spies. Yahweh permitted it to be done so that the responsibility of what action should be taken would rest on the people (Num. 13:1-2; Deut. 1:22). When the spies returned and set forth their faithless report, they did so as representatives of the whole community. They doubted their ability unaided to take the land, which confession was a good thing; but then, lacked the faith to recognise that Yahweh would work through them in order to obtain it, which was a bad thing.

VERSE 24

"Ye have been rebellious against Yahweh from the day that I knew you" — In this statement, Moses reverts to the apostasy at Horeb, to further impress the people with the realisation that apart from Divine grace, they would have been destroyed. Moses did not make this statement to condemn the new generation, but to warn it of the tendency of flesh to go astray. In that regard the people of that generation were no different to their fathers; so that unless they injected faith into their activity, they would succeed no better than did the previous one. Later in his discourse, Moses sadly predicted that the people would again go astray (see Deut. 31:27-29; Acts 7:51). In that regard, Gentile believers are just as susceptible to going astray as were the Israelites. So Paul wrote that these incidents are recorded for the admonition of such (See 1 Cor. 10:11).

VERSE 25

"Thus I fell down before Yahweh forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because Yahweh said He would destroy you" — To fall before Yahweh is to assume the posture of humility. This was necessary because of the circumstances that had arisen, and the declaration of Yahweh that He would destroy the nation and make a new one of the posterity of Moses. The forty days' period of fasting would not have been empty of activity. Moses would have spent them in meditation and supplication. They were therefore days of preparation, communion, instruction, intercession. They were necessary because of the apostasy of the people, and the weakness of flesh. In this Moses acted as mediator (Gal. 3:19).

VERSE 26

"I prayed therefore unto Yahweh, and said" — Only portion of the prayer is given here, it should be compared with the expressions as contained in Exod. 32:11-13. As mediator, Moses constantly pleaded the cause of his people. See examples of this in Exod. 32:11; 34:9; Num. 14:13-19; Ps. 99:6; 106:23. In Exod. 32:11 Moses is represented as beseeching Yahweh, on behalf of the people. In Hebrew the verb signifies to *earnestly intreat* in the continuous tense, suggesting the continuity of prayer as in Luke 18:1: "Men ought always to pray and not to faint". In the prayer as recorded in the chapter be-

fore us, Moses advanced three persuasive petitions:

"Destroy not Thy people" ... v.26;
 "Remember Thy servants" ... v.27;
 "Safeguard Thy name" ... v.28.

These were most persuasive petitions with which to approach Yahweh. Obviously Moses gave careful thought to the prayer before he uttered it.

"And said, O Lord Yahweh" — The term "Lord" is expressive of the authority of Deity. The Hebrew word is in the plural implying action through the angelic host that was placed over the affairs of Israel. In charge of that angelic host was the arch angel upon whom was named the name of Yahweh (see Exod. 23:20-23). He introduced himself to Joshua as "captain of the host of Yahweh" (Josh. 5:14), and from the lips of Gabriel we learn that his name was Michael, for he is described as "your prince" (Dan. 10:21). It is significant, therefore, that the Lord Jesus should be given the name of Michael (Dan. 12:1), because, of course, he has been granted the status over the affairs of Israel, both natural and spiritual, that was formerly that of the angel. In praying to *Adonai Yahweh*, therefore, Moses gave expression to his knowledge of the angelic ministration in the affairs of Israel. To the title "Lord" however, their is appended the name *Yahweh*. This is the covenant name of Deity which guarantees fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore, in approaching God, Moses invoked His covenant Name as manifested through the authoritative angelic Lords of heaven.

"Destroy not Thy people and Thy inheritance, which Thou hast redeemed through Thy greatness, which Thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with Thy mighty hand" — Israel is Yahweh's inheritance (see Deut. 32:9; 1 Kings 8:51), His possession by means of redemption. The word "redemption" is *gaal*, and defines redemption as performed by a kinsman. The use of this term in relation to Yahweh is most significant. If an Israelite, through adversity, was sold into slavery, it was the duty of the next of kin to buy back his relation. He did not question the cause of his kinsman's adversity, which could well have been through his own folly. Irrespective of the cause, the next of kin was expected to go to his help. This illustrated the work of Yahweh toward the Israelites as Redeemer. He redeemed them out of

Egypt by paying the redemption money, and so had claim upon them as His people (Deut. 32:9-12; Ps. 74:1-2; Ps. 77:15; 107:1-2; Isa. 63:19). In appealing to Yahweh on the basis of redemption, Moses effectively did so on the ground of His love, mercy, and pity. A Redeemer, of course, had to have both the ability and the right to so act. Yahweh's greatness demonstrated His strength to perform (Deut. 11:2). He not only had the ability to act, but also had a love of Israel so as to desire Him to do so (Deut. 7:8).

VERSE 27

"Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" — By introducing the patriarchs into his prayer, Moses pleaded the cause of Israel on the basis of Yahweh's faithfulness in His promises (Exod. 32:13).

"Look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin" — In this clause, Moses pleaded forgiveness on the ground of acknowledging the weakness of human nature.

VERSE 28

"Lest the land whence Thou broughtest

us out say" — Reference to "the land" is a Hebraism relating to the people of the land, as in Gen. 41:36. In this case the people of Egypt.

"Because Yahweh was not able to bring them into the land which He promised them, and because He hated them, He hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness" — Moses now advances Yahweh's reputation as incorporated in His purpose; this would suffer if Israel did not enter the land. See Exod. 32:12; Num. 14:16; Deut. 32:26-27; Ps. 115:1-2.

VERSE 29

"Yet they are Thy people" — See Ps. 95:7; Isa. 63:8-9; Ezek. 38:14.

"And Thine inheritance, which Thou broughtest out by Thy mighty power and by Thy stretched out arm" — As such, the people of Israel constituted the "Ecclesia in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38), a position of privilege now granted Gentile believers, who also are now styled His inheritance (Eph. 1:18). But though that is their status they must not presume upon it, lest the fate of the first generation of Israelites becomes theirs'.

"Thou Shalt Remember"

The word "remember" is from the Hebrew *zakar*, to mark (so as to be properly recognised), and therefore, to recall in its significance, and by implication to mention. The things they were called upon to remember included: • their slavery in Egypt (Deut. 5:15); • what Yahweh did to Pharaoh (Deut. 7:18); • the trials of their wanderings and the relief afforded by divine providence (Deut. 8:2-3) • their disobedience (Deut. 9:7); • the circumstances of their redemption from out of bondage (Deut. 15:15; 16:12; 24:18,22) • the day they left Egypt in haste (Deut. 16:3); • the punishment of Miriam (Deut. 24:8); • the hostility of Amalek (Deut. 25:17); • Yahweh's past doings (Deut. 32:7); • Yahweh as the Giver of good (Deut. 8:18).

The Israelites had plenty to recall, and the exercise of doing so would enable them to "Behold the goodness and severity of God" (Rom. 11:22). Disciples today are likewise called upon to "remember" Yahweh's dealing with them (Eph. 2:11). The exercise will serve to emphasise the great privilege of communion and fellowship with God, and the benefits of acting so as to ensure eternal salvation.

YAHWEH'S MERCY IN RESTORING THE COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

Moses continues his recapitulation of incidents that occurred at the giving of the Law, and relates Yahweh's mercy to acts such as restoring the broken tablets of stone, maintaining the priesthood so giving access to worship, providing Levi as assistants in the work of the Tabernacle, and hearkening to Moses' intercession of behalf of the people. The chapter concludes by indicating how the people can repay the Divine mercy and love. It reminds believers of every age that they have received many concessions and privileges from Yahweh, so much forgiveness and help, that it becomes them to enquire what returns they should make to Him. Certainly they should dedicate their lives to His honour, and lay themselves out to advance interest in His kingdom. Verses 12-13 provide key verses for the chapter.

God's Mercy in Restoring the Two Tablets of Stone — vv. 1-5

The two tables of stone bearing the Ten Commandments, which were broken by Moses when he returned from the Mount as he saw the wickedness of Israel, are restored at the invitation of Yahweh.

VERSE 1

"Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto Me into the mount" — After the Israelites had broken the covenant, and as a condition of renewal of it, they, through Moses, were called upon to supply a further two tables of stone. It appears that the first tablets of stone were provided by Yahweh as the initiative came from Him (Exod. 32:16). The restoration, however, had to be at the initiative of the people shown by them supplying two new tablets, upon which would be inscribed the Ten Commandments. By that means, the covenant would be re-confirmed.

"And make thee an ark of wood" — Tablets of stone containing the Ten Commandments, described as "the tables of the covenant" (Heb. 9:4), were ultimately placed in the Ark of the covenant. The wording of this chapter suggests that the

Ark was planned or partially constructed at this time. It may have been completed later when the artistry of Bezaleel was used to that end (see Exod. 25:10; 37:1). It is referred to in this place because the placing of the tablets of stone in the Ark completed the covenant.

VERSE 2

"And I will write on the tables, the words that were in the first tables, which thou breakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark" — The original instruction for doing this is recorded in Exod. 25:16,21. In addition to the tablets of stone, there subsequently were placed in the Ark the golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. The former foreshadowed eternal life through faith, the latter set forth the principle of newness of life through resurrection. However, it is significant, that when the Temple was built, and the Ark was placed in the Most Holy, it contained only the tables of stone (1 Kings 8:9). This was appropriate to the circumstances. The building of the Temple by Solomon foreshadowed the Temple to be erected in Jerusalem by the Lord Jesus Christ. At that time, eternal life through faith and a resurrection from the

dead (typified by the pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded), will be made obvious in the presence of immortalised saints then openly associated with the Lord Jesus in his Kingdom. Therefore, typically they were removed from their previous hiding place in the Ark. However, the Ten Commandments will still remain the basis of acceptable living for mortals in the Kingdom. Hence, Malachi, anticipating that requirement declared: "Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments" (Mal. 4:4).

VERSE 3

"And I made an ark of shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand" — In this statement it would appear that the Ark was constructed before Moses ascended the mount the second time. This would mean that it was made before any other parts of the tabernacle. Certainly it is the first piece of Tabernacle furniture described (Exod. 25:10). And this is appropriate to the type. Before the Lord ascended into heaven, he had figuratively constructed an Ark of salvation. But the completion of the "greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say not of this building" (Heb. 9:11), awaits his return as the construction of the mercy seat, cherubim and rest of the old tabernacle awaited the return of Moses, Christ, as the antitype of Moses shall gather all his materials together, and so bring to a completion that which he initiated before he ascended into heaven. Foreshadowing the work of Christ, Moses ascended the Mount with the two tablets of stone in his hands, and the confirmation of the covenant that they represented was established by the writing of God thereon. The antitype is fulfilled in "that the Lord entered into the holy place not made with hands which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24). His presence in heaven, "confirmed the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8).

VERSE 4

"And he wrote on the tables according to the first writing, the ten commandments" — These tablets were inscribed "with the finger of God" (Deut. 9:10). In the Hebrew the word "commandments" is

translated from *Debarim* - signifying "words". They are defined as ten words, because the term defines the ideas expressed thereby. See the use of *debarim* in Exod. 34:27.

"Which Yahweh spake unto you in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the assembly" — Once, again from such expressions as this, it is obvious that the covenant referred to in Deut. 5:3, relates to that made at Horeb with the old generation. It was a covenant made with the nation of Israel, and not a particular section of it. The word "assembly" is from the Hebrew *qahal* signifying "ecclesia". Therefore "the day of the assembly" was the day when the ecclesia was gathered together to hearken to the voice of Yahweh. See Heb. 12:18-24.

"And the Lord gave them unto me" — Moses received them as mediator between God and Israel. He represented Yahweh to the people, and the people to Yahweh. He accepted the tablets as representative of the nation, and conveyed the authority of Yahweh to the people.

VERSE 5

"And I turned myself, and came down from the mount" — see the similarity with ch. 9:15.

"And put the tables in the ark which I had made" — See note on v.1.

"And there they be, as Yahweh commanded me" — From the vantage point of 38 years later, Moses is able to state that the Tables of the Covenant were in the Ark in the midst of Israel. They remained in that Ark through all the perambulations of the children of Israel, until it was placed in the Temple by Solomon. See 1 Kings 8:9.

Moses Recalls Yahweh's Mercy In Continuing The Priesthood: — vv. 6-7

Not only did Yahweh, of His grace, and in response to the intercession of Moses, restore the Covenant that the people had broken, but He followed this up by continuing the high Priesthood, after the death of Aaron by appointing Eleazar to it. A careful reading of the chapter will disclose that these verses are in parenthesis, and Moses' orderly summary of events reverts back to the narrative in v.8.

VERSE 6

"And the children of Israel took their

journey from Beeroth, of the children of Jaakan" — The name "Beeroth" denotes *Wells*. That of the "children of Jaakan", or, as it is in Hebrew *Bene-Yaakan* - signifies *Sons of tortuous or twisting*. It is an Idumean name, referred to in Num. 33:32. In Numbers, however, the order of the stopping places as presented in this verse is different. It places Mosera before Bene-Yaakan. It is probable that the Israelites after travelling for some distance had to turn back for some cause, so that the order of stops in both places could be correct.

"To Mosera" — Mosera evidently was situated at the foot of Mt. Hor (see Num. 20:28). The name signifies *fetters*; or *chastisements*, and in Num. 33:30 is given in the plural. Such a name is appropriate for the burial place of Aaron, fettered by the punishment of death.

"There Aaron died, and there he was buried" — The sad details of the death of Aaron are given in Detail in Num. 20:23-29).

"And Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead" — The name "Eleazar" signifies *God (El) is a Helper*. Certainly the help of God's strength was needed at that time.

VERSE 7

"From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah" — The word signifies *cutting* or *clef*. It probably is to be identified with the Waddi Ghudhagidh. In Num. 33:32, the place is styled "*Horhagidgad*".

"And from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters" — The word signifies *Goodness*, or *Pleasantness*. It is described as a land of rivers of water, and is generally identified with Yotvata, about 50 km. (30 m.) from Eilat. It is a place of pleasantness and goodness, alike for its scenery, and its plenteous supply of water. Today, there is a kibbutz established there, with large dairy herds, whilst springs of waters still gush forth abundantly, and provide the main source of Eilat's water supply. Remains of a Solomonic fortress have been discovered here on top of an ancient spring. It guarded the access to some of the most important copper and iron mines in nearby Timnath, which were extensively exploited by King Solomon, and it commanded the main highway on the west side of the Arabah rift, to and from its chief seaport.

Yahweh's Mercy In Separating Levi — vv. 8-9

Yahweh's mercy is further revealed in providing Levi to assist the priests in their work of mediation on behalf of the people.

VERSE 8

"At that time Yahweh separated the tribe of levi" — The time referred to was not at the death of Aaron, but following the sin of the Golden Calf when the Levites responded to the call of Moses (Exod. 32:26).

"To bear the ark of the covenant of Yahweh" — The duties of the Levites are given in Num. 3:6-39; Num. 4:5-49; 8:14-26.

"To stand before Yahweh, to minister unto Him, and to bless in His name unto this day" — The expression "to stand before Yahweh" describes the action of a servant waiting upon his master. In the case of the priests or Levites, it denoted that they acted as servants to Yahweh, in ministering to the people. Hence they represented Yahweh to the people, and the people to Yahweh (Deut. 18:5; 2 Chron. 29:11). The Rechabites, because of their faithfulness, though not Levites, were promised that they would "stand before Yahweh", or act as Priests forever in the age to come (Jer. 35:19). Accordingly, they will find their place amongst the Priests of Zadok in that day (Ezek. 44:11-16). They, with the other priests, clothed with immortality will serve Yahweh by bringing near the offerings of the people and so to "minister unto Him". The particular blessing they were called upon to pronounce upon the people is expressed in the familiar words of Num. 6:22-27. See Deut. 21:5.

The three functions of the priests and Levites as listed in this verse are significant. They are to:

1. bear the ark (fellowship Christ's sufferings and manifest his virtues);
2. stand before Yahweh (labour in His service);
3. to praise Him (to vocally express His goodness).

VERSE 9

"Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren" — The Levites were given no tribal inheritance in the land, but were scattered amongst the tribes in order to play their part in the worship and education of the people.

"Yahweh is his inheritance, according

as **Yahweh thy God promised him**” — The duty of the Levites was to serve Yahweh, for which reason they were freed from the cultivation of the land, and were supported by the tithes of the other Israelites (Num. 18:20-21). Hence the description: “Yahweh is his inheritance”. As they were separated amongst the tribes, so their counterpart today, the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16) are scattered amongst the nations (see Ps. 16:5; Acts 15:14). The Levitical parable of separation and dedication will continue in the appointment of Levites both mortal and immortal in the land in the age to come (see Ezek. 44:28).

Yahweh's Mercy In Harkening To Moses' Intercession — vv. 10-11

Further evidence of Yahweh's great mercy is revealed in His pardoning of the people in spite of their rebellion, through the intercession of Moses.

VERSE 10

“**And I stayed in the mount according to the first time, forty days and forty nights**” — This intercession of Moses at the time of the great sin (Exod. 32:11-14), was continued when he again ascended the Mount (Exod. 34:8-9). His anxiety at that time is expressed in Deut. 9:19. However, as a result of his pleading, and in spite of the shocking episode of the Golden Calf, Yahweh renewed His covenant with the nation.

VERSE 11

“**And Yahweh said unto me, arise take thy journey before the people**” — Moses pleaded earnestly with Yahweh that He should continue with the people, in consequence of which He promised to send the angel of His presence to accompany them (see Exod. 33:12-17; Isa. 63:9). Nevertheless, Moses was commanded to lead them as a shepherd would his flock (see Psa. 77:20; 78:52-54).

“**That they may go in and possess the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them**” — Once again the Abrahamic covenant is prominently brought to mind. The Mosaic Covenant was based upon it, so that faith was needed to fulfil it.

How Israel Should Repay The Divine Mercy and Love — v. 12-Ch. 11:1.

Moses' recapitulation of past failures on the part of Israel reaches a climax as he emphasises the powerful exhortation that emerges therefrom. He clearly underlines

the responsibilities resting upon Israel, and how they are expected to carry them. He warns them that in treating with God, they do so with One who is able to reward or punish. Therefore, there is need to fear His holy name, and to respect the ordinances that He has set before them.

VERSE 12

“**And now, Israel, what doth Yahweh thy God require of thee?**” — See the same question asked by Micah, and his very significant reply (Mic. 6:8). Yahweh desires His people “to do justly, to love mercy, and to humble themselves to walk with their God”. Moses provides a similar answer. He lists five requirements of grace:

“**But to fear Yahweh thy God**” — *First requirement.* See note on Deut. 6:2. Reverence or awe at the majesty and glory of Yahweh is a first essential to true worship (Prov. 1:7).

“**To walk in all His ways**” — *Second requirement.* This requires the application of principles in action. Fear, or reverence, should motivate action (James 1:22).

“**And to love Him**” — *Third requirement.* Love manifests a readiness to sacrifice self-interest in the performance of Yahweh's will. It is a necessary addition to both fear and walk (2 John 6).

“**And to serve Yahweh thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul**” — *Fourth requirement.* To serve is to submit to the status of a servant; that is, to acknowledge the authority and right of God as Master. See Mal. 1:6; Heb. 12:28.

VERSE 13

“**To keep the commandments of Yahweh, and his statutes, which I command thee this day**” — *Fifth requirement.* The word “keep” is from a Hebrew root signifying to *hedge, guard, protect, attend.* It has the connotation of carefully meditating these commandments with the object of fulfilling them. To do this requires constant study of the Word of Yahweh, such as Paul recommended Timothy to give (1 Tim. 4:13-16). This is the fifth and final instruction of Moses at this time.

“**For thy good**” — Those who properly revere and obey God are promised present benefits as well as future ones. See Deut. 5:33; 11:13-15; 30:16; 1 Sam. 2:30; Psa. 145:20; Rom. 8:28. Paul sums this up by stating that “Godliness has promise of

the life that now is, as well as that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:8). To “love” Yahweh involves a respect for His Word, manifested in an earnest attempt to keep it. See 1 John 4:19-20; 5:2-3; 2 John 6. To “fear” Yahweh is to render unto Him the firstfruits of knowledge by the awe and respect in which He is held. See Prov. 1:7. However, this will not immune God's people from trials, but it will enable them to discern the purpose of trials and see beyond them. Consider the circumstances of Daniel. He was taken into captivity. It would not have been a pleasant experience. At that time, those who were left behind, believed that they had been blessed of Yahweh, in being exempt from the captivity. But that was not the case. In fact, the captivity was for the good of those affected thereby. Jeremiah was told: “I will acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans, for their good” (Jer. 24:5). It was safer for Daniel and his companions to be in Babylon than to experience the holocaust of Jerusalem when attacked by Nebuchadnezzar. Let faith be manifested in the ways indicated in the verses before us, and good will be experienced now, as well as in the age to come. However, note the progression of virtues listed here: “to fear”, “to walk”, “to love”, “to serve”, “to keep”. A man may fear, and walk without love. Love is the bond of perfectness (Col. 3:14), and will be manifested in “serving” and “keeping” the Word and Way of Yahweh. A God of such majesty and justice as Yahweh (see vv. 20-22) should command the reverence, devotion, and praise of Israel spiritual and natural. The restraints that this will impose will prove to be for the good of those exercised thereby. Genuine happiness is always associated with the performance of duty. “Taste and see that Yahweh is good”, counselled the Psalmist (Psa. 34:8). The pleasure and enjoyment of spiritual pursuits never wane. Those of other matters associated with the flesh do, for they are temporary and limited. For example, the benefits of eating flesh (though granted by God) is limited, but the effort of consuming the Word never fails; it is of permanent value, and never wastes.

VERSE 14

“**Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is Yahweh's**” — See 1 Kings 8:27; Psa. 115:16. Moses called upon the people

to “behold” in thought the mighty, remote, omnipotent Creator who controls not only the earth, which is as a speck of dust in comparison with the immensity of “space”, but all creation, and Who has condescended to choose Israel as His people (see Deut. 7:7-9). Yahweh dwells in the heaven of heavens, far beyond the scope of the greatest telescope to penetrate, and even beyond the ability of the mind of man to contemplate. Though so remote and lofty, He has bridged the illimitable distances in order to condescend to men of low estate (Psa. 103:8-13).

“The earth also, with all that therein is”

— Yahweh is the Creator of all things, and as such He has numberless objects in which to rejoice. He could have selected any nation upon earth, but because Israel was “beloved for the fathers' sake” (Rom. 11:28), he selected it. For the relationship of God to Israel and to heaven and earth, see Gen. 14:19; Exod. 19:5; Psa. 24:1.

VERSE 15

“**Only Yahweh had a delight in thy fathers to love them**” — This is an important statement upon which Paul's comment in Rom. 11:28 is based. The word “delight” is from the Hebrew *chashaq* and signifies to *cleave, or join in love.* It is expressive of affection and choice, and describes Yahweh's attitude towards the fathers of Israel because of their faith under pressure. He manifested His love towards them by granting them the promises. Through Christ he extends His love even to the forgiveness of sins to those who embrace His covenant. He “commends His love” to the attention and for the imitation of those who are recipients of it (Rom. 5:8).

“And he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day”

— This expresses the great privilege granted Israel in being selected as the channel of God's purpose and love (see Deut. 4:37; 7:7). Though Yahweh promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that their seed would inherit the land, He could have kept His promise by selecting the Edomites instead of the Israelites, for both were descendants of the fathers. Therefore the choice of Israel was a matter of grace. The nation had not manifested any outstanding qualities that would lay a claim upon God to treat them any differently to other nations. The sole claim to preferential treatment was their

relationship to the fathers, and as the latter enjoyed the privilege granted them because of their faith, it revealed the need for true Israelites to build that quality into their lives whilst resting on the grace of Yahweh. For that same reason, i.e. because they are "beloved for the fathers' sake", Yahweh will restore to the people of Israel their national greatness in the Age to come. He will do this, to vindicate his great Name of which the promises made to the fathers is an expression (see Ezek. 36:22).

VERSE 16

"Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff necked"

— Circumcision was the token of the covenant (see Gen. 17:11). Because of this, the covenant made with Abraham is described as "the covenant of circumcision" (Acts 7:8). From John 7:22 we learn that the law of circumcision took precedence over the sabbath law: it was "of the fathers" — whilst the sabbath law was "of Moses". Circumcision involved the cutting off of flesh. Therefore, it represented a repudiation of the flesh, including that of mere fleshly descent. Abram had tried to supply the promised seed through the flesh (see Gen. 16:2), but was taught that the seed to be provided was "not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of men, but of God" (John 1:13). Therefore, instead of circumcision establishing any hereditary right, it did the very opposite; it stressed that fleshly descent in no way qualified for enjoyment of covenant privileges, and was a ground, not for pride, but for humility. This mark was placed intimately in the flesh, and therefore was personal, hidden away from normal view, pointing to the circumcision of the heart, which only Yahweh can detect. The performance of the rite gave pain to the flesh. In *Elpis Israel* p. 250 Bro. Thomas states: "None but circumcised persons can inherit the promises. This may startle; but it is strictly true. It will however, be remembered that true circumcision is of the heart. Circumcision of the flesh is but an outward sign of Abraham's circumcision of heart; and everyone who would inherit with faithful Abraham, must be circumcised of heart likewise. When he was circumcised of heart, his faith in God was imputed to him for remission of sins that were past. His former idolatry etc., was forgiven, and the body of the sins of his flesh put off. Now a

man believing what Abraham believed, with the same effect on his disposition and life, is also circumcised of heart, when, in putting on Christ, he is 'circumcised with the circumcision made without hands by the circumcision of Christ', performed on the eighth day according to the law. In putting on Christ, his faith is counted to him for righteousness, as Abraham's was. 'The body of the sins of his flesh', is cut off. The foreskin of his heart is circumcised, and he is the subject of 'circumcision in the spirit'; and his praise, though not of men, is pronounced of God (Rom. 2:29)".

Circumcision, therefore, is much more than mere baptism; it is a repudiation of a former way of life, and the manifestation of a new way in Christ Jesus. It is a figurative 'crucifixion of the flesh, with its affections and lusts' (Gal. 5:24). A person can be baptised, without being spiritually circumcised; for he can be immersed and yet fail to put into effect the principles set forth in the Word. Baptism is the first act of obedience but is not the completed process; circumcision points to a life given to God through the repudiation of the works of the flesh.

So, Moses in the verse before us, reminded the people of the solemn responsibilities resting upon them as the children of God, and the seed of the covenant. They were called upon to circumcise the "foreskin of their hearts". That is, to cut off that which would prevent their hearts being duly impressed with a sense of Yahweh's love. This implies opening the heart to Yahweh by removing all reservations, coverings, secrets, unbeliefs. It is a command to do so. God recognises the difficulty of submitting to spiritual circumcision and promises to help those who desire to obey (see Deut. 30:6). The first essential to true circumcision is humility of mind (Lev. 26:41).

It was through the flesh that man first sinned, and it remains the area, its functions, lusts etc., whereby man's rebellion against God still finds manifestation. It was fitting, therefore, that the symbol which should denote the removal of this estrangement from God should be wrought in the body.

VERSE 17

"For Yahweh your God" — Yahweh Elohim of Israel is the Memorial Name of Deity, guaranteeing the eternal continuance of the nation (see Exod. 3:15). As the people of the covenant, Israelites

should recognise the responsibilities of their privileged status, and render implicit obedience unto Him, acknowledging His status as Lord, and His willingness to help and bless them in every circumstance of life, in return for their loving obedience.

"Is God of Gods" — The Hebrew is "Elohei of Elohim" and signifies "Powers of the Mighty Ones" — Yahweh is one, "a great God (*El* — power), and a great King above all Elohim" (Psa. 95:3). In this verse the word "Elohim" is rendered *gods*, but the word is identical with the many other places where it is rendered *God*. The reference is to the *Elohim*, or angels of heaven. Above all that glorious host Yahweh is supreme. Elsewhere David says: "Yahweh hath prepared His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all. Bless Yahweh, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word. Bless ye Yahweh, all ye hosts; ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure" (Psa. 103:19-21). From this, and other references, we gain a picture of Yahweh supreme over all the angelic host, who are sent forth to perform His will. Paul declares: "They are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). Though many in number, they are one through the spirit that motivates them all. The Apocalyptic symbol of that one Spirit multitudinously manifested is "the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne" (Rev. 4:5). Actually there is but one spirit (Eph. 4:4); but when that one Spirit is partitioned amongst others, the number seven (the covenant number representing many in one) is appropriate. *Elohei of Elohim*, representing the Powers of the Mighty Ones, relates to the one Power, or Spirit of Yahweh, multitudinously manifested in the Elohim, or angels of Power. The opening of the Red Sea, the providing of the manna in the wilderness, the provision of water from the smitten rock, and similar miracles are different manifestations of the one spirit. Hence the use of this title in this place. Further references to it are found in Josh. 22:22; Psa. 136:2; Dan. 2:47; 11:36.

"And Lord of lords" — The Hebrew is *Adonai of Adonim*. This signifies "rulers of rulers". Yahweh has His host of angels in the heavens, and into their care have been placed His hosts (Israel) on earth. The former exercise authority over the latter. Moses was told that Yahweh had ap-

pointed an angel to supervise the affairs of Israel (Exod. 23:20-23), and Joshua was introduced to the captain of that host (Josh. 5:13-15). The angel Michael was given the title of *archangel* which signified that he was placed in authority over other angels, who, in turn, exercised authority over Yahweh's rulers on earth: the leaders of Israel. The angels in heaven that were appointed to the task of supervising the affairs of Israel, enjoyed the title of *Adonim*, or Lords, and those appointed to authority over Israel on earth, likewise, were given that title. The authority vested in the heavenly *Adonai*, as well as that vested in the earthly *Adonim* stemmed from Yahweh. They represent Him in the exercise of their authority whether in heaven or on earth. Christ also will exercise authority over those who will reign with him, and therefore is given the title, "King of Kings, and Lord of lords" (Rev. 17:14; 19:16). Both he, and those elevated to authority with him in that day will manifest the authority of Yahweh.

The titles *Elohei of Elohim*, and *Adonai of Adonim*, express different aspects of Divine Manifestation. The first draws attention to the power that was manifested by Yahweh in the miracles that were performed through the angelic hosts; whilst the second relates to the authority that was vested in those appointed to positions of eminence: an authority that should be respected by the people of Israel, as they saw that it came from Yahweh Himself.

"A great God" — This is a further title expressive of the majesty of Yahweh. The word "great" is from a Hebrew expression signifying "one who shall be feared, revered, and respected". The fear of Yahweh is the firstfruits of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7). The word denotes the reverential respect that should be paid to Yahweh. Through Malachi, He asked Israel the question: "If I be a Master, where is My fear?" Those who worship Yahweh aright will render unto Him the respect, and reverential awe due to One so high and lofty above all flesh. The word "God" is from the Hebrew *El*. Whenever the word *El* is used, it is expressive of exceptional power, or might. When the Hebrews used this title in relation to Deity, His almighty divine power was brought to mind. In the title *great God (El)*, Israel was reminded of the reverential awe that should be paid One whose power is so mighty as to be beyond the ability of flesh to fully comprehend.

“A mighty” — The Hebrew word is *Gibbor*, a title signifying *Warrior* or *Hero*: that is, one who manifests his power in victorious conquest. This Yahweh did, in effecting great victories and deliverances for His people; such as over Egypt, the Amalekites, and the powerful enemies east of the Jordan. Israel enjoyed the protection of this great divine Warrior and Hero, who was worthy of their gratitude and adoration.

“And terrible” — The Hebrew *yarey* signifies “to fear, revere, hold in awe”. Yahweh is lofty, infinite in power, remote from all flesh. Hence he is to be held in the greatest awe, and offered the greatest respect. Such a fear will motivate action. Job declared: “Behold, the fear of Yahweh, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (Job. 28:28). Today often scant respect is paid to those in authority, and the regard for God is considered of least importance. This attitude of contempt will not be shown by those who recognise that the God whom they serve is *Yarey* or Terrible. However, the fear that this knowledge induces will be developed in those only who recognise the reality of God. Those who consider Him merely from an academic viewpoint will not fear Him, because His reality will not be apparent to them: to them He is merely a doctrine to accept. The very remoteness of God, His silence in this age, develops in some a sense of unreality in His existence. The Israelites were made to fear God, when they saw the awful manifestation of Divine power at Sinai. It is recorded “that they feared exceedingly”. Even Moses “trembled, and durst not behold” (Acts 7:32). In the visible exhibition of Yahweh’s reality, they recognised His ability to perform. As the people crouched at the foot of Horeb, observed the smoke, heard the voice, and felt the earthquake, they were filled with fear. That fear taught them to reverence the God whom they had elected to serve. But fearing abstractly is not sufficient. In several passages in scripture, fearing and proper living are so closely related as to virtually express synonymous ideas (See Lev. 19:14; 25:17; Deut. 17:19; 2 Kings 17:34). One aspect of righteousness repeatedly and emphatically associated with “fearing” God, is manifesting kindness to the unfortunate, and to the stranger, or resident alien (cp. Deut. 10:18-20 and ct. 25:18). Therefore, to “fear” God, but fail to apply the principles as set down for the

observance of His people, is to fail to “fear” Him in an acceptable way. Similar reverence is due also to one’s parents (Lev. 19:3), holy places (Lev. 26:2), and Yahweh’s Name (Psa. 86:11). Special blessings are promised to those who do so (Psa. 112:1).

“Which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward” — Yahweh does not extend preference to any because of their position among men; He does not prefer the rich to the poor, nor vice versa. He champions the cause of the fatherless, widows, and strangers, without respect of persons. Peter learned this when he was called to preach the gospel to Cornelius. He found, to his astonishment, that God was acting in full accord with His revealed character, as expressed in this verse (see Acts 10:34; 1 Pet. 1:17). Moreover, Yahweh will not accept a bribe. One cannot buy his way into the Kingdom of God, through monetary considerations, as though Yahweh needed anything (2 Chron. 19:7; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Gal. 2:6; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25). Notice that in some of the references cited above, the manifestation of this attribute of Yahweh will be brought up for consideration at the Judgment Seat. Those who have failed to do so will be treated with censure. Yahweh regardeth not persons, and that fact will be made abundantly clear at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

VERSE 18

“He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless, and the widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment” — Yahweh acts as an impartial and incorruptible Judge. Paul taught the Gentile pagans of Lycaonia that God, in providing the necessities of life to all mankind, actually set forth a witness to His goodness which constituted an invitation to men of all nations to worship Him through the channel of Israel (see Acts 14:17; 17:24-29; Rom. 1:19-20).

VERSE 19

“Love ye therefore the stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt” — Yahweh’s children (see Exod. 4:22) are expected to emulate the qualities of their heavenly Father. God-manifestation is shown in action, by manifesting unto others the love and consideration that Yahweh has extended unto them (see Lev. 19:33-34).

VERSE 20

“Thou shalt fear Yahweh thy God” — This important passage of scripture sets forth the name of God under various titles as follows:

Elohei of Elohim — Powers of the Mighty Ones.

Adonai of Adonim — Sovereign authority over delegated earthly rule.

A great El — Creative power beyond human conception.

Gibbor — A victorious man of war (Exod. 15:3; Isa. 9:6).

Yarey — One to be feared, revered, hold in awe (Exod. 34:10).

The qualities of Yahweh as expressed in the declaration of these verses are as follows:

He regards not persons. He cannot be bribed.

His power, sovereignty, strength, ability to war, and awesomeness, are blended with equity, and made perfect in love (see v. 18). Terrible indeed would that power be if separated from the love and equity through which it is manifested!

Christ’s earthly ministry was a commentary of v. 18.

“Him shalt thou serve” — Yahweh’s people are expected to submit to His will as servants do to that of their masters, and that without regard to the consequences.

“And to Him shalt thou cleave” — In Gen. 2:24, this term is used to describe man’s relationship in the marriage state. He is expected to “cleave unto his wife”. The word signifies to “keep close to someone,” to be joined intimately and permanently thereto. A derivative is used of the manner in which the various parts of the body are closely joined to each other. As each member is necessary to the proper functioning of the body as a whole, so it is with the multitudinous body of Christ. The word also carries the sense of clinging to someone in love (Deut. 11:22), affection and loyalty, as Ruth clave to Naomi (Ruth 1:14). Strong gives the word as figuratively signifying “to catch by eager pursuit as a wife”. This, as in marriage, involves separation and dedication (see Josh. 23:6-17; Acts 11:22; 2 Cor. 6:14-16). In the verse before us the Israelites are commanded to cleave to Yahweh in affection and loyalty so as to experience His blessing in return. That also is a requirement in true marriage. Unfortunately, as Jeremiah sorrowfully lamented, though Yahweh caused the Israelites to cleave

unto Him, they failed to properly respond to His affection (See Jer. 13:11).

“And swear by his Name” — See note on Deut. 6:13. To swear by the Name of Yahweh implies the performance of certain things in His Name. His Name had been named upon Israel (Num. 6:27), which meant that their actions could bring credit, or discredit upon the One whose name they espoused. This is also the case in marriage. How close is the relationship of marriage to that of a worshipper with his God as expressed in the statement of these verses! First fear or revere — the readiness to submit (see Eph. 5:22), then serve, cleave, swear by His name (i.e. govern action to the honour of the family name), finally praise. Let those principles motivate a marriage or worship and unqualified success will be the result. In that regard the natural teaches the spiritual.

VERSE 21

“He is thy praise” — That is, He should be the object of their praise. They should vocally express themselves in thanksgiving for what He had done for them. See Exod. 15:2; Psa. 22:3; 109:1; Jer. 17:14. The word rendered *praise* signifies “to laud as in hymns”. Its use is expressed in Deut. 26:19; 1 Chron. 16:35; 2 Chron. 20:22; Neh. 12:46. To Him the highest praise should be rendered, because of what He has done for Israel both natural and spiritual both of which have experienced the Divine goodness (see Exod. 15:11; Jer. 17:14).

“That hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen” — The children of Israel had received visible evidence of the great things Yahweh had done for them. That is true also of believers in this age. He has called them out of Gentile darkness, given them a hope and elevated them to a status high above flesh. Through baptism He has drawn them into covenant relationship with Him, so that they can anticipate the future with confidence, in contrast to the world about them. Israel saw great and mighty acts performed on its behalf in the deliverance of the nation; and today believers can see marvellous developments in the restoration of Israel and other signs among the nations witnessing to the imminence of Christ’s return. The words of Christ to his disciples are applicable also today to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear (see Matt. 13:16-17).

“Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now Yahweh thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude” — The reference to the number that went down into Egypt is explained in Gen. 46:26. Now the promise made to Abraham had been partially fulfilled in that the children of Israel were “as the stars of heaven for multitude”. In spite of the efforts of Pharaoh to destroy them, the people had escaped his power, had replaced the wastage of those destroyed in the wilderness, and as a mighty company of warriors, were now preparing to invade the land. Compare

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WARNINGS AND EXHORTATIONS TO OBEDIENCE

Moses in exhortation urges Israelites to recognise their close dependence on God, for the more this is realised the greater will be the service of obedience rendered to Him. He explains that true strength and success are absolutely dependent upon this. A key verse of the chapter is v. 27: “a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of Yahweh your God”. The climax of the chapter is reached in v. 32: “And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day”. In his exhortation, Moses gives reasons why Israel should obey (vv. 2-9). Obedience is absolutely essential, for the Land they are to occupy is entirely different to the other lands with which they were generally familiar. In Egypt, there was no need of rain, for the flooding of the Nile provided irrigation for crops; and in the wilderness there was lack of both rain and water. On the other hand, the Land they are about to enter is plentifully supplied with the rain of heaven (vv. 10-12). This rain is assured through the blessing of Yahweh if Israel fulfil their responsibilities according to the Law (vv. 13-17). Therefore there is a need for them to revere and teach God’s word (vv. 18-21), which is the key to success (vv. 22-25). As a reminder of this, commanded Moses, once Israel enters the Land, the tribes must

with Deut. 1:10; 28:62; Neh. 9:23. This promise made to Abraham (see Gen. 22:17) had now been partially fulfilled in the people of Israel after the flesh. They were as the stars of heaven for multitude, for they constituted a large company of people, nationally exercising the authority of God. They had not yet become as “the sand of the sea”, for that simile describes the bounds of Gentile power, likened to the sea (Isa. 57:20), limited by the national boundaries granted Israel by Divine government (see Job 38:11). The second portion of the promise made to Abraham would be fulfilled when they entered the Land, and ejected the Canaanites therefrom.

assemble to hear again recited the blessings and cursings of the law (vv. 26-32). This will remind the people of the two ways set before them: the national ways of Life and of Death.

VERSE 1

“Therefore thou shalt love Yahweh thy God, and keep His charge, and His statutes, and His judgments, and His commandments always” — The word “therefore” links this verse with the previous chapter; and a better division would result if the new chapter commenced at v. 2. The verse before us sums up the conclusion reached from the previous chapter. Love and obedience go hand in hand. Where love exists obedience will be manifested. “This is love”, wrote John, “that we walk after his commandments” (2 John 6). If a person loves sufficiently, he will sacrifice his own will in order to please the object of his love. Love of God demands that. True worship is a blend of love and fear see Deut. 10:20 and our comments on Deut. 6:5.

Why Israel Should Obey — vv. 2-9

Moses reminds the people that they are fully conversant with Yahweh’s care and concern for them. They have felt His disciplinary hand, and have witnessed His miracles performed in Egypt and elsewhere on their behalf. Their personal knowledge of these things should create the incentive to obey. Obedience will result in further blessing once they enter the land.

VERSE 2

“And know ye this day: for I speak not with your children that have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of Yahweh your God” — Moses seems to have addressed himself particularly to the elders who had witnessed Yahweh’s wonderful works (see v. 7). The word “known” can be used in the sense of *acknowledged*. The elders to whom he spoke, were men of experience, who had witnessed the hand of God. They were therefore qualified to pass on to their children, the results of their knowledge. They had seen the “chastisement of Yahweh”. The word signifies “discipline”. Rotherham renders it as “instruction”. The idea of the word is to teach through discipline. In Eph. 6:4 Paul advocates that fathers should bring up their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”.

The word “nurture” is from a Greek word *paideia* signifying both the “training and instruction of a child by discipline”. The Revised Version renders it as *chastening* the verb expressing the idea of instruction supplemented with physical correction. Hence both the Old and New Testaments teach the value of impressing instruction with such a form of correction. Certainly Israel had experienced such disciplinary care through the wilderness, as Yahweh humbled them through trials. It was not pleasant for the people to experience the process of instruction described in Deut. 8:2-3, but it had moulded them into a more courageous, determined and faithful people ready to enter the land.

“His greatness” — The Israelites had not only experienced the discipline of Yahweh, but had personal evidence of His greatness. The Hebrew word is *godel* from *gadal* “to twist”, hence implying “strength”, or “magnitude”. A rope is made larger and stronger by the twisting together of many strands, and Yahweh’s greatness was manifested by many acts of goodness. His strength, or greatness, enabled Him to redeem the people (see Deut. 9:26 and cp. with 3:24; 5:24; 32:3). See also the thrilling ascription of praise by David in 1 Chron. 29:11. The word “greatness” in that place is from the Hebrew *gedullah*, which is from a common root.

“His mighty hand” — The hand is the symbol of action. Here it expressed Yahweh’s ability to perform. The Israelites had seen that manifested in the miracles that He had performed on their behalf, including the provision of manna from day to day.

“And His stretched out arm” — The arm is used figuratively for the ability to extend the influence of labour and activity. The Israelites had been made conscious that Yahweh’s arm is “not shortened that it cannot be save” (Isa. 59:1).

VERSE 3

“And His miracles” — These had been evident from the time of their stay in Egypt, and throughout the wilderness wanderings. See Deut. 6:22; 7:19; Psa.

78:12-13; 105:27; 135:9; Jer. 32:20-21. etc.

“And His acts, which He did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh the King of Egypt, and unto all His land” — The word “acts” signifies *actions*, Yahweh’s transactions, or activity. The history of Israel from the beginning, from the time that Moses stood before Pharaoh, until now that the people are on the eve of entering the Land of Promise, had witnessed mighty interventions of Yahweh on their behalf.

VERSE 4

“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 Yahweh hath destroyed them unto this day” — The destruction of the host of Pharaoh in the Red Sea demonstrated Yahweh’s ability to save the people of Israel by the most unusual means. See Exod. 14:26-31; 15:4,9,10,19; Psa. 106:11; Heb. 11:29.

VERSE 5

“And what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came unto this place” — The children of Israel were required to remember the mighty acts of Yahweh throughout their wilderness wanderings. If they pondered the care that He had manifested in providing them with manna and water, evidences of His everlasting love (Jer. 31:3), they would find strength of faith to overcome the problems that could arise as they entered the Land. See Psa. 105:35-42. Through Moses and Aaron God had shepherded them through the wilderness to the Promised Land. See Psa. 77:20; 80:1. Through the fire and cloud, He had comforted and protected them. See Psa. 78:14; 106:12. Now the time had come for them to act upon the conviction that He would continue to help them.

VERSE 6

“And what He did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab the son of Reuben” — Moses moves on to show how Yahweh dealt with internal enemies. See Num. 16:1,31; 27:3; Psa. 106:17. Korah is not mentioned, perhaps out of consideration for his descendants, some of whom would have been among the audience of Moses at that time. See Num. 16:1,31; 27:3. And for Korah’s children see Num. 26:11. Korah died with the Levites, not

with Dathan and Abiram. Their revolt, being Reubenites, was political in character; his was religious.

“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” — The word *substance* signifies “living substance”, as in the margin. The RV renders it as “living thing”. The reference is to the children and animals of Dathan and Abiram. They are described as being “in their possession, in the midst of all Israel”, because they were associated with the tabernacle.

VERSE 7

“But your eyes have seen all the great acts of Yahweh which He did” — The Israelites had personally witnessed the mighty power of Almighty God, and therefore had a responsibility to respond to this evidence of His reality.

VERSE 8

“Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day” — “Therefore” links the command of this verse with the statement of the verse which precedes it, and which gives reason why Yahweh’s commandments should be kept. Enlightenment brings added responsibility. See Amos 3:2; John 9:41; 12:48. What Yahweh requires of His people is epitomised in Deut. 10:12-15.

“That ye may be strong” — See the promise and exhortation of Josh. 1:6-7. The strength required to successfully complete a work of Yahweh is derivable from Him through the Word. See Psa. 138:3; Isa. 40:31; Eph. 3:16; 6:10; Phil. 4:13; Col. 1:11. Human weakness is no deterrent to the manifestation of divine strength; in fact, God’s strength is “made perfect through the weakness” of the one revealing it (2 Cor. 12:8-10).

“And go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it” — Determination, resoluteness and courage combined with faith are the ingredients of success. See 1 Sam. 4:9; 1 Cor. 16:13.

VERSE 9

“And that ye may prolong your days in the land, which Yahweh sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed” — Israel’s tenancy of the land was conditional upon the good behaviour of its people. Principles laid down for this pur-

pose, and which, in each case, is linked with long life are to “keep the commandments” (Deut. 4:40; “fear Yahweh” (6:2; Prov. 10:27); honour parents (5:16); discipline the tongue (Psa. 34:12); act with wisdom (Prov. 9:11; 3:16).

“A land that floweth with milk and honey” — See Exod. 3:8 for the first mention of this description. It denotes a Land of plenty, excellent for pasturage, and abounding in the most wholesome herbage and flowers. But “milk” and “honey” are also used as symbols for the Word: the former relating to the basic principles expressed therein; and the latter denoting the strength derived therefrom. The Land of Promise was to be peopled by those who honoured Truth, and therefore all forms of false religion and philosophy had to be rooted out.

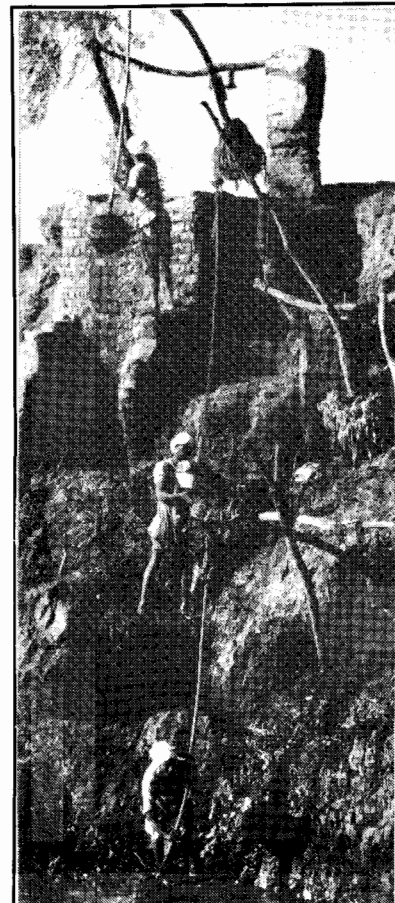
The Land of Promise Dependent Upon the Rain (or blessing) of Heaven — vv. 10-12

The Land of Promise is quite unlike that of Egypt. In Egypt, irrigation is necessary and entirely dependent upon human manipulation; in Eretz Israel it is provided as the blessing of Yahweh. It is a Land directly under His supervision, and upon which His eyes are constantly centred.

VERSE 10

“For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out” — Egypt is a very arid country on the edge of the great Sahara desert. The arable and populated area is limited to the Nile valley, and as the rainfall is only about one inch per year, it is entirely dependent for growth upon the irrigation of the flats by the water of the river. In ancient times, and before the construction of the Aswan Dam, this was annually performed by the flood waters spreading over its banks. The Land which the Israelites were about to enter is entirely dissimilar to this, and regularly receives the blessing of Yahweh in the form of rain. The fact that it is dependent upon this blessing of heaven provides a further motive for proper conduct. Rainless and arid Egypt is a fit emblem of the world of sin in distinction from the world of grace as represented by the Land of Promise made fruitful by the heaven-bestowed blessing of God. The Israelites had “come out” of Egypt, as believers today are “taken out of the Gentiles”, a people for the Name.

“Where thou sowest thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs” — This describes the laborious method of irrigation then commonly used in Egypt, and frequently seen even today. The land is often artificially watered by a foot pump or tread-wheel called a *shadurf*, or by artificial channels connected with dams, and opened, turned, or closed by the feet. Sometimes an animal is used for the purpose, and will turn a wheel that activates the pump. All such methods are seen in Egypt to this day. It is a land independent of the rain of heaven (see Zech. 14:18), and therefore typical of the Gentiles who act in independence of God.



Laborious method of irrigation in Egypt.

VERSE 11

"But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven" — Rain is used as a symbol of the spirit-word. The Promised Land soaked up the rain of heaven, as true Israelites should receive the Word of God. "My doctrine shall drop as the rain," declared Moses, "my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass" (Deut. 32:2).

VERSE 12

"A land which Yahweh thy God careth for" — The Hebrew signifies that He seeketh its good. The Psalmist declared: "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" (Psa. 65:9-11). The Psalmist pictures the manner in which Yahweh "seeketh out" what is best for the Land of His choice and favour (see also Psa. 104:10-13). The Land and its products figuratively represent Israel and the fruits of the Spirit-word. As Yahweh overlooked the Land, and provided what was best for it in view of the circumstances that He saw manifest there, so He does for His elect, carefully overshadowing their lives for their ultimate benefit. "Doth God care for oxen, or saith He it for your sakes?" enquired Paul of another Law, and he pointed out that the Law has a spiritual significance that we can apply to ourselves.

"The eyes of Yahweh thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" — Even in winter, when overcast skies and bitter winds may give the impression of a forsaken land, Yahweh is there, behind the clouds, providing for the needs of His people. He is constantly with His saints in times of prosperity and of adversity.

Conditions Upon Which God's Blessing Will Be Provided — vv. 13-17

Let Israel remain faithful to Yahweh, and He will abundantly bless the people with tokens of His goodness.

VERSE 13

"And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto My commandments which I command you this day" — To "hearken diligently" is to hearken closely and intelligently with intent to obey.

"To love Yahweh your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul" — Proper love will manifest itself in service or obedience. See notes on Deut. 6:5; 2 John 6. The heart was the organ of intelligence to the Hebrew. What then is heart-service? The answer is, Prayer based on the Word. See Eph. 2:18. Soul-service suggests the sacrifice of self. See Matt. 6:25; 10:39 where the word "soul" is rendered *life*. A person rendering service to God with all his soul, would become an acceptable "living sacrifice" unto Him (Rom. 12:1).

VERSE 14

"That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season" — Rain in season is productive of good; rain out of season can be destructive of crops. In this verse "rain" occurs three times, but is the common rendition of three different words in the Hebrew. The word *matar*, signifies merely to rain, and is found in the present clause, and also in vv. 11,17. It relates to normal rain in general. The word *Yowreh* signifies the first rain, or the spring showers; whilst *malqowsh*, denotes the Autumn, or latter rain. Conditional upon the quality of their worship, the people of Israel could depend upon adequate rainfall at proper times.

"The first rain" — The word *Yowreh* is derived from a root signifying *sprinkling*, and so denotes the early or first rains.

"And the latter rain" — The word *malqowsh* denotes the Spring rain. This rain is important to swell out the grain, and provide a full harvest. The various rains of the Promised Land, come when they do their greatest good.

"That thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil" — See Hag. 1:6; Mal. 3:10-11. The first rains come about the middle of October to the end of December. These rains prepare the soil for seeding and keep it moist after it is sown. The latter rains come about March and early April when the grain is ripening, and needs the additional showers to fill it out and fully develop it for harvest. The first of the grain crops (barley) is gathered

in at about Passover time. The first harvest, therefore, is the corn, and the final ingathering, the vintage. Yahweh's purpose with Israel and with the world takes on the pattern established in nature. Hence Armageddon will witness the beginning of the Lord's harvest of the future, and the "vintage" will witness his final judgments upon the nations prior to the commencement of the Millennium (see Rev. 14:15,18).

VERSE 15

"And I will send grass in thy fields" — See Psa. 104:14. Grass or pasturage is used figuratively of flesh (Isa. 40:6). Grass in the fields of Israel represents growth of population.

"For thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full" — Reference is made first to the cattle and then to the Israelites, as required by the Law (Deut. 25:4), but these injunctions had a spiritual significance as noted by Paul (1 Cor. 9:9). This not only taught that those who labour in the Truth should be supported in their efforts (1 Tim. 5:18), but also that careful consideration should always be given to others.

VERSE 16

"Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived" — This warning is given in context with the promised prosperity expressed in the previous verse. Affluence and satiety easily induce forgetfulness. See Deut. 4:9; 8:11; 32:15; Luke 21:34-36; Heb. 2:1. The word "deceived" is from a Hebrew root signifying that which is *open*. A heart opened is one susceptible to any impressions from without, and therefore one that is easily persuaded or enticed (see Heb. 3:13). Paul warned of the ease whereby "the hearts of the simple" (i.e. opened) are deceived and seduced; and his expressions could well have been derived from the verse before us (see Rom. 16:18).

"And ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them" — This, in fact, took place in Israel. Deut. 32:15.

VERSE 17

"And then Yahweh's wrath be kindled against you" — See Deut. 6:15.

"And He shut up the heaven, that there be no rain" — See 1 Kings 8:35; 2 Chr. 6:26; 7:13. Gentiles view heatwaves and drought as the vagaries of uncertain nature; the Hebrews were taught to consider

these things as visitations from God (see Ruth 1:6), and induced thereby to look inwardly to discover the reason. They are also used figuratively, e.g. Rev. 7:16.

"And that the land yield not her fruit" — See Lev. 26:4. Adverse weather conditions would prove to be the first of the punishments upon a disobedient people. See Deut. 28:15-19.

"And lest ye perish quickly from off the land which Yahweh giveth you" — Compare this warning with the promise of continual occupancy in v. 9. And note the warnings of Deut. 4:26; 28:20,35; 30:18. The ultimate punishment was to be taken into captivity. Unfortunately, Israel did experience this.

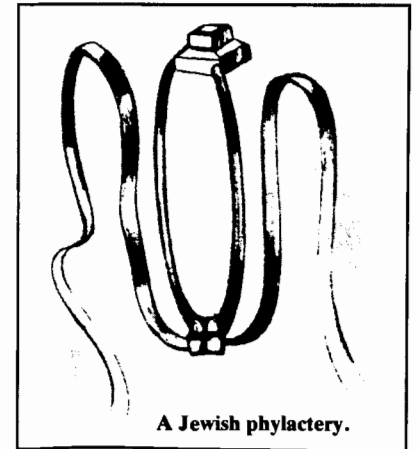
Thus the Need To Revere And Teach God's Word — vv. 18-21

As the future blessings in the Land are conditional upon a true and proper worship, there is need to both revere and teach God's word, so that His people are constantly reminded of its precepts.

VERSE 18

"Therefore shall ye lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul" — See Deut. 6:6-9; 32:46; Psa. 119:11; Prov. 6:20-23.

"And bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes" — See notes on Exod. 13:9; Deut. 6:7-9. The instruction of Deut. 6:7-9 is repeated here; the repetition emphasising the importance of the instruction. In the event of the Israelites



A Jewish phylactery.

being punished by being driven into exile as implied in v. 17, the ordinances prescribed must be continued to be observed; even in dispersion they must bring to mind the requirements of Yahweh. The instructions, of course, are to be interpreted figuratively, not literally as the Jews have done, "making broad their phylacteries, and enlarging the borders of their garments" whilst their hearts remain untouched—a practise the Lord condemned (Matt. 23:5).

VERSE 19

"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" — See notes on Deut. 4:9.

VERSE 20

"And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates" — See notes Deut. 6:9.

VERSE 21

"That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which Yahweh sware unto your fathers to give them" — Tenancy of the Land on the part of the Israelites was conditional upon their obedience, and therefore a contrast to the unconditional promise made to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. See *Elpis Israel* p. 249.

"As the days of heaven upon the earth" — This denotes that the occupancy shall be as long as the heavens remain stretched out over the earth, that is, forever (Luke 1:32). The purpose of God in leading Israel to the Land was that the nation should remain there permanently, but conditions were attached to that. The divine purpose, of course, will be fulfilled in the Millennium, for this unusual expression of the Law is cited in Psa. 89:29 in that context: "His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven". See also Isa. 65:22.

Success Will Result From Obedience — vv. 22-28

Obedience is the key to successful living in the presence of Yahweh. The people of Israel are promised that if they closely identify themselves with Him they will become the dread of their enemies, for by His help they will overcome them.

VERSE 22

"For if ye shall diligently keep all these

commandments which I command you, to do them, to love Yahweh your God, to walk in all His ways" — This is a repetition of previous warnings such as an anxious parent might give to its child, particularly if somewhat doubtful as to whether the instructions will be carried out to the letter! The word "keep" is from the Hebrew *shamar*, "to hedge about, guard, attend to". The command requires that the will of Yahweh should always be kept in mind, and that actions should be motivated thereby. See this requirement reproduced in 1 John 2:3; 3:22; 5:2-3. The same repetition found in the writings of Moses, is found also in those of John.

"And to cleave unto him" — Israel is told to take hold of Yahweh, as a wife should seek the guidance and protection of her husband, or a child take hold of the hand of its father.

VERSE 23

"Then will Yahweh drive out all these nations from before you" — The spies had claimed that the task was beyond the ability of Israel to accomplish; and this was true. But it was never expected that Israel would conquer in its own strength, no more than it is expected that the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16) should gain the victory in the absence of help. It is faith that will grant this (1 John 5:4). Israel was called upon to invade the enemy-infested Land in faith, placing confidence in God. As a father will protect his obedient child from molestation on the part of others, so Yahweh would "His son" (Exod. 4:22-23).

"And ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves" — See Deut. 9:1. Yahweh's obedient son would be suitably rewarded by his loving Father.

VERSE 24

"Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours" — This would partly fulfil the promise made to Abraham, for he was invited to "walk through the land, in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee" (Gen. 13:17). Israel's occupancy of the land provided a token fulfilment of that which will see its completion in the Age to come (Ezek. 48).

"From the wilderness" — The country east of the Jordan that already had been taken by Israel.

"And Lebanon" — The Lebanese

ranges marked the northern area.

"From the river, the river Euphrates" — The Euphrates marked the eastern and northern borders of the Land. This extent of territory was promised Abraham (Gen. 15:18), but not obtained by the Israelites that entered the land under Joshua. It will form part of the Promised Land in the future (Ezek. 48).

"Even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be" — The RV renders this as "the hinder sea", i.e. the Mediterranean which formed the Western border.

VERSE 25

"There shall no man be able to stand before you; for Yahweh 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" — To "stand before" in this context implies to do so in a hostile manner (see Deut. 7:24). Moses promised the people that fear would grip their enemies and weaken their fighting capabilities. That fear was already weakening the nations as they heard reports of the successes of the Israelites against the kings of the eastern side of the land (Deut. 2:25). It intensified when Joshua led the army against Jericho (Josh. 2:9; 5:1).

The Blessings and Cursings of the Law to be Recited Unto The People — vv. 26-32

The blessings and cursings of the Law are suggestive of the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. To Israel, they represented the way of national Life or the way of Death. In order to remind the people of the responsibilities resting upon them they are to assemble at Shechem at the foot of Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal for a dramatic presentation of the blessings and cursings of the Law. Shechem is a most appropriate place for this to take place, for it is the first place in the Land where Abraham was given the promise and he built an altar (Gen. 12:7).

VERSE 26

"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse" — Israel had the freewill to choose either. See Psa. 81:12-14.

VERSE 27

"A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of Yahweh your God, which I command you this day" — There is rich reward in following the way of blessing for

its benefits are found now as well as in the Age to Come. See Lev. 26:3-13; Deut. 28:1-14. There are rewards both now and in the future for those who walk according to this way. See Psa. 19:11; Isa. 1:19; 3:10; Matt. 5:3-12; 25:31; Luke 11:28; John 13:17; 14:21-23; Rom. 2:7; Rev. 22:14.

VERSE 28

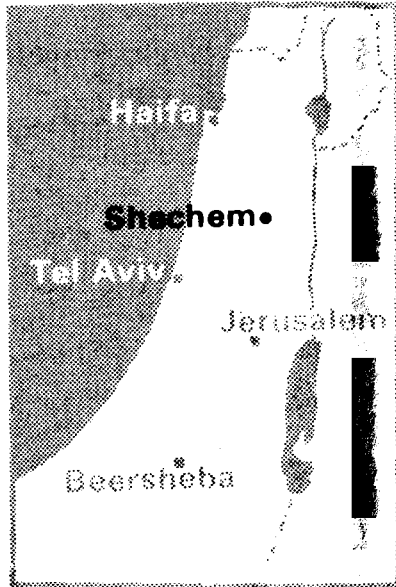
"And a curse if ye will not obey the commandments of Yahweh your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known" — See Lev. 26:14; Deut. 28:15; Isa. 3:11; Matt. 25:41; Rom. 2:5-9. The "way which I command" is the way to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24; Rev. 2:7).

VERSE 29

"And it shall come to pass, when Yahweh 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" — See notes on Deut. 27:12-13; Josh. 8:33 where the instructions are given in greater detail. Gerizim and Ebal overlook the significant site of Shechem where the promise to Abraham was first made and confirmed in the Land (Gen. 12:7). The two peaks are separated by a valley about 200 yards wide, forming a pass that leads to Samaria. The word Gerizim signifies to *cut off*, i.e. to *separate*. It is to the south; and Ebal, signifying *bald* or *Heaps of Nothing* or *Confusion* (Dictionary of Proper Names) is to the north. Ebal is higher than Gerizim indicating, perhaps, that through weakness of the flesh man more readily inherits curses than he does blessings. Their heights are about 2,700 ft (900m.) and 2800 (930m.), and they are about 3 miles (5km) long, extending in a kind of semicircle to partly surround Shechem.

VERSE 30

"Are they not on the other side of Jordan by the way where the sun goeth down?" — In Hebrew this is literally "on the road of the west towards the setting of the sun" (see *Interlinear Hebrew English O.T.*). The "way of the west" denotes the road upon which Jacob travelled west across the Jordan from Succoth to Shechem. It continues from Shechem to the coast. This was about 60 miles (96 km) north from where the Israelites were then.



“In the land of the Canaanites” — See Gen. 12:6. The land was infested with Canaanites at the time Abram entered it, and still remained so when Joshua led the people over Jordan. The word “Canaanite” is from a root *kannah* signifying *to bend the knee, to humiliate oneself* so as to obtain an advantage over another. Therefore, by implication, it signifies a trader. The word has been rendered merchant (Job 41:6; Hos. 12:7; Zeph. 1:11) and traffickers (Isa. 23:8; see also Ezek. 17:4). The Canaanites were a people cursed of God (Gen. 9:25), and therefore the enemy of the righteous. They were a religious people, but their religion was immoral to the extreme. Therefore, the Israelites were about to enter a land of warlike, spiritual enemies, and engage upon a bitter struggle demanding faith and courage for victory. They needed a Burden-bearer (Shechem signifies *Between the Shoulders, or Burden-bearer*) to sustain them. To that end, after an initial success, they were to make their way to this spot where Abram had been given the promise, and Jacob has been divinely helped, to receive encouragement for the task before them. Since then, though the ancient Canaanites have been exterminated, religious Canaanites still are active in the

Land and throughout the world. They are the “merchants of the earth” who trade in many things including the “bodies and souls of men” (Rev. 18:11,13); but who are destined to mourn and lament when “no man buyeth their merchandise any more” (v. 11). At that time, as Zechariah prophesied, “there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of Yahweh of hosts” (Zech. 14:21), implying that they are found there at present. Religious Canaanites are those who “through covetousness, with feigned words, make merchandise” of the truth (2 Pet. 2:3). The clergy are such, for they make merchandise of the Word of God. But their judgment is rapidly approaching, and Zechariah’s words will be fulfilled (see Zech. 13:3).

“Which dwell in the champaign” — The reference is to the Arabah, the great depression of land that extends from the Sea of Galilee southwards. Jericho is situated in the Arabah.

“Over against Gilgal” — Gilgal signifies *Rolling away*. There were two places of that name in the Land. One was opposite Jericho, and was given the name Gilgal because there “the reproach of Egypt was rolled away” (Josh. 10:6). The other Gilgal, the one referred to here as being adjacent to Shechem, was north of Bethel (2 Kings 2:1-2; 4:38). It was a royal city conquered by Joshua (Josh. 12:23).

“Beside the plains of Moreh” — The word “plains” should be rendered *oaks or great trees*. The Hebrew *‘elony* is derived from a root signifying strength. There is no such place as “the plains of Moreh”, and so the reference must be to the oaks or trees of Moreh. “Moreh” signifies *teacher*, so that the description that aligns this place close to Gilgal and Shechem becomes (with the meaning of their names) very significant. The *Great Trees of the Teacher*, suggest the evergreen trees of Psalm 1, typical of the saints in glory through the help of the Burden-bearer. When that is revealed all reproach shall be rolled away, and the faithful shall stand forth as “the mighty ones of the Teacher”. The objective set before the people of Israel when they made their way to this significant site, to hear recited the blessings and cursings of the Law, was that they might find a place as trees of glory in the age to come (Isa. 60:21; 65:22; Rev. 22:1-2).

VERSE 31

“For ye shall pass over Jordan” — See 9:1. Joshua (Jesus) was to lead them into the Land, and Moses was to die upon Mount Nebo. It was a graphic foreshadowing of Yahweh’s purpose with the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). Israel, as a nation, made two crossings: through the Red Sea with its salt water under direction of Moses; and across the Jordan, with its fresh water, led by Joshua. Christ told Nicodemus that a person must be “born of water and of the spirit” to enter the Kingdom of God. He is born of water at baptism; and he will be born of the spirit at the Lord’s return. This was typically set forth in the crossings of the children of Israel.

“To go in to possess the land which Yahweh our God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein” — Israel was

to possess the Land as the Kingdom of God.

VERSE 32

“And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day” — See Deut. 5:32-33; 12:32. The Israelites were called upon to openly and publicly perform all God’s will, and so witness to the call to service they had accepted. They were not to be ashamed of this (Psa. 119:6), but willingly submit to all required of them. Christ also sent forth his Apostles to teach believers to “observe and do” the will of God (Matt. 7:21-27; 28:20). His friends are noted for this characteristic (John 15:14). The Apostles constantly brought this home to believers (1 Thess. 4:1-2). John taught that the manifestation of love demanded it (1 John 5:3; 2 John 6).

Ruins of Shechem at the foot of Mt. Gerizim (right).



ATTITUDE TOWARDS MATTERS OF DIVINE WORSHIP CHAPTERS 12-13

With the conclusion of Chapter 11 there is a change in Moses' discourse. All that has gone before may be regarded as the religious and historical prelude to that which follows. Though, in the previous chapters, Moses refers generally to the need to observe the Covenant of Horeb, he now becomes more specific regarding what that Covenant demands of the people once they enter the Land. These laws relate to:

1. Religious institutions and worship — Ch. 12:1-13:18.
2. The Israelites' relationship to Yahweh — Ch. 14:1-15:23.
3. Their obligation to observe Feasts — Ch. 16:1-17.
4. The Government of the people — Ch. 16:18-18:22.
5. Criminal Law — Ch. 19:1-21:9.
6. Domestic legislation — Ch. 21:10-23.
7. Human relationships and responsibilities — Ch. 22:1-26:19.

Then follow the blessings and cursings of the Law, and Moses' final exhortations, warnings, and prophecies.

These chapters provide an expansion of the Ten Commandments which form the basis of the teaching of Deuteronomy. Chapters 12-14 which expound upon the worship of God, can be aligned with the first three Commandments. Chapters 15:1-16:17 which lists the holy festivals, are analogous to the Fourth Commandment. Chapters 16:18-18:22 which set forth principles relating to civil and religious Government, for the purpose of disciplining the nation, as parents should rule the home, can be related to the Fifth Commandment. The balance relates to the relationship of man to his fellow-men which, of course is the teaching of the final five Commandments.

The Section of Deuteronomy that now engages our attention, therefore, sets forth the application of the Ten Commandments to the requirements of practical daily living, when settled in the Land. They are never lost sight of, for they form the basis of the Covenant made at Horeb, and

here re-affirmed with the people of Israel as they are about to enter the Land. See such expressions as: "When Yahweh hath cut off the nations, whose Land Yahweh thy God giveth thee" (Deut. 19:1); "When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies" (Deut. 20:1); "These are the statutes and judgments which ye shall observe to do in the land" (Deut. 12:1).

Chapter 12 commences the new sub-section of Deuteronomy with the words "These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land . . ." The previous chapters have made it obvious that the Israelites will successfully invade the Land, and Moses has been specific in describing its outstanding qualities. But the new way of life awaiting them there will necessitate a change in their application of the principles of the Law. Previously they had wandered through the wilderness with little opportunity to plant crops or gather in the harvest, or present tithes; and the requirements of the Law had been modified to meet the needs of their nomad existence. That will no longer apply, once settled in the Land, so that then every requirement of the Covenant of Law is to be observed. Already in Chapter 6:1, Moses has made it clear that when they enter the Land it will be upon the basis of the Covenant made at Horeb, that is, the Ten Commandments; and now, from Chapter 12 onwards, he reveals what those Commandments will require of the people in the terms of practical living. As the first of the Commandments elevated Yahweh, His authority, and the exclusiveness of worship He demands, so the first section of the part of Moses' Discourse shows what is required in regard to respect for God when in the Land (Chps. 12, 13). Seeing that they will then hold jurisdiction over the Land, in contrast to their subservient state in Egypt where they were "strangers", or their nomadic existence in the wilderness which they traversed as "pilgrims", they were to assert their authority and insist upon the principles of acceptable worship being recognised and practised throughout it. This required the following:

1. The vigorous destruction of existing false worship — Ch. 12:2,3,29,31.
2. Their establishment of national worship according to

Divine direction — Ch. 12:1,32

3. *The recognition of a central place of worship as a unifying influence, established at a site to be selected by Yahweh, and where His Divine Name is to be honoured — Ch. 12:5.*

4. *God's way to be incorporated in all aspects of life witnessed by the tithes etc. — Ch. 12:11.*

5. *Divine worship to be based upon family participation — Ch. 12:18.*

6. *It is to inspire pleasure — Ch. 12:12.*

7. *It is to be a liberal service — Ch. 12:17-19.*

Having laid down the positive requirements of Divine worship, Chapter 13 describes some of the negative demands:

1. *False prophets are to be ruthlessly suppressed — vv. 1-5.*

2. *God's authority is to be elevated above family considerations — vv. 6-11.*

3. *Idolatrous cities are to be completely destroyed — vv. 12-18.*

True religion, therefore, has both positive and negative principles and responsibilities to observe.

It is interesting and significant to trace the changed conditions of the people once in the Land. They had been "strangers" in Egypt and pilgrims throughout their wilderness wanderings; they are to be established as citizens in the Land. Their change of status, and variations in worship that it brought, typed the change that will take place in the status of believers at the Lord's return. Today, like Israel originally, they are strangers and pilgrims, separated from the world about them, isolated from its politics and its national struggles; but then they will conquer it politically (Dan. 2:44) destroy its false forms of worship (Rev. 17:18; Zech. 13:3-4), establish a way of life honouring to Yahweh, Whose Name will then again be centred in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-4) and reign with Christ as King-priests (Rev. 5:9-10). In the instruction of Deuteronomy, and the events of the times, there are typical foreshadowings of what the future will reveal to the glory of God and the wellbeing of humanity.

CHAPTER TWELVE

POSITIVE REQUIREMENTS OF YAHWEH'S WORSHIP

Religion is not limited to abstract principles or doctrines which may excite the mind without making demands upon the person; it is to be expressed in positive principles that are to find expression in the affairs of everyday life. In short, true religion is a way of life, not merely an academic exercise. Key verses in the chapter are vv. 1,28,32. The ordinances set forth require the destruction of pagan worship (vv. 1-5); the unity of worship around Yahweh's altar (vv. 4-14); the acknowledgement of Yahweh as the Giver of every good gift, and the Provider of daily food in the payment of tithes (vv. 17-19); Yahweh's goodness to be acknowledged in all circumstances (vv. 20-28). The chapter concludes with an exhortation of warning against the dangerous influence of affluence. In times of prosperity care must be ever exercised lest in the abundance of possessions, Yahweh's requirements are overlooked or forgotten.

All Forms of Pagan Worship To Be Ruthlessly Destroyed — vv. 1-3

Exercising sovereign authority in the Land as the Kingdom of God on earth, Israel is commanded to ruthlessly destroy all vestiges of false worship together with its monuments, idols and altars. It is typical of the forthright vigour with which advocates of the Truth should assail the citadels of error today, and the ruthless manner in which all forms of false teaching will be utterly destroyed in the future age when the Kingdom is restored.

VERSE 1

"These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land"

— These statutes and judgments comprise a repetition of laws already given, but with added details as to their application in view of the new circumstances that would arise as a settled people in the Land. For example, whilst during the wilderness wanderings the principles of God's truth had to be maintained by those who looked for an ultimate reward, in the Land they were, in addition, to physically overthrow

all centres of false worship. This is analogous to the circumstances of believers today. Like the faithful in Israel during the wilderness wanderings, they are called upon to maintain the faith in spite of trouble within or opposition without; but once the Kingdom is established under Christ, the passive resistance of today will be replaced by a belligerent opposition of error, and physical destruction of those places where it is centred. Such cities as Rome will be completely disappear.

"Which Yahweh God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth" — The Land was given to Israel for the term of the natural life of the people. It never became their Land in the absolute sense, but always remained Yahweh's Land. They were permitted to occupy it on the terms of a tenancy at will, that is, so long as they kept the conditions imposed by its Possessor, Yahweh (Ch. 11:12). As His Land, it is a Holy Land, and this character of it had to be reflected by the behaviour of the people (Deut. 11:8-9). Otherwise they would be ejected therefrom.

VERSE 2

“Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods” — It was not enough for Israelites to live a separate existence from the people round about; seeing they had sovereignty over the Land they had to attack the worship and destroy the shrines which were the centres of pagan blasphemy. As the Land was considered holy unto Yahweh, all remnants of false worship had to be eliminated. See Num. 33:51-52; Deut. 7:5,25-26.

“Upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree” — The high places of the Land were selected for the buildings of pagan shrines, probably with the belief that it brought the worshippers nearer to the objects of their devotion. In this they are followed by many religious systems today. Note, for example, how Roman Catholicism prefers elevated sites for the building of their churches. Moreover, trees were revered as objects of worship, the Christmas Tree of modern times being traceable to such. In ancient times, among pagans, the Oak was sacred to Jupiter; the Laurel to Apollo; the Ivy to Bacchus; the Olive to Minerva; the Myrtle to Venus, and so forth. Unfortunately, Israelites were induced to follow the practise of their pagan contemporaries. See Isa. 57:7; Jer. 2:20; 3:6; 17:2; Hos. 4:12; 2 Kings 16:4; 17:10. Isaiah predicted: “Ye shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen” (Isa. 1:29). The “trees” and “gardens” were associated with pagan worship.

VERSE 3

“And ye shall overthrow their altars” — Though these altars were sacred to the pagan worshippers, they were to be treated as blasphemous abominations to Truth-loving Israelites, and therefore completely overthrown. This was to be done ruthlessly and violently, for the word “overthrow” signifies to “break down” in the Hebrew. There was to be no soft remonstrating with the Gentiles in regard to their worship, but a holy war to utterly destroy it as abhorrent and polluting, even as the light of the sun destroys the darkness of night.

“And break their pillars” — Such pillars were Memorial columns or stones erected to pagan gods. For the legitimate

use of such objects as memorials to Yahweh, see Gen. 28:18; Exod. 24:4.

“And burn their groves with fire” — The use of fire was not only for the purpose of destruction, but also for purification. Yahweh’s abhorrence of such “groves” is expressed in Exod. 34:13 and provides the context for the proclamation of Yahweh’s name as *Jealous*. The word “groves” does not denote a cluster of trees as in our language, but a particularly evil religious object that was designed to incite acts of moral perversion. They were monuments designed as sex tokens to be used in religious rites in conjunction with male and female prostitutes connected with pagan shrines. The worshippers at the groves of *Asherah*, a female goddess of sex, were utterly depraved and grossly immoral. Canaanitish worship was coarse and lewd, and prostitution was common to it. It was to be avoided at all costs by Israelites. Nothing is more calculated to draw a person away from the purity of Divine worship than sexual impurity. It coarsens the mind and blunts the moral perceptions. And it was fundamental to the worship of the groves (*Asherah*). The *Asherah* and *Asherim* (the female and male Hebrew words rendered “groves”) were pillars or images of wood worshipped with libidinous rites and lascivious practises by the pagans. The word is derived from the root *ashar*, “to be straight, upright, erect”. The pillar was set upright or erect like a totem pole. It was either a living tree with the top cut off and the trunk fashioned into a shape designed to stimulate sex, or a log similarly shaped and set erect in the ground (1 Kings 14:15; 16:33; Isa. 17:8). Though usually made of wood (Jud. 6:26), they were perhaps in some cases made of stone. Such poles could be “cut down” (Exod. 34:13), burnt (Deut. 12:3), broken in pieces (2 Chron. 14:3), or plucked up (Mic. 5:14). That they were not groves of trees is clear from 2 Kings 17:10 where they are described as being set up “under every green tree”.

Some believe that originally the idol was worshipped as symbol of the Tree of Life, and later perverted to signify the origin of life, and pictured with the male organs of procreation (Ezek. 16:17). Such symbols became the objects of a worship offered in conjunction with the most obscene orgies. It was centred in the Canaanitish nations, and from them spread to others. Hence the importance of carrying out Moses’ orders to ruthlessly

destroy every semblance of it. The social world today follows the same pattern, and sex is worshipped to the utter decline of true morality. Believers will avoid it like the plague.

“And ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods” — The graven images were sculptured idols like the golden calf worshipped by the Israelites at the foot of Horeb. Pagans did not worship such idols as their gods, but as the symbols of their gods, much the same as the Roman Catholic religion has its images as symbols of its worship. Such idols and images were to be “hewn down” — the very expression denoting the vigour and violence by which it was to be done.

“And destroy the name of them out of that place” — Even the names of the gods were to be held in abhorrence and avoided.

Yahweh’s Altar To Be Revered
— vv. 4-14

There is to be no imitation of pagan rites in the worship of Yahweh; no multiplication of shrines and visible objects of worship. A centre is to be established selected by God and not by man, and to that point worshippers must turn to enjoy the unifying influence of the Truth, and with the members of their families, to rejoice before Yahweh. Family worship is thus to be encouraged throughout the nation.

VERSE 4

“Ye shall not do so unto Yahweh your God” — The prohibition related to the multiplying of shrines like the pagans, as the following verses clearly show. A united family worship is to be encouraged throughout Israel, and hence one main centre is to be established. Some Jewish rabbis interpret this verse as relating to the names of the false gods (v. 3), and understand it to mean that the name of Yahweh must not be destroyed like that of heathen deities. Upon this mistaken idea, and with superstitious regard for the name of God, Hebrew books in which the sacred name occurs are reverently buried rather than destroyed when they can no longer be used. Some time back, an issue of Israeli stamps depicted various synagogues throughout the world, but on one of them the divine Name appeared. A protest was made by the ultra-orthodox Jews of Jerusalem, who declared that because the Name of God was on the stamp it must not be licked or franked! So vigorous was the protest that the Postal Authorities agreed

to withdraw the series and destroy the stamps. But they were not permitted to destroy them, in deference to the mistaken Jewish understanding of this verse. Accordingly, the series of stamps were withdrawn by the Authorities and stored away in vaults to rot.

VERSE 5

“But unto the place which Yahweh your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there” — A central place of worship was necessary to unify all the tribes; but it was not to be left to flesh to select it, according to its convenience. As it would become Yahweh’s dwelling place on earth, it was His right alone to determine where it should be found. Shiloh was first selected (1 Sam. 1:3), then Jerusalem (see Psa. 132:13-14). However, in Jeremiah’s day the people were warned that Yahweh would abandon Jerusalem, and they were invited to view Shiloh which He had previously left and ponder its desolated state. As it was once the centre of divine worship but was abandoned, so also could be Jerusalem (Jer. 7:12-14). That is the state of things today; and the dwelling place of God is found wherever saints meet together for communal worship (John 4:21-24), gathering together in His name (Matt. 18:20). The Ecclesia, therefore, must not be neglected, it being the appointed place of worship (Heb. 10:25); described as spiritual Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22-24). However, at the Lord’s return, Jerusalem the city will become again the centre of world worship (Isa. 2:2-4; Zech. 14:16). The choice of such sites as Shiloh and Jerusalem was governed by their significance. That was also the case wherever the ancients built their altars. They were permitted to do so only in “places where Yahweh recorded His name” (Exod. 20:24). These were sites where divine theophanies, or manifestations of Yahweh in some way, were experienced. For example, God “appeared unto Abram” in Shechem (whether by dream or by angelic visitation is not stated), and there he built an altar (Gen. 12:7). At no stage, therefore, was flesh permitted to build altars pleasing to its own convenience: it had to be in places selected by God in some manner.

“Even unto His habitation” — The term “habitation” is from the Hebrew *leshichno* and signifies the Divine presence. From this word is derived the term *Shekinah*, used for the glory of Yahweh

dwelling between the Cherubim. The word signifies the place of Yahweh's dwelling, and as such He has the right to select where it must be. David declared: "For Yahweh hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation (a different word). For this is My rest for ever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Psa. 132:13-14). Because of this, Jerusalem can rightly be described as a Holy City. It is a city separated by Him for His use.

"Shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come" — To "seek" Yahweh in this context implies mental preparation; to "come" is the physical act of obeying what the mind reveals is right to do. In certain exceptional cases, however, this general rule was waived. For example, Gideon (Jud. 6:18,26), Manoah (Jud. 13:16), David (2 Sam. 24:18), Solomon (1 Kings 3:4-5), and Elijah (1 Kings 18:31) offered at places other than Shiloh or Jerusalem. There were reasons for this, of course, and, in any case, in each of the sites, there had been a theophany or manifestation of Divine power of some kind, to justify such action.

VERSE 6

"And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks" — The Israelites were required to bring their sacrifices and offerings to the centre established by Yahweh for that purpose; and they must not appear "before Yahweh empty" (Exod. 23:15). It is fundamental to proper worship to "honour Yahweh with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase" (Prov. 3:9). Blessings in return are promised if that is done conscientiously and in the right spirit, and the experience of life reveals how true is the promise (see Prov. 3:10; Mal. 3:10).

VERSE 7

"And there ye shall eat before Yahweh your God" — See v. 18; Deut. 14:26. A peace offering brought worshippers into communion with Yahweh, to experience the "peace of God".

"And ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto" — There is nothing like the pure happiness that flows from a work completed with the knowledge that the blessing of the Father has been with one in such labour. This is possible in the mundane things of life, as in labour associated with His worship or the extension of the

Truth. When one returns home tired from physical labour, how relaxing it is to recognise the goodness of God, and to thank Him accordingly. At the Feast of Tabernacles, after the harvest had been gathered in, all Israelites were required to acknowledge the goodness of God, and rejoice in that they were the recipients of it. The word "rejoice" is from the Hebrew *samach* and signifies "to brighten up". There is nothing more calculated to cause that than to be associated with a company of happy people united in the "one hope of the calling" and mutually appreciative of what God has done for them. This joy can be induced by counting the blessings we all receive from God, as required by this verse. Let that be done, and there will be found no place in thought to ponder the disadvantages of life! This is a practical aspect of worship that is acceptable to Yahweh. Solomon wrote of the value and virtue of one who enjoys the good things of life in recognising them as blessings from God, and rejoicing before Him in consequence (Ecc. 5:18-19). Paul, though in prison, could rejoice before God, and exhort others to do likewise (Phil. 3:1; 4:4). A rejoicing believer, who is able to lift himself above the problems of life that invariably beset all, is an inspiration, an encouragement, and an incentive to his companions. By counting the blessings we receive from Yahweh, we can find much to rejoice in, and the chapter before us constantly advocates that such should be done (vv. 12,15).

"Ye and your households, wherein Yahweh thy God hath blessed thee" — This command demands family worship. It is said that "the family that prays together, stays together". Certainly family worship leads to a more united family and to greater personal happiness. The Law was based upon God, Family and Land — all of which are set aside by mankind today. In man's philosophy, God is debunked; an urban life is preferred before a rural existence; and with many, family life is in decline. In contrast, the requirements of the Law provided the basis for true and lasting happiness both then and in the Age to come.

VERSE 8

"Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day" — The Israelites were about to experience great changes in their living conditions. During the wilderness wanderings there had been no settled

site for worship as the Israelites moved from place to place, and therefore, certain adjustments had been necessary. In certain matters, the people had worshipped according to their convenience. That was no longer to be the case.

"Every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes" — During the period of wandering, the requirements of worship as set down in the Law had been greatly relaxed. For example, circumcision had been abandoned (Josh. 5:2-9), the Passover omitted (vv. 10-11), and other requirements of the Law ignored (Acts 7:42-43), whilst the celebration of some Feasts awaited their settlement in the Land (see Lev. 23:39). In measure, anarchy had reigned in the spiritual sphere, particularly during the period of time the old generation was dying off. Many had been governed by their own considerations, and worship had become relaxed. This deadly influence was again insidiously experienced when the initial flush of occupying the Land had worn off and the people relaxed under the period of the Judges. The reality of God was reduced to a mere sign or symbol, whilst paying no tribute to Him as King; worshipping Him in outward form, but with no real power. Moses warned the people that this must change, and for a time it did; but, unfortunately, when once established in the Land, they failed and relapsed into this same state (Jud. 17:6). This is a danger facing believers today, mainly stemming from the fact that there is no central Ecclesial authority. Hence, in large measure, "every man does what is right in his own eyes". The return of the Lord, and the restoration of the Kingdom of God, shall change that. Meanwhile it is wise for all to recognise the authority of God as found in His word, and discipline self according to its precepts.

VERSE 9

"For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which Yahweh your God giveth you" — The word "rest" is *menuchah* in Hebrew. It denotes the "rest, security, and consolation" which a wife has the right to expect in the home of her husband (see *Sirong's Concordance*). It was used by Naomi in describing to Ruth the marriage she desired to arrange for her daughter-in-law (Ruth 3:1 — see our notes on that place). The generation of Israelites that left Egypt under Moses were called to such a "marriage" with Yahweh (Isa. 54:5), but because of dis-

obedience and rebellion against His authority failed to attain unto that "rest", as David notes in Psa. 95:11, and Paul observes in Heb. 3:7-4:11. The Israelites "entered not in because of unbelief" (or *lack of faith* as the word signifies). What then are we to make of the words of Solomon in 1 Kings 8:56, or those of David cited in 1 Chron. 23:25? In 1 Chronicles 23:25 the word is *nuwach* the root of *menuchah* but without the same connotation. But in 1 Kings 8:56, the word is *menuchah*, and David declared: "Yahweh hath given rest (*menuchah*) unto His people Israel, according to all that He promised: there hath not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised by the hand of Moses His servant". What are we to make of this statement in view of David's earlier comment in Psa. 95:6-8? It is significant that in that place David refers to the rest as Yahweh's rest. "My rest". David evidently saw a distinction between Yahweh's rest, and the temporary rest the nation enjoyed towards the close of his reign. The latter was typical of that "rest" to come, but not the complete fulfilment of the promise made to Israel through Moses. Therefore Paul, commenting upon his words, described the rest as still future (Heb. 3:7-4:11). In Solomon's day, in the provision of the Temple, Yahweh had provided a place of rest (1 Kings 8:56), typically answering to the requirements of the verses before us, for they are linked with the establishment of the Temple (v. 11). But David had warned that for the people to really enjoy that rest in its fulness they must avoid the sin of the wilderness, that of rebellion against the authority of Yahweh as Husband — Psa. 95:7. The nation failed to heed David's warning, and so the Temple was destroyed and the promised resting place given over to the Gentiles until the "root of Jesse shall stand for an ensign of the people" (Isa. 11:10). Israel, therefore, at no stage has entered into the fulness of Yahweh's rest, or marriage state (see Psa. 95:11); that great privilege is yet to be realised.

VERSE 10

"But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which Yahweh your God giveth you to inherit, and when He giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety" — In this verse, the word "rest" is from the Hebrew *nuwach*, the root of *menuchah*, and signifying to *rest, settle down*. This promise

was fulfilled when Yahweh "gave David rest round about from all his enemies" (2 Sam. 7:1), at which time he desired to build a Temple in fulfilment of this promise (2 Sam. 7:2-3), but was not permitted so to do. The word "safety" is from the Hebrew *betach* and signifies "security", or "refuge".

VERSE 11

"Then there shall be a place which Yahweh your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there" — The previous verse shows that the identity of this place would be made known after the nation had conquered their enemies, and was at rest. That time came in the reign of David. Yahweh gave him "rest round about from all his enemies" (2 Sam. 7:1). In view of the circumstances, and doubtless motivated by the verse before us, David sought permission to build a house, that Yahweh may fittingly dwell in the midst of his people. He was not permitted to do this, for that honour was reserved for Solomon. Until then, "the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of Yahweh until those days" (1 Kings 3:2). Prior to the time when David asked permission to build a house unto Yahweh, he had already made it his earnest prayer, that Yahweh would reveal the place that He would choose (see Psa. 132:3-5). The invasion, and occupation of the land by Israel was preparatory to this. Faithful men of God awaited the revelation that would come from Yahweh, and which would reveal the site where His temple would be built.

"Thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto Yahweh" — See v. 6. The expression "your choice vows" is perhaps better rendered, "the vows of your choice". There was no compulsion to the making of vows, they were voluntary expressions of thankfulness and goodwill towards Yahweh.

VERSE 12

"And ye shall rejoice before Yahweh your God, ye, and your menservants, and your maidservants" — As we have noted at v. 7 to "rejoice before Yahweh" denotes an acceptable form of worship. God desires His children to be happy. The first verse of the Book of Psalms emphasises that. The Hebrew word there rendered

"blessed" (v. 1) is in the plural in the Hebrew and signifies *happinesses*. The root of happiness is peace with God, and is dependant on sound and proper worship. Moses constantly exhorted the people of Israel, that they are to seek such peace and rejoicing. See Deut. 12:7,18; 14:26; 16:11,14,15; 26:11; 27:7. If a true servant of God will count his blessings, he will discover much in which to rejoice. It is important to acceptable worship that we do that, and remember to thank our God.

"And the Levite that is in your gates: forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you" — The Levites assisted the people to acceptably approach God; therefore without their aid there could be no rejoicing before Yahweh. They devoted their lives to this, and because their presence throughout the tribes was essential to the proper education of the people, they had no personal inheritance granted them by Yahweh (see Num. 18:20). The dependance of the Israelites upon the Levites, and their responsibility to contribute to them in material things are clearly laid down. The Levites must not be overlooked in the general rejoicing. It was vital to acceptable worship that the blessings of Yahweh should be shared with those whose labours had helped to bring the people to Him (see Deut. 12:19). It is likewise a responsibility for believers today to materially contribute to the well-being of those who deny themselves the things of this life, in order to serve them in the Truth. Paul exhorted: "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things" (Gal. 6:6). The word "communicate" signifies *to share, or materially contribute to his support*. This should be done voluntarily, and not by demand on the part of the one so labouring. See the example of the Philippian brethren towards Paul (Phil. 4:10-12).

VERSE 13

"Take heed to thyself" — This is another re-occurring phrase throughout Deuteronomy, emphasising the personal responsibility resting upon every Israelite, and extending the lesson to us. See Deut. 2:4; 4:9,15,23; 11:16; 12:13,19,30; 27:9. It is a phrase, too, that was reiterated by the Lord Jesus. See Luke 8:18; 11:35; 12:15; 17:3; 21:34. Many other similar exhortations will be found in the Gospel records. There is need for every true Israelite to personally apply himself to the Word, and to its application in life.

Canadian personal cheques, but those of other countries present difficulties.

Of course, we like to hear from readers personally. In fact, we have deeply appreciated the kind criticisms and helpful suggestions of many readers, and delight to share their studies with them. So when remitting let us hear about you; and if you pay in the country of your present sojourning in this life, but would like to write to us in addition, we shall be delighted to hear from you.

Christ's Coming May Interrupt Our Plans

When we commenced this project, we did so with the hope that we might progress through the entire Bible. However, we have experienced such delays, and so many problems and frustrations in recent years, that our hopes have not materialised; and with the addition of advancing age, it seems that our project will never be completed. And not only because age itself present a problem, but because the Lord's return may interrupt it. We are living in significant times, witnessing to the imminence of his coming. Meanwhile, we continue on with our exposition — awaiting the return of the Lord who will render all such efforts unnecessary.

The Book Of Numbers

We had a quantity of these volumes bound in book form, but unfortunately all supplies have now been absorbed. Hence we have not been able to supply the book to some who have requested it, whilst others, who got in early, have been able to obtain the exposition in bound form. We are sorry that supplies ran out so quickly.

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Editorial

Project Completed

In our last issue we announced that we had received permission to re-print *The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy* by Bro. H. Sulley. We are pleased to announce this issue that the book is now available. It is a re-production of the last Edition as issued by the Author, but with the plates and drawings he prepared in colour. It makes a very attractive volume, and the print being large in size is much easier to read than the smaller edition.

We are delighted, also, to announce that *Eureka* Vol. 3 is currently being distributed. This volume includes illustrations that assist the text, and is priced at the same amount as previous volumes in spite of the steep increase in costs that have taken place since we commenced this project.

It is a long-time ambition of *Logos* Publications to re-issue *Eureka*; for we believe it to be the finest non-inspired work available to the reading public. It is a classic of Christadelphian literature, an exposition of *The Apocalypse* that is far superior to anything else produced including *Apocalypse Epitomised!* We are currently working on the next volume.

We are also preparing *Genesis*, for publication, but heavy commitments in other directions have delayed progress.

TITHING

Yahweh required that a tenth of all produce, flocks and cattle were to be given back to Him. This was acknowledgement that all came from Him originally, and that the Israelite was permitted to retain nine-tenths of what really belonged to Yahweh. Provision was made for an Israelite, if so disposed, to redeem the tithes of the fruits of his field and of his trees by paying the value of them with a fifth part added (Lev. 27:30).

With regard to animal tithes, the law prescribed that every tenth beast "that passed under the rod" when the shepherd counted his flock, was to be sacred unto Yahweh, good and bad alike. It forbade any attempt to substitute one beast for another on penalty of both animals — the tenth as well as the one exchanged for it — being required to be redeemed (Lev. 27:32-33). This tenth, called *Terumoth* was given to the Levites as the reward of their service; and it was ordered, further, that they were themselves to dedicate to Yahweh a tenth of these receipts, which was to be given to the maintenance of the priests (Num. 18:21-28).

In the *Book of Deuteronomy*, given when Israel was on the eve of entering the land, the Law of tithing was extended. This was doubtless to provide for the greater affluence that could be expected when the Israelites took over the more fertile country of the Land of Promise. Whereas, during the wilderness wanderings, the whole nation was in close proximity to the Tabernacle and Priesthood, that would not be the case when settled throughout the Land promised Abraham. Hence additional instructions were given. They included the following:

1. They were to bring their tithes, together with their various offerings and first-fruits to the chosen centre of worship, and their portion of it was to be eaten in festive celebration in company with their children, their servants, and the Levites (Deut. 12:5-18).

2. This tithing was to be taken out every year.

3. However, in case of distance making this difficult, permission was granted to convert the produce into money, which was to be taken to the appointed place, and there laid out in the purchase of food for a festal celebration, in which the Levite was by special command, to be included (Deut. 14:22-27).

4. At the end of each third year, all the tithes of that year was to be gathered and laid up "within the gates", and a festival was to be held which the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, together with the Levite, were to share with the offerer (Deut. 14:28-29).

5. Lastly, it was ordered that after taking out the tithes each third year "which is the year of tithing", a declaration was to be made by every Israelite that he has done his best to fulfil the divine command (Deut. 26:12-14).

To summarise, it would appear (1) that one tenth of the whole produce of the soil was assigned for the maintenance of the Levites. (2) Out of this the Levites were to dedicate a tenth to Yahweh for the priests. (3) A second tithes was applied for use at the festivals. (4) Every third year either the festival tithes or a third tenth was to be eaten in company with the poor and the Levites. Josephus claims that there were three tithes taken up: one for the priests and levites; one for use in the feasts; and a further tenth every third year to be given to the poor (See Tob. 1:7,8). Others, however, claim that at the end of the third and six years, the sec-

ond tithe was shared between the poor and the Levites, and that there was no third tithe.

In any case, whatever tithes were required, Yahweh promised that if they were meticulously paid, He would ensure the prosperity of the people (Mal. 3:10). The offering of the tithes, therefore, was an act of faith.

“That thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest” — The Israelites had to exercise care lest they be seduced by other places, or forms of worship. Those places and forms of worship may have appealed to the flesh, as divergent forms of worship may do today. Therefore care had to be exercised. Contrary to this command, Jeroboam “took counsel”, and set up alternative places of worship in Bethel and Dan. The record states, “this thing became a sin.” (1 Kings 12:28-33); and Jeroboam earned the descriptive title of the one *who made Israel to sin* (2 Kings 23:15). Yahweh does not want worship in the abstract, he requires it to be according to His instructions. Both Cain and Abel were religious, both desired to worship God, but Cain’s offering was rejected, because it did not conform to Yahweh’s requirements. Acceptable worship such as gives Yahweh pleasure is that which is offered “in spirit and in truth”. The Lord in emphasising this declared: “the Father seeketh such to worship Him”.

VERSE 14

“But in the place which Yahweh shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee” — See note v. 5.

Yahweh To Be Acknowledged in the Eating of Meat — vv. 15-16

In the Land, Israelites are to be permitted to kill and eat meat on their own behalf without bringing it to the Tabernacle for so doing as was required in the Wilderness. Nevertheless, Yahweh has to be acknowledged in the provision of such. This takes the form of disposal of the blood by pouring it out upon the earth.

VERSE 15

“Notwithstanding, thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates” — The instruction that Israelites were to present their offerings in the place that Yahweh would choose, did not imply that they were not to

kill and eat in their own abodes whatever they desired for food, according to the blessing of Yahweh their God. If they desired meat for their own use, they were at liberty to kill and prepare it locally for use in their own private homes.

“Whatsoever thou soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of Yahweh thy God which He hath given thee” — The Hebrew word rendered “lusteth” is *avah*, and signifies “to will, choose, or desire”. It does not in itself imply that which is evil, although it can be used in that way. There are various different words commonly rendered *lust* in the Bible, and the occurrences are worth noting.

“The unclean and the clean may eat therefore, as of the roebuck, and as of the hart” — The roebuck, or gazelle, and the hart, or deer, were “clean animals”, but not offered in sacrifice as were sheep, cattle, etc. There was a difference between clean animals, and clean animals offered in sacrifice. All Israelites, whether ceremonially clean, or unclean, could partake of “clean” animals but not those offered in sacrifice. The latter were placed in a special category.

VERSE 16

“Only ye shall not eat the blood” — The prohibition of blood, and therefore of animals not correctly killed, applied to all in covenant relationship with Yahweh, but not to Gentiles (Deut. 14:21). It is perhaps significant that the prohibition of blood occurs 7 times in the law: Lev. 3:17; 7:26; 17:12-14; 19:26; Deut. 12:16; 12:23-27; 15:23. The importance of this law is stressed in Lev. 17:10-16 (see notes). When an animal was offered in sacrifice, the blood was placed upon the altar, or poured out at its side. Blood represents life, and when shed in sacrifice represented a life given unto God. It was therefore publicly smeared upon the altar, or poured out at its side as a witness to others. However, when life was taken to sustain flesh, such as it would be if an animal were killed merely for human consumption, the blood was not put on the altar; it was poured out

THE VARIOUS WORDS RENDERED “LUST” IN THE BIBLE

Hebrew

Avah — signifies “to will”, “choose”, “desire”. It does not in itself imply that which is evil. It is rendered “covet”, “desire”, “be desirous”, “long after,” “lust after”. See Num. 11:34; Deut. 12:15,20,21; 14:26; Psa. 106:14.

Ta'avah — an intensive form of *avah* denoting to *desire greatly* is rendered “lust” in Num. 11:4; Psa. 78:30.

Chamad — to delight in so as to lust after. Prov. 6:25.

Nepesh — is rendered “lust” in Exod. 15:9; Psa. 78:18. It is a word also rendered “soul” etc. It relates to the animal or fleshly life.

Sheriyruwth — is derived from a root signifying to *twist* and therefore that which like rope is strong, firm, and in behaviour obstinate. It is rendered “lust” in Psa. 81:12.

Greek

Epithumeo — from *epi* “at, upon” and *thumos*, “passion” as if breathing hard (Strong), therefore expressive of strong desire. It is rendered “covet”, “desire”, “would fain”, “lust”. It is given as “lust” in Matt. 5:28; 1 Cor. 10:6; Jam. 4:2; Gal. 5:17; Rev. 18:14. Note in Gal. 5:17 it describes alike the urging of the flesh against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

Epithumetes, — a noun signifying a craver. See 1 Cor. 10:6.

Epithumia — a longing, especially after that which is forbidden (Strong). It is rendered “concupiscence”, “lust after”, “desire”. It is given as “lust” in Mark 4:19; John 8:44; Romans 1:24; 6:12; 7:7; 13:14; Gal. 5:16,24; Eph. 2:3; 4:22; 1 Tim. 6:9; 2 Tim. 2:22; 3:6; 4:3; Tit. 2:12; 3:3; James 1:14,15; 1 Pet. 1:14; 2:11; 4:2-3; 2 Pet. 1:4; 2:10,18; 3:3; 1 John 2:16,17; Jude 16,18.

Orexis — excitement of the mind for the object of desire. Rendered “lust” in Rom. 1:27.

Hedone from a root signifying “to please”, and denoting *sensual delight*. Rendered “lust” in James 4:1,3. The word appears in English as *hedonism*, a philosophy that teaches that pleasure is the greatest good, and generally denoting the most depraved forms of such to gratify the flesh.

The various shades of meaning indicated by the various words above help to give further significance to the passages of Scripture where they occur.

In Deut. 12:15 the word *lusteth* merely means “to desire”. This is obvious from the context which likens that which is lusted as the enjoyment of that obtained from the blessing of Yahweh.

upon the ground, and covered over with earth. See Lev. 17:13. Life taken in order to sustain flesh is not worthy of public witness, and hence the blood was hidden from human sight, by being covered over.

During the Wilderness Wanderings, any slaughter of beasts for food, had to be performed at the Tabernacle. Of course, meat was not then part of the daily diet of Israelites. It was reserved for particular occasions. And with the Tabernacle so accessible, it presented no problem for any such animals to be taken there for killing. This would present a problem when established in the land, and with only one central place of worship, and with many Israelites dwelling remotely therefrom. So new regulations are required. If the slaughter of beasts is to be only for food, and not as an act of sacrifice, it may be carried out in the dwellings of Israelites, and not at the Tabernacle as heretofore.

Yahweh To Be Acknowledged in the Payment of Tithes — vv. 17-19

Instruction concerning tithes is given in Lev. 27. Now additional details are provided regarding the payment of them when in the Land. Obviously very few tithes have been paid during the course of the wilderness wanderings, for crops were not planted, and herds were small and few. But now that the Israelites are about to enter the Land, and exchange their nomad existence for a settled rural one, payment of tithes will become a prominent feature of their offerings. As a type, the tithe represented the holy seed (Isa. 6:13). Christ is the tithe of the true seed, and as such is holy unto Yahweh, His life provides an example of how the antitypical "seed" should give itself unto Yahweh. The true seed constitutes Yahweh's tithe taken out of all nations; in other words, the Ecclesia given unto Him (Acts 15:14). The Godly seed should provide an example of Godly living unto all mankind.

VERSE 17

"Thou mayest not eat within thy gates, the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds, or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offerings of thy hand" — Certain tithes were taken to the sanctuary, where portion of them was eaten by the offerer and his family, and any Levites of his city who may be there. However, every third year, the tithe was used in the offerer's hometown in a special ceremony in which

Levites, the poor, and strangers were invited to share (see Deut. 14:28-39). Generally, however, tithes were used for the maintenance of Yahweh's ministers, and for the relief of the poor and the stranger. Christ's brethren are called upon to honour Yahweh with their substance (Prov. 3:9), acknowledging Him as the Author of their increase and store (Deut. 8:13-18; Hosea 2:8), supporting His servants (Matt. 10:8, 40-41; Luke 11:41; 12:33; 1 Cor. 9:11; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 6:17-18), and manifesting liberality in spiritual things (Matt. 25:35-40).

It is sometimes implied that Israel gave a tenth of their possessions to Yahweh as a tithe. In fact, Yahweh gave Israel ninety-ninths of what was His, but expected them to pay back to Him the tithe, or tenth of their increase.

VERSE 18

"But thou must eat them before Yahweh thy God in the place which Yahweh thy God shall choose" — The tithes were probably offered at the Festival of Tabernacles, where the people rejoiced together, according to the law of Lev. 23:40. Portion of the tithes then presented could be eaten by the worshipper in a communal feast before Yahweh.

"Thou, thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant" — The Law demanded family worship. Such occasions as the Festival of Ingathering would strengthen the faith of the individual, as well as the unity of the family and nation. It would impress all with the realisation that the blessing of Yahweh had extended to both family and nation, as they enjoyed together the good things He had provided. Instruction of children was the duty of parents, who likewise were expected to bring them to such spiritual festivals as the Feast of Ingathering.

"And the Levite that is within thy gates" — The Levite supplied the mediatorial bond between the worshipper and Yahweh. Therefore, in such worship, the debt owing to the Levite must not be overlooked.

"And thou shalt rejoice before Yahweh thy God in all that thou puttest thy hand unto" — Rejoicing before Yahweh is described as a gift of the spirit (See Gal. 5:22). Hence Paul encouraged the brethren to rejoice before Yahweh (Phil. 3:1-3; 4:4). This will become more enthusiastic when the worshipper sets out to "count his

blessings" and recognises the debt he owes Deity.

VERSE 19

"Take heed to thyself" — See note v. 13.

"That thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth" — The Hebrew renders the latter clause as "all thy days". Lay Israelites owed a debt of gratitude to the Levite, because the life of the latter was devoted to teaching and expounding the word of Yahweh, and assisting the people in their worship. They partly repaid this by sharing with the Levite the material blessings that Yahweh had granted them. Paul sets forth the principle that if believers are "partakers of spiritual things" they have a duty to respond by sharing the good things of this life with those who are their benefactors in that regard (Rom. 15:26-27). He emphasised this obligation even more directly in 1 Cor. 9:11-14. It was the responsibility of Ecclesias to assist such as the Apostles in material things. Paul did not press this principle upon the brethren for his own sake, for he clearly showed that he preferred not to burden them in any way (see 2 Cor. 12:14-16), and treasured his independence (see Acts 20:33-35). Nevertheless, he deeply appreciated the thoughtful actions of those who voluntarily extended themselves to materially help him in the work in which he was engaged (Phil. 4:14-17). In like spirit the law commanded the Israelite to "forsake not the Levite". The very terms of this command indicate that it was to be left to the conscience of the Israelite to do this: the law gave no one power to enforce payment.

No Excuse Will Justify The Avoidance of Yahweh's Requirements — vv. 20-28

During the wilderness wanderings, the children of Israel were required to bring any animal to be slain for personal use to the Tabernacle, that an offering thereof may be made to Yahweh (see Lev. 17:3-6). However, this will not be practicable once they are established in the land, for many will then dwell at considerable distances from the place of sacrifice. Therefore, some variation of the law is to be permitted, though the spirit of it is to be retained. Similar amendments will be made to Yahweh's law as given through Moses, when the Kingdom is re-established at the Lord's return, and extended throughout the world. Though, in principle, the Mosaic law will

be re-instituted, there will be amendments to it, made necessary by the need to cater for a worldwide dominion and worship, rather than those limited to the Holy Land, as in the past. The reason for the amendments then about to be introduced is now given.

VERSE 20

"When Yahweh thy God shall enlarge thy border, as He hath promised thee" — Instead of being clustered around the Tabernacle as in the wilderness, the nation of Israel will be given "enlarged borders" when settled in the Land. This will demand some change in the mode of presenting offerings and sacrifices.

"And thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, because thy soul longeth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after" — The word "soul" in this context is used to describe the seat of emotion and appetite. The verb *lusteth* simply means "desireth". See note v. 15.

VERSE 21

"If the place which Yahweh thy God hath chosen to put His name there be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which Yahweh hath given thee, as I have commanded thee" — The Israelites were to exercise extreme care in killing animals for meat. As far as possible, they were taught to kill such so as to drain it completely of blood. Rabbis claim that this verse indicates that Moses actually taught them orally the manner in which this was to be done; and that his instructions have been passed down through generation after generation of Israelites to this day.

"And thou shalt eat in thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after" — Under the circumstances described in this verse, the law that required an Israelite to bring the animal to the Tabernacle for killing, is amended to provide for the new circumstances which will take place once they are in the land. See Lev. 17:3-6.

VERSE 22

"Even as the roebuck and the hart is eaten, so shalt thou eat them, the unclean and the clean shall eat of them alike" — See notes on vv. 15-16. The roebuck is better known as the gazelle, and the hart as the deer.

VERSE 23

"Only be sure that thou eat not the

blood; for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh — The term “be sure” in the Hebrew denotes *be strong*. The “strength” referred to is spiritual determination. Israelites manifest strength when they observe the instructions of Yahweh, and take pains to learn the significance of what they are called upon to do. Blood represents the life. Without it a mortal body cannot live. Moses’ statement is today confirmed by medical science, though this was not the case previously. The function of blood in the body is of comparative recent discovery. But in this, as in other matters, the Bible is found to be scientifically exact in every facet of science, upon which it touches. The word for “life,” is *nephesh*, from a root signifying *to breathe*. It is literally true that the blood is the breath of life, for the bloodstream conveys oxygen as well as nutrients to the various parts of the body, without which it would die. God “breathed into Adam the breath of life” and he became a “living creature”. See Gen. 2:7. He commenced to breathe, and hence to live. As he began to breathe, and his heart began to pump, blood was conveyed to all parts of the body. Blood and breath are vital to human, mortal existence, but not to divine nature, which is promised to the redeemed in the age to come (cp. 2 Peter 1:4). Therefore, Paul taught that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 15:50), though flesh energised by spirit will do so. Though Israelites were prohibited to eat blood, the restriction was not imposed on Gentiles who were outside the covenant (Deut. 14:21).

“And thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh” — This law goes back to the days of Noah (see Gen. 9:4), and the spirit of the law remains true to this day. The figurative teaching is: let flesh be consumed, but give the life to Yahweh. The Law, and therefore this spiritual application of it is set forth as a “perpetual statute” (Lev. 3:17). It is to be observed, even today, not by mere abstinence from the physical eating of blood (even though that may be desirable), but by giving one’s life to Yahweh in dedicated service. The Lord provided an example of this, for he said, “the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28). In presenting his body as a living sacrifice, he figuratively abstained from eating of blood. In consequence, the redeemed are represented as singing: “Thou

has redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev. 5:9). His “blood” represents a perfect life of sacrifice through which both he, and those in him, attain unto life eternal. In the absence of an understanding and an acknowledgement of this figurative and spiritual reason for the prohibition, the physical abstinence of eating blood has little significance. The apostolic recommendation of Acts 15:28-29, was a concession to Jewish scruples. This is made clear by Paul’s comments in relation to meats offered to idols in 1 Cor. 8:7-9, 12-13; 10:19-24, 25-29. Whilst it is better to observe both the literal and spiritual applications of the law, the latter can only be ignored at risk of life eternal. See v. 16. The reiteration emphasises the importance of the law.

VERSE 25

“Thou shalt not eat it; that it may go well with thee, and thy children after thee, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of Yahweh” — Prosperity is promised to the people of Israel, if they live in accordance with the instructions and law of Yahweh. This is constantly asserted throughout the Book of Deuteronomy, which is appropriate to the circumstances, inasmuch as the Israelites were on the eve of entering the land (See Deut. 4:10; 5:16). Obedience to Yahweh’s laws is always a sound foundation for a happy and profitable life (See Psa. 112:1-3; Isa. 3:10; 48:18-19).

VERSE 26

“Only thy holy things which thou hast” — The “holy things” are those things separated from a person’s possessions, to be given unto Yahweh as an offering. See Num. 5:9-10; 18:19.

“And thy vows” — In contrast to the holy things that were compulsory offerings to Yahweh, vows were voluntary items that were dedicated unto Him in gratitude for benefits received.

“Thou shalt take, and go unto the place which Yahweh shall choose” — In contrast to the liberty granted in verses 20-22, it was compulsory for Israelites to take their “holy things”, or vows, to the Tabernacle altar, or, later, to the Temple.

VERSE 27

“And thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of Yahweh thy God: and the blood of

thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of Yahweh thy God” — There was a variation of this law according to the type of sacrifice offered. In the case of the burnt offering, the blood was placed on the altar (Lev. 1:5-9), whereas in the case of the sin offering, some of it was placed on the horns of the altar, and the rest poured out at the side (Lev. 4:7).

“And thou shalt eat the flesh” — This related to the peace offering (Lev. 7:11-16).

VERSE 28

“Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, for ever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of Yahweh thy God” — See note v. 25. Things to be *observed* as required by the Law included the following: the feast of unleavened bread (Exod. 12:17); the Passover (Exod. 12:24); the Sabbath (Exod. 31:16); the day of atonement (Lev. 23:24-29); the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost (Exod. 34:22); the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:39-44); all sacrifices in their season (Num. 28:2); laws relating to the disease of Leprosy (Deut. 24:8); all the statutes and commandments of the Law (Exod. 34:11; Lev. 19:37; Deut. 5:32; 6:1-3). To observe a matter, is to carefully consider its significance, and its relationship to the circumstances of life. The admonition, “to observe” is attached to all the commandments listed above, which therefore required that the Israelites give due study, and application, to the matters involved. The manner of observation is set out by Psa. 119:34: “with the whole heart”.

The Need For Care Against Ensnarement By Environment — vv. 29-32

As the foregoing instructions emphasise the sovereignty of Yahweh, and the care which His subjects should exercise in observing His laws, Israelites are now warned against turning aside to other gods. Curiosity may cause them to enquire regarding contemporary pagan worship. The danger of so doing is stressed and a command issued prohibiting such action. In these days, an undue curiosity in examining the false doctrines, and peculiar rites of the apostasy has led some away from the truth.

VERSE 29

“When Yahweh thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee whither thou

goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land” — Instead of “succeedest” the Hebrew has “inherit”, or “possess”. In this comment Moses anticipated the time when the Israelites would have conquered the inhabitants of the land and occupied their territory. Such a time of ease and affluence could present problems. War demands sacrifice, and teaches the need of discipline. With victory won, however, there arises the temptation to seek relaxation, and to compromise with surrounding conditions. This tends to blunt the point of doctrine, and lessen the extent of separateness the Truth demands.

VERSE 30

“Take heed to thyself” — The responsibility is a personal one, resting upon each individual Israelite. The warning to take heed, is reiterated throughout the *Book of Deuteronomy*.

“That thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee” — This warning was well warranted, for unfortunately, this is exactly what the Israelites did. See the *Book of Judges*, and the epitome expressed in Psa. 106:34-38.

“And that thou enquire not after their gods” — The mere investigation of false forms of worship can lead to apostasy (see 1 Tim. 4:16). The Israelites were to be distinguished in their mode of worship, and were to avoid even investigating prevailing worship which was contrary thereto.

“Saying, how did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise” — Note the warning of Jeremiah (ch. 10:2) and Ezekiel (20:32) on the same theme, and compare it with the exhortation of Paul (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:17). A false god, or a false worship, is fundamentally immoral. Paul taught that “evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:15, 33). By this he meant that wrong doctrine will inevitably be reflected in inconsistent conduct. To the brethren in Rome, he wrote that because men “did not like to retain God in memory”, God, in turn, “gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things that are not convenient” or seemingly. There followed a moral deterioration of the most evil kind (Rom. 1:21-32). On the other hand, the retention of sound doctrine inevitably will have its impact upon sound living. A healthy mind contributes to a righteous character. Christ rendered perfect obedience to his

Father, not through the strength of flesh but through a mind given completely to God.

VERSE 31

"Thou shalt not do so unto Yahweh thy God: for every abomination to Yahweh, which He hateth, have they done unto their gods" — The word "abomination" is applied to their idols and worship. It is derived from the Hebrew *towebah*, and denotes "something disgusting, a stink, an abhorrence". The false religion of Canaan was abhorrent to Yahweh, for it perverted the basic requirements of normal morality, as well as those of Truth. The term is frequently used in Deuteronomy to describe an attitude towards such: see Deut. 7:25; 17:1; 18:12; 22:5; 23:18; 25: 16; 27:15. The Canaanitish worship was not only false in doctrine, but also degrading in conduct. The immorality and inhumanity introduced by its religious rites, rendered it absolutely abominable to Yahweh. As one avoids a stench, so Israelites were commanded to consider false religion as that, and to avoid contact with such.

"Which He hateth hath they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters, have they burnt in the fire to their gods" — See Lev. 18:21, and our notes at that place. Excavations at Gezer, Taanach, and Megiddo, have revealed regular cemeteries around heathen altars in which scores of skeletons of infants have been found, showing traces of slaughter and partial consumption by sacrificial fire. It is a sad commentary upon the evil tendencies of the flesh, that Israelites should have turned from the pure and elevating worship of Yahweh, to imitate such vile rites.

VERSE 32

"What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" — This command repeats that of Deut. 4:2 (see Prov. 30:6; Matt. 28:20). It sets the seal of divine authority upon these opening books of the Bible. In Rev. 22:18-19, the Lord Jesus sets a similar seal upon his Word, thus completing the limits of divine Revelation. All claims of such since then are obviously false.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN**THREE IMPORTANT "IFS" IN RELATION TO DIVINE WORSHIP**

Three important "ifs" are listed in this chapter (vv. 1,6,12), based upon the instructions of the previous chapter. Whereas it provides directions for the overthrow of Canaanitish religion in the Land, once the Israelites have occupied it, this chapter instructs how to treat with attacks upon the Truth from within. The possibility is stated of false prophets arising to lead Israelites astray (vv. 1-5), a warning is issued against allowing one's close relations to turn one from the strict requirements of true worship (vv. 6-11): a caution is given of some Israelites becoming so debased in knowledge or attitude as to raise the voice of rebellion against the requirements of Yahweh (vv. 12-18). Such challenges to the Truth are to be rigorously suppressed. To ignore them could lead to national disaster, resulting in the complete failure of the impeding invasion, and the repudiation of the nation by Yahweh. The chapter, therefore, provides a series of warnings and penalties against the propagators of false religion from within, such as have plagued the Truth in every age. It reveals that the real test of Truth is not a sign, wonder, or prediction coming to pass: but in the logic of its Doctrines, accepted in its entirety: the Word of God as plainly expressed and simply understood without any addition thereto (see Deut. 4:2; 12:32). That Word is the revelation of Yahweh (Deut. 29:29), and therefore must be the final court of appeal (Isa. 8:20). The Truth revealed therein will accomplish Yahweh's purpose with it (see Isa. 55:11; John 8:32-36), reproducing divine characteristics in those motivated by it. Therefore, loyalty to the Word is demanded of all true Israelites, and the final judgment will be based upon an individual's reaction to it (see John 12:48-50; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Rev. 22:18-19). Anything contrary to what is plainly stated in the Word, is false, regardless of any seeming endorsement by sign or miracle. Therefore, those who claim to have the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, and who set it forth as a sign, or wonder, to prove the veracity of the gospel they preach, must be placed in the category of

Summary of Principles of Worship To Be Observed By True Israelites (Ch. 12)

Deuteronomy 12 sets forth principles of worship to be observed by the people of Israel once they entered the Land. Similar principles should be observed today in witnessing for the Truth. They can be summarised as follows:

- * True Israelites are ordered to protest vigorously against false forms of worship (vv. 2-3; 29-31).
- * Their worship is to be according to Divine command, not merely human devising (vv. 1,32).
- * It is to be centred at the unifying place selected by Yahweh where His name is to be honoured (v. 5).
- * It is to be a varied worship, reflecting all aspects of dedication (v. 11).
- * It is to inspire pleasure (v. 12).
- * It is to be based upon family and national life (v. 18).
- * It is to be a liberal worship (vv. 17-19).

false prophets. Miracle is supplementary to the Truth, not vice versa. The Gospel must first be proved before any signs or wonders have any real validity. The Chapter before us teaches with what vigor they should be opposed who reverse this process. God allows "signs" and "wonders" to prove the loyalty of His people (vv. 3-4), as He permits trials to test their love for Him (Deut. 8:2). Even heresies can help to make manifest the approved according as believers react thereto (1 Cor. 11:18-19; 2 John 7-11). In the important Chapter before us, Israel is instructed to recognise the supremacy of moral and doctrinal principles over pretended miracles. In contrast, many advance the supernatural as establishing a teaching as truth; but that is not God's way. Confirm truth it may; awaken attention to it, it will; but that which creates and establishes faith, is the Word alone (Rom. 10:17). A strong delusion can cause one to believe a lie, and of this Paul makes warning (2 Thess. 2:11). Because of this, both Old and New Testaments witness against false prophets, and warn of the consequences that follow when any are influenced thereby. See the lessons and warnings of 1 Kings 13:8-9; Ezek. 13:1-3, 10-16; Matt. 7:15; Gal. 1:6-9. Paul, in characteristic forthright language, called down a curse upon those who perverted the Gospel, even though claiming the authority of Apostleship or angelic endorsement thereof.

False Prophets to be Suppressed — vv. 1-5

The first case of possible apostasy concerns a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams. Both represent classes of people who claim Yahweh has communicated His will to His people through them (Num. 12:6). Both titles can relate to either genuine or false revelators of the Divine will or purpose. Joseph, for example, was both a prophet and a "dreamer of dreams". However, Moses warns that false prophets could arise in Israel, proclaiming teaching contrary to the will of Yahweh. Such may even provide "signs" or "wonders" to give seeming authentication to their message; in other words, to draw upon something or happening that appears to be supernatural, or miraculous, and so claim that they are men of God. Extreme care must be taken by the people that they are not deluded by such evidence. They are to carefully analyse the teaching of the prophets in the light of the

Word, and refuse to be diverted therefrom. To do otherwise is to court the greatest personal and national danger.

VERSE 1

"If there arise among you" — The possibility of apostasy arising from within is a constant danger. Israelites were to be constantly on their guard against those who set themselves up as teachers, or as interpreters of the Word of God. Their teaching must be thoroughly examined in the light of the Word.

"A prophet" — The Hebrew word *nabhi* denotes "one who speaks from God". It is derived from a verb *naba* signifying "to boil or bubble over". The idea behind the word is taken from the metaphor of a fountain, bursting forth from the heart of a man, into which God hath poured His spirit. A prophet also denotes an interpre-

ter of what God has divinely revealed (see Exod. 7:1; 4:16). The English word "prophet" expresses both these principles. It is formed by two syllables: *pro* — meaning "for"; *phet* — signifying "a word". A prophet, therefore, was one who speaks for God. During the course of Israel's history, the true prophets of Yahweh were constantly plagued by false prophets: those who spoke contrary to the will of God (see 1 Kings 22:6, 8, 20-23; Jer. 6:13; 28:1-17).

The warning also applies to these times. Christ and the apostles warned that false prophets would arise (Matt. 24:11; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Pet. 2:1). They would seek to authenticate their false teaching by pretended signs and wonders designed to seduce the very elect (Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:9-10). The Scriptures classify them as false prophets (see Matt. 7:15; 2 Pet. 2:1). The readiness of believers to follow such false teachers generally arises from want of knowledge (Eph. 4:14), the itch for novelty (2 Tim. 4:3), a diseased craving for the supernatural (such as the credulity of spiritualism — 2 Thess. 2:9-13), or the desire to superimpose fleshly fallacies on the truth (2 Tim. 3:1-8).

Under the law, such false prophets were to be put to death (v. 5); during these times, they are to be excluded from fellowship (see Matt. 18:17; Tit. 3:10; 2 John 9-11). The command to put such to death may seem harsh, but it was necessary to preserve the faith of the nation. And the Truth will only be preserved within Ecclesias, when those advocating error are excluded. An operation is necessary when cancer is manifested in a body, and the same principle is applied figuratively to Ecclesias (see 2 Tim. 2:16-17).

"Or a dreamer of dreams" — In past ages Yahweh has sometimes expressed His will through a dreamer of dreams. Joseph was one such. However, if any revelation from such would prove contrary to the written Word, it would show that the revelator was false. In every case, the Word decided the issue.

"And giveth thee a sign or a wonder" — A "sign" is a token as in Gen. 1:14; and a "wonder" is a miraculous happening as in Exod. 4:21. Charlatans have ever supplemented their claims of divine endorsement of their message by imitating such. Examples of this are in evidence today, in the false claims of some to work miracles, by others, to have the gifts of the

spirit, or in the seeming supernatural cases of "faith" healing.

VERSE 2

"And the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee" — Of course, if the "sign" or "wonder" did not come to pass, the charlatan would be obviously discredited (see Deut. 18:22; Jer. 28:9). But it is always possible that the "sign" or "wonder" come to pass, which is strong proof to a deluded mind that God has spoken.

"Whereof he spake unto thee, saying, let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them" — The purpose of the "sign" or "wonder," is to influence dupes who are deluded thereby, to serve other gods, or endorse false doctrines. This, likewise, is the motive behind the Pentecostal, and similar movements, of today. The so-called miracles are designed to lead people away from truth, to the false teaching set forth by such sects. Hence the warning of this chapter is appropriate to believers of all times.

VERSE 3

"Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams" — The command is explicit. There must be no heeding the teaching of such. Israelites were to personally study the Word, so as to recognise when its principles were challenged. The same responsibility rests upon believers of this age. When any arise claiming signs or wonders without endorsing the doctrines of truth, their appeal should be sternly set aside as false, and the Word given its proper place of authority. This is not always done. Today many falsely claim to have the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and attract converts by the extravagance of their claims rather than by a sound exposition of Scripture. They appeal emotionally, but not according to Scripture and logic. Truth must be based on Scripture, "to the law and to the testimony" without which nothing should be determined in regard to Truth (Cp. Isa. 8:20; Acts 17:11 with Eph. 4:17-20; 1 John 4:1).

"For Yahweh your God proveth you" — God permits the uprise of false teachers to prove those who have the truth, that they may show themselves worthy of the Kingdom. All will be tested or proved in some way or other. When the approved

FALSE PROPHETS

The warning of the Law against false prophets has an application to subsequent times. The N. T. predicted the uprise of such (see Matt. 24:11; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Pet. 2:1). Like those against whom the Law warned, they also would produce signs and wonders (See Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:9-10). As a "prophet" denotes one who "sets forth the will and purpose of God", false teachers are classified as false prophets (see Matt. 7:15; 2 Pet. 2:1). The Apostle Paul in dealing with the menace of such teachers, warned that the readiness of people to believe them arises from (a) want of knowledge — Eph. 4:14; (b) the itch for novelty — 2 Tim. 4:3; (c) a diseased craving for the marvellous — (such as the credulity of spiritualism) — 2 Thess. 2:9-13; and (d) the desire to superimpose the inclinations of depraved hearts on the truth — 2 Tim. 3:1-8. Both Christ and the prophets commanded that there were to be no fellowshiping of such. See Matt. 18:17; Tit. 3:10; 2 John 9-11.

The Law commanded that false prophets be put to death (Deut. 13:5). Under Christ they are to be excluded from fellowship. These instructions may seem harsh but in the past they were necessary to preserve the nation, and today are needful to maintain Ecclesias in the faith. When the body is endangered, the surgeon's knife may seem severe, but can save a life. False teaching is likened to "a canker" that will cause death unless treated (2 Tim. 2:16-18).

are ultimately gathered together, there will be only one who will have rendered perfect obedience unto the Father, but there will not be one who has not been tried in some way. See Psa. 66:10; 81:7; Matt. 24:24; 1 Cor. 11:19; 1 John 2:19.

"To know whether ye love Yahweh your God with all your heart, and with all your soul" — The testing is designed to purify characters for the Kingdom. Under trial Abraham demonstrated his worthiness to receive the promises made conditionally to him at the beginning of his pilgrimage (see Gen. 22:1). It not only assisted to perfect his character, but was an open witness and example of his faith to all. To "love" Yahweh, is to willingly fulfil His will (see 2 John 6). When a person loves God, in the sense expressed in this verse, he will not find obedience onerous, but rather a pleasurable exercise.

VERSE 4

"Ye shall walk after Yahweh your God" — The literal Hebrew signifies "to

walk behind Him". He is the Shepherd (Psa. 80:1), and His people are the sheep of His pasture (Psa. 78:70-72; 79:13), who are to follow Him, imitating His ways (Exod. 34:5-7). The covenant Josiah commanded Israel to observe, was "to walk after Yahweh, and keep His commandments" (2 Kings 23:3; cp. also Mic. 6:8). To walk after Yahweh, is to have His characteristics as the ideal, and therefore to build into one's life, the Divine qualities which He manifests. This means, that the sheep of His pasture are expected to elevate truth and righteousness in action. They are to be manifestations of the Father in word and deed.

"And fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and ye shall serve Him, and cleave unto Him" — Observe the progression of ideas expressed in this verse. First comes fear, or reverence, for that is the firstfruits of knowledge (see Prov. 1:7). Where Yahweh is revered His commandments will be kept. The word "keep" signifies to *overlook, watch and observe*. To do this, a per-

son must be cognisant of the commands of Yahweh; that is, he must understand them by studying His word. Next comes the need to *obey*, or put into practice the things learned. This is the firstfruits of service. To willingly obey Yahweh is to render back to Him the adoration and praise due unto Him, in gratitude of the great love manifested by Him towards His people. Finally, there is need "to cleave unto Him". This word is expressive of a marriage relationship between husband and wife (see Gen. 2:24), and which typed the relationship existing between Israel as a nation and God (see Isa. 54:5). To "cleave" unto Yahweh means to embrace Him in love and devotion with the whole heart. It means to be joined to Him in that intimate relationship that exists only between husband and wife, and which is productive of fruit to the joy of both. When that relationship exists between a believer and his God, he will view with utter abhorrence the teaching of false prophets.

VERSE 5

"And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death" — The death sentence was to be imposed legally by the nation, and endorsed by all the people (Lev. 20:2; Deut. 17:7). In fact, the false prophet was guilty of the joint crimes of sacrilege and sedition: Yahweh being both supreme God and King. See the punishment brought upon the false prophets in the day of Israel's overthrow at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 14:15), and note that this supreme penalty will be exacted against those, who, at the return of Christ, dare set themselves up as false prophets. There will be such an abhorrence of their action, that their nearest relations will turn their hand against them (see Zech. 13:3).

"Because he hath spoken to turn you away from Yahweh your God" — The Hebrew expression signifies to "speak revolt against Yahweh". Even though the false prophets did not intend this, it was the crime of which they were guilty. See the indictment of Yahweh through Jeremiah (ch. 50:6), Paul's rebuke of Elymas (Acts 13:8), and his prophetic warning to Ecclesias to be on their guard, for such false prophets will always be in evidence (Acts 20:29-31; 2 Tim. 4:3-5).

"Which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which Yahweh thy God commanded thee

to walk in" — This statement describes the enormity of the action of false prophets in the midst of Israel. In spite of Yahweh's goodness in redeeming the nation out of the house of bondage, these false teachers would presume to pervert His word, and influence the people. The word "redeemed" signifies *to ransom by payment*. Dr. Young gives it in the present tense: "is ransoming you". The nation of Israel was still dependent upon Yahweh for complete deliverance. It was necessary, therefore, for the people to remain consistent with the truth set before them, otherwise they were of no use to Yahweh, and would perish. The teaching of the false prophets seduced the people, diverting them from the paths of righteousness that led to their Divine inheritance. The A. V. is quite expressive, for it describes their action as violently thrusting another out of the way of truth. Rotherham renders the word as *seduce* that is, turning them by force of argument.

"So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee" — The verb is from the Hebrew *ba'ar* signifying, "to burn, or consume by fire". Rotherham renders it *consume*. The teaching of the false prophets mentally and morally polluted the people, who, therefore, were in need of purging by fire. Hence the severity of the sentence against the authors of such teaching. The nation had to "purge the evil away from the midst of it". The equivalent today is 'the act of disfellowshipping heretics (see Heb. 12:14-16; 1 Cor. 5:7-8,13; 1 Tim. 1:20; Titus 3:10).

Yahweh's Word To Be Elevated Above Flesh Relationships — vv. 6-11

The first inducement to apostasy (vv. 1-5) is seen as the influence of a false prophet exercising religious authority. Now Moses legislates in regard to seduction coming through family relationships. Natural affection will cause some to hesitate to administer such extreme action as death or disfellowship against a member of the family, but in the case of apostasy no such consideration is to be shown. All are to be put to death who seek to divert Israel from the true worship. The issues are too serious to be trifled with. The cases now considered are those imposing a practical test upon an Israelite's love of Yahweh.

VERSE 6

"If thy brother, the son of my mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of

thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul — The most intimate relationships are here considered. The “son of thy mother” implies a much closer relationship than the son of the same father, but of a different mother in a polygamous marriage. The “wife of thy bosom” likewise expresses the closest intimacy. It was the sin of Adam that he yielded to the persuasion of the wife he loved, and this can be a danger at any time. The “friend which is as thy own soul” is one so beloved, that an Israelite would hesitate to offend him, much less deliver him up to the penalty of death. Moses laid it down, and Christ endorsed it, that the nearest and dearest must not be permitted to deflect one from the true service of Yahweh. See how the teaching of Moses is endorsed by Micah (Mic. 7:6) and its application in the new testament, as far as false brethren and prophets are concerned. Note the teaching of Christ (Matt. 10:37; 12:49-50), and the warning of the Apostles (Gal. 2:4; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 2:26; Jude 4).

“Let us go and serve other gods which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers” — The enticement may be stated secretly, but the intent should be revealed openly. See also Deut. 27:15-24. Why should one make such a suggestion as stated? Doubtless out of curiosity, and perhaps to taste of the forbidden immorality that was incidental to the worship of the Canaanites. The suggestion to do this may be made merely as an experiment, and with no serious intent to turn away from the true worship. However, when Truth is known and endorsed, what need or value is there in investigating the claims of the apostasy? Unstable minds in doing so run the risk of being led astray by the false teaching to which they are introduced.

VERSE 7

“Namely of the gods of the people that are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth, even unto the other end of the earth” — This is an extension of the prohibition of Deut. 6:14. All forms of Gentile worship, both that native to the land, or that imported from foreign parts, are prescribed. Has the law any application today? It has, in relation to the worship of the apostasy, which is a perversion of the Truth. In addition, Paul taught that “covetousness is idolatry” (Col. 3:5). Covetousness is a Gentilism sometimes

imitated by those who have embraced Christ (Matt. 6:32). In warning disciples to “keep themselves from idols” (1 John 5:21), the apostle may well have had that form of idolatry in mind.

VERSE 8

“Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him” — There is to be complete and unequivocal rejection of any secret suggestion to depart from the ways of Yahweh. When a close relation, or a beloved friend pleads the right to set forth his point of view in that regard, his request should be rejected. All close friendship or consideration should cease.

“Neither shall thine eyes pity him, neither shall thou spare, neither shall thou conceal him” — Having being lured astray by Gentile worship, the beloved friend must now be treated as a Gentile enemy. See Deut. 7:16; Ezek. 5:11; 9:5-6. This law will be enforced once again at the coming of the Lord, when, in view of the revelation of Divine goodness then manifested, there will be a wholesome revulsion of this form of sin (see Zech. 13:3). There is to be no sparing of such, as Saul spared Agag (1 Sam. 15:3), nor concealment of the sin. It is to be revealed for what it is, and made public in order that the punishment might be administered, and others deterred from following the same course.

VERSE 9

“But thou shalt surely kill him” — Whoever it is, whether brother, wife, daughter, or beloved friend he or she, is to be treated as an enemy of Yahweh the King, and of the nation. Of course, the punishment was to be administered legally, and only to those who stubbornly refused to amend their ways. An Israelite must not of himself, kill the erring brother, but take him before those authorities competent to adjudicate in his case.

“Thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death” — The offender was to be stoned to death, and the accuser was to aim the first stone. Flesh might decry such a law as unmerciful, but the success of the nation in its conquest of the land, as well as its future wellbeing, absolutely depended upon the consistency of its worship. These considerations should be recalled today, when frequently, pleas for love and pity are advanced when God’s

truth is under challenge. Acceptable worship demands that Yahweh’s truth be upheld above all else, and loyalty to it must be maintained by those who are its adherents.

“And afterward, the hand of all the people” — Representatives of the nation were to assist in stoning the guilty party to death. After the first stone had been thrown by the accuser and main witness, these representatives would likewise cast their stones, as concurring in the condemnation of the crime.

VERSE 10

“And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he has sought to thrust ye away from Yahweh thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage” — Death by stoning was the penalty exacted. Such a death ensured that those executing it, had no personal contact with the guilty party, for that would have been defiling (See Exod. 19:12-13). Instead of reading “there shall not a hand touch it”, as though relating to the mountain, the pronoun should be *him* referring to the transgressor. Ceremonial uncleanness under the law was transmittable from one person, or object, to the other. See the question and answer recorded in Hab. 2:11-14.

VERSE 11

“And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you” — The penalty, although severe, was salutary. It ensured respect of the law, and for the worship of Yahweh. The penalty publicly inflicted, and generally known, would have a deterrent effect upon the community as a whole, calculated to restrain such irreverence. See Prov. 19:25; 21:11; and its application in 1 Tim. 5:20. Today, the world robs all penalty of fear, and wickedness runs riot. This was not tolerated under the Mosaic covenant, nor will it be in the Millennium. The death penalty will be re-introduced (see Zech. 13:3). In principle, Christ makes the same demand on the allegiance of his disciples, as God did on Israel in these verse. See Matt. 10:34-39.

Idolatrous Cities to be Destroyed

— vv. 12-18

The third source of possible apostasy is that of a city whose inhabitants have been induced through the wickedness of a minority to turn from the way of righteous-

ness, and embrace a pagan form of worship. There is no pretext in this case, but a high-handed act of spiritual rebellion. The punishment is severe: the inhabitants are to be put to the sword, and the city itself destroyed.

VERSE 12

“If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, which Yahweh thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying” — The Cambridge Bible renders: “If thou shalt hear tell, that in one of thy cities . . .” This instruction relates to a report of apostasy in a city perhaps afar off. True Israelites were not at liberty to ignore such a report. They had to carry out Yahweh’s instructions, that being the basis of their occupancy of the Land. The description, “Thy cities, which Yahweh thy God hath given thee to dwell” defines Israelites as tenants at will, subject to certain conditions. As such, they had a responsibility to see that Yahweh’s will was carried out in all parts of the land. As mere tenants they must not allow any part of His property to become centres of rebellion against His just authority. This was one of the terms of their inheritance, for the ownership of their dwellings was vested in Him (Lev. 25:23). If they did not carry out the Divine will they could be ejected from their occupancy. Cp. Deut. 28:58,63 and see *Elpis Israel* p. 249. This limited tenancy of the land should be contrasted with the eternal possession promised Abraham and his seed (Gen. 13:15).

VERSE 13

“Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you” — “Children of Belial” can be rendered *Sons of Worthlessness*, that is, men begotten of worthlessness or wickedness. In 2 Cor. 6:15, the term denotes impure religion, and as we have seen, the religion of Canaan was noted for its extremely immoral rites. Some derive the word from *beli* “not”, and *al* “over”, and define it as one so proud as to refuse to submit to a superior. Others, give it as *beli* “not” and *ol* a “yoke”, and relate it to those who refuse submission of any kind. Others from *beli* “not” and *yaal*, “profit”, and so profitless or worthless. *The Septuagint* renders it as *lawless*. The term relates to men who follow the dictates of the flesh, and therefore please themselves rather than Yahweh. They are worthless to Him, though they may be greatly esteemed by

their fellowmen.

“And have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known” — The reference is to a determined minority, who having embraced false teaching, now endeavour to spread their ideas and encourage converts. They set before their associates a new doctrine, and invite their participation in it.

VERSE 14

“Then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently” — Such rebellion is not to be ignored, no matter how convenient it might be to do so. It is the responsibility of all to investigate any form of apostasy, and to seek to turn those influenced thereby, back to the sound principles of the Truth. Otherwise, according to the laws of defilement, others will be influenced thereby, and the whole nation affected. In these times, it is sometimes easier to ignore the teaching of Ecclesias afar off as being a matter of little local concern — but if that is done the influence of error may ultimately permeate the local Ecclesia. Nevertheless, the most careful investigation and warning must be made before condemnation is proclaimed. There is a need to “judge righteous judgment” in such cases (John 7:24). This is implied in the instructions of this verse: “enquire”, “search”, “ask diligently”. These reveal the care that should be adopted in seeking out the facts of the matter. They were not to proceed on the basis of mere hearsay.

VERSE 15

“Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword” — A state of war is to be entered into against cities given to apostasy. Today the battle of faith is waged with the weapons of fellowship and doctrine, not by the sword (See 2 Cor. 10:3-6 which might well be based on the Scripture before us).

“Destroying it utterly, and all that is therein” — The Hebrew *charam* rendered “destroying” signifies to *devote*. It implies a religious act of destruction, by which things of the flesh are destroyed. This act of hostility and destruction against a city given to apostasy could act as a warning to others who may otherwise be induced to follow the same heresy. Paul set forth the purpose of disfellowshipping as designed for “the destruction of the flesh, that the

spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:4). Among the works of the flesh are “variance, strife, seditions, and heresies” (Gal. 5:20). Such adverse aspects of Ecclesial life must be put down that the Spirit Word may have its proper impact and influence. There is need for Ecclesias to faithfully, and forthrightly, proclaim the Truth vigorously, and denounce error with equal vigour, that others may be influenced thereby.

“And the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword” — So potent is the defiling influence of false doctrine and worship that even the cattle are represented as having been defiled thereby. Cattle were “clean” beasts, used in sacrifice, and therefore figuratively represented Israel.

VERSE 16

“And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof” — This was a form of purification. It was publicly performed. The word “street” is better rendered as *public square*. The most prominent part of the city was to be the scene of the holocaust. That which “abided the fire” could be given back to Yahweh for His use. See Josh. 6:24; Num. 31:22-23. The antitype of this will be manifested at the Judgment Seat of Christ when the work of disciples will be tried by fire, and only that which abides the fire will be accepted of the Judge (see 1 Cor. 3:11-15).

“Every whit for Yahweh thy God” — The Hebrew *kaliyl* is rendered “whole burnt sacrifice” in Deut. 33:10; Psa. 51:19. To destroy the guilty city, and purify the spoil by fire was treated as an act of devotion unto Yahweh. Similarly, to wage war upon false doctrine is a similar act of devotion. It must not degenerate into a matter of mere personalities, but must ever be conducted as an act of loyalty to God. The limitations and restrictions by which it should be waged are those set down in the Word.

“And it shall be an heap for ever; it shall not be built again” — The fate of cities given over to apostasy is similar to the curse placed upon Jericho (Josh. 8:28). Apparently such cities were to be left in their ruinous state as memorials of the fate of those who turn against Yahweh. The NIV rendition is perhaps more graphic. It renders: “Gather all the plunder of the town into the middle of the public square and completely burn the town and all its

plunder as a whole burnt offering to Yahweh your God. It is to remain a ruin for ever, never to be rebuilt”. In that light, it is illuminating to travel the cities where once were found the Ecclesias of Asia mentioned in *The Apocalypse*. All that today remain are the ruins of Churches, the sad memorials of Ecclesias that fell from grace.

VERSE 17

“And there shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand” — The term “cursed thing” signifies that *devoted* unto Yahweh, as rendered in the margin (see also Lev. 27:28). The term denotes that which is given unto God, and therefore holy unto Him, so as to be treated as He prescribes. That which Achan took from out of Jericho is described as a “cursed thing”, and some have mistaken the term to mean that there was something evil about the wedge of gold etc., that he purloined to his own use. That was not the case. The evil was in his action in taking to himself that which belonged to Yahweh, not in the object he took. The warning of this verse is to avoid the mistake that he made. As the city and its contents are represented as being defiled by apostasy, disciples must learn to destroy all remnants of false doctrine so that nothing of the apostasy remains. There must be a thorough cleansing of its polluting influence.

“That Yahweh my turn from the fierceness of His anger” — This expression is used in Josh. 7:26 in relation to the sin of Achan. The “fierceness of Yahweh’s anger” was assuaged by the national endorsement of the punishment meted out to the offender. Flesh deprecates the penalty of capital punishment for such a sin as Achan’s, and decries it as unreasonable. But flesh does not view sin as God does. In its philosophy such a sin is considered of little consequence, and even doctrinal error is excused if the person manifests the “spirit” of the Truth. But the Bible treats apostasy as a drug that dulls the sensitivities of the mind to the realities of right living. The term “witchcraft”, used of wrong doctrine (Gal. 6:20), is from the Greek *pharmakia*, and is derived from a root signifying the removing of an evil, or the inflicting of one, by means of a drug. It therefore denotes the stupefying effects of false religion acting as a drug upon the mind. Many who claim that the death penalty is a worthy punishment for those who

destroy the characters, or lives, of others by unscrupulous drug-peddling deplore the disfellowshipping of those who spread false doctrine. But in the sight of Yahweh, false teaching is treated as “witchcraft”, or the soothing effect of a drug that can induce a bad habit and destroy all hope of life eternal. Disciples must try and view such penalties from the standpoint of God, and understand His attitude towards sin. That is not easy; for being flesh, and all too conscious of one’s own failings, the tendency is to excuse sin in others, and fail to view it from the standpoint of God. “Who knoweth the power of Thine anger?” asked Moses of Yahweh (Psa. 90:11). The question signifies, Who can properly estimate the intensity of wrath that Yahweh feels and reveals against sin? And he answered by stating that only those who fear Him can even begin to comprehend the enormity of it. Moses’ question and answer are worth pondering. Remember, he was excluded from the Promised Land because he allowed the people to so activate him as to speak “unadvisedly” with his tongue. Not a great sin, we may imagine!

“And shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee” — “Mercy” and “compassion” as used in this verse are from two very closely related words. The first is in the plural *rahamim* and denotes “mercies”. *The Theological Word Book of the O. T.* notes: “This word shows the link between *raham*, ‘to have compassion’ and *reham/raham*, ‘womb’, for *rahamim* can refer to the seat of one’s emotions (Gen. 43:30), or the expression of one’s deep emotion (1 Kings 3:26). *Rahamim* recalls in various situations that God’s tender mercy is rooted in His free love and grace”. The word, therefore, is expressive of the deep bond of affection that Yahweh has established between Himself and His people who perform His will as expressed in the previous verses. Whilst they may have been subjected to the harsh, adverse criticism of fellow Israelites because they searched out the error of their fellow-Israelites and punished the offenders when they refused to respond to reasoning, they could be assured that Yahweh’s feelings towards them were those of tender and unique affection that a true father has for the child he has begotten in the womb of his wife. In the circumstances before us, Israelites who carried out the will of God would have viewed the apostasy of the city concerned (like an Ecclesia today that em-

braces wrong teaching or false standards) from the standpoint of God, and recognising such sin in all its abhorrence would have commenced a warfare of faith against the guilty town to the honour of Yahweh's name. The word *rakamim* is in the plural number, and therefore expressive of the many acts of loving-kindness that the Father shows towards His obedient children.

"Compassion" — The word is from the Hebrew *raham*, and is expressive of deep love and compassion usually of a superior (a parent) to an inferior (a child) as rooted in some "natural" bond, as expressed by *rahamim*. It incorporates the strong tie God has with those whom He has called as His children (Psa. 103:13). God looks upon His own as a father looks upon his young children: He has pity on them (Mic. 7:17). His deep tender love is expressed in His mercy and forgiveness towards His people in the face of deserved judgment, and upon the condition of their repentance.

"And multiply thee, as He hath sworn

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

ATTITUDE REQUIRED TOWARDS YAHWEH AS HIS FAMILY

The reason for the instructions of this chapter are stated in the two opening verses: Because ye are the children of Yahweh, and Because thou art an holy people unto Yahweh. Because of Israel's unique relationship with God, practices inconsistent with their privileged status must be shunned. The Chapter provides instruction for the people of Yahweh in three regards: When faced with death in the home (vv. 1-2); When at the table in their eating habits (vv. 3-21); When enjoying prosperity in providing tithes for divine service (vv. 22-27), or for the relief of others (vv. 28-29). The limitations and restrictions thus stressed show Israel to be a "peculiar people" unto Yahweh.

No Disfiguring of Themselves in Mourning — vv. 1-2

True Israelites are taught to look beyond death to a resurrection unto life eternal. Ac-

cordingly they are not to "sorrow as those who have no hope", unlike Gentiles who disfigure themselves in their despair at times of mourning.

unto thy fathers" — The promise was made to Abraham (Gen. 22:16-17), and carried on through him to his descendants. It will be fulfilled without doubt, for ultimately the seed of Abraham will constitute "a great multitude, which no man can number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (Rev. 7:9). But personal participation in that multitude is conditional upon each one upholding Yahweh's honour. Mere fleshly descent from Abraham is not sufficient.

VERSE 18

"When thou shalt hearken to the voice of Yahweh thy God, to keep all His commandments which I command thee this day, to do that which is right in the eyes of Yahweh thy God" — The personal well-being of each Israelite, as well as the success of the national campaign, depended entirely upon the attention of each one to the Word, and their practical application of its requirements. See Deut. 12:25,28,32; Psa. 119:6; Matt. 6:31-34; 7:21,24.

VERSE 1

"Ye are the children of Yahweh your God" — Literally, this should be "the sons of Yahweh your God". This preamble stresses the privileged status of Israel, and provides the reason for the restrictions that follow. The conduct of Yahweh's sons must be consistent with their calling. The sense of the statement is better stated if the word "Because" is placed before the verse. Because they are sons of God, they must not do this or that. This privileged status of Israel is stressed elsewhere. See Exod. 4:22-23; Psa. 82:6-7; Hos. 1:12; John 11:52; Rom. 9:4. Today, believers in Christ occupy the same privileged position, and are described as the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16), and His children (John 1:12; Rom. 8:16; 2 Cor. 6:18; Gal. 3:26; Heb. 2:10; 1 John 3:1). Any claiming that title must observe the restrictions of conduct that are demanded of such.

"Ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead" — Man is mortal because of sin. Death is a negation of God's purpose, and is treated as defiling. True Israelites are taught to look beyond death to the hope of the resurrection. See Psa. 49:15; 71:20; Dan. 12:2; Acts 26:7; 1 Thess. 4:13. It was the custom of heathens to cut themselves in deep sorrow to show the intensity of their feelings in the face of death, and to shave their hair as a sign of great mourning. Such practices are prohibited Israelites who are to look beyond death to the resurrection. It is thought by some that this heathen custom had a religious connotation. W. J. Moulton in *The Social Institutions of Israel* states that such practices "had heathen associations, and may have been designed to help in concluding a covenant with the departed, at whose grave the shed blood or cut hair might be offered". See also our notes on Lev. 19:28; 21:5, and compare with Jer. 16:6; 48:36-37; Ezek. 7:18; 27:31.

VERSE 2

"For thou art an holy people unto Yahweh thy God" — The word "holy" signifies separated for a purpose. The purpose is stated by the Apostle Peter: "to show forth the virtues, or praises, of God" (1 Pet. 2:9). This demands high standards of conduct.

"And Yahweh hath chosen thee" — As He has also chosen the Israel of God in Christ Jesus (Acts 15:14).

"To be a peculiar people unto Himself"

— The Hebrew word rendered "peculiar" is *cegullah*, from a root signifying to shut up, and therefore denoting wealth as closely guarded or locked up in a safe place. The word also signifies *purchased*. See Exod. 19:5. The term has been rendered *peculiar treasure* (Psa. 135:4), describing the tribute due to a king (Ecc. 2:8), *jewels*, or *special treasure* (Mal. 3:17 see mg.), *proper good* relating to David's personal wealth (1 Chron. 29:3), *special* denoting a purchased people (Deut. 7:6), and so forth. The passage is cited in Tit. 2:14 and applied to those in Christ, whilst Peter, in also citing the passage (1 Pet. 2:9), adds what is required of those so defined. They are to "shew forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light".

"Above all the nations that are upon the earth" — Hence a true Israelite, whether then or now, must be unique and distinct from all other people, as the requirements of this chapter reveal. Gentiles think it strange that believers limit their actions and conduct according to the Divine will (1 Pet. 4:4).

What May And May Not Be Eaten — vv. 3-21

Israelites are instructed as to what they may eat and what they should avoid. In some cases the animals listed are unfit for human consumption, and the dietary laws given are such as assist to safeguard the health of Yahweh's people. But the real significance is to separate them from other nations, and manifest their elect character. They are taught, through these laws, to avoid the characteristics denoted by the animals prohibited. Unlike the clean beasts generally referred to in Leviticus 11, the clean beasts in this chapter are specifically enumerated (vv. 4-6). They form two categories: domesticated animals used also for sacrifice; and wild animals used only for food. In type, these two classifications represent Israel after the spirit and Israel after the flesh; whilst the unclean animals typify Gentiles, in their various characteristics. The ten animals enumerated as "clean" beasts are not listed in Leviticus 11 where the subject is also treated, perhaps because they would not be found in the wilderness, but would be in the Land the Israelites were about to enter.

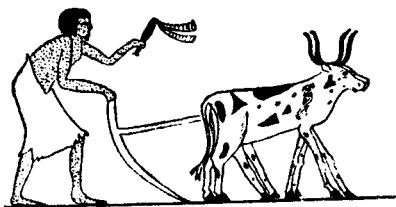
VERSE 3

"Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing" — The word "abominable" is from the Hebrew *tow'eb*, and denotes that

which is disgusting, and abhorrent. The term is also used to define idolatry. The animals described as "abominable", are not necessarily so in themselves, but are defined as such by decree. Many Gentiles are thoughtful and considerate in themselves but in rejecting the Truth reveal themselves to be unfit for association with believers. See Lev. 11:2; 20:25.

VERSE 4

"**These are the beasts which ye shall eat: the ox**" — The ox was rated a clean beast, and was used for sacrifice. The Hebrew word denotes a *traveller*, and categorises the ox as one who gives his strength in labour for others, a quality Israelites should emulate.



"**The sheep**" — Sheep were used for both food and sacrifice. The Hebrew term here denotes one who dominates (contrast with v. 26), and relates to rams old enough to butt. Sheep are frequently used in Scripture for Israelites. They are noted for their docility, affection for the shepherd, and usefulness. The females were used to provide milk as well as wool and meat. Sheep, therefore, were a source of both food and clothing; useful alike whether alive (for its milk and wool), or killed (as food or sacrifice).

"**And the goat**" — The Hebrew 'ez denotes "strength". Qualities of the sheep as listed above apply also to the goat. The goat, however, is more wayward than the sheep, and therefore was used as a sin offering. Note that this verse lists clean beasts that were domesticated, and therefore were used in sacrificing as well as for food.

VERSE 5

"**The hart**" — This verse lists wild animals, which were classed as "clean" and therefore could be eaten, though not used for sacrificing. The Hebrew word *ayol* signifies "strength". The hart was another name for the stag or male deer. It was

categorised as a clean beast, but because it was untamed, and not domesticated, it was not used for sacrifice (see Deut. 15:22). The hart is surefooted (Isa. 35:6), and therefore likened to the Godly man who conscientiously walks in His ways (Psa. 42:1). It is also noted for its gracefulness, beauty and speed, and in that regard is likened to Christ (Song 2:9,17; 8:14).

"**And the roebuck**" — Its Hebrew term *tebiy* emphasises its beauty. It is better known as the gazelle. Though a "clean" beast, it is a wild animal and therefore not permitted for sacrifice.

"**And the fallow deer**" — The Hebrew word *yachmur* is from a root signifying to *boil up*, perhaps indicating the reddish colour of the deer. Again, though a "clean" beast, it was not domesticated, and therefore of no use for sacrifice. Only animals that submitted to discipline were permitted for that purpose.

"**And the wild goat**" — The Hebrew word signifies *Slender*, and the reference is to the Nubian Ibex. This is the only reference to this animal in the Bible.

"**And the pygarg**" — The Hebrew word signifies *The Leaper*. The reference is to the desert antelope, known for its ability to leap. No other mention is made of this animal of the Bible.

"**And the wild ox**" — The Hebrew term signifies to *Mark off*, to *Designate*, and probably relates to the markings on the coat of the desert oryx, a type of antelope. It was generally caught in a net (Isa. 51:20).

"**And the chamois**" — The Hebrew term *zomer* means to *Leap*, or *Touch*, perhaps implying the manner in which the animal appears to lightly touch the ground, and its ability to leap. The reference is to the mountain sheep (see RV) similar to the European chamois.

VERSE 6

"**And every beast that parteth the hoof,**" — This suggests the facility of discrimination: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). "Apply thine heart to understanding", declares the Proverb (Prov. 2:3). The Hebrew word comes from a root denoting the ability to separate and distinguish between good and evil. In a typical sense, this is "parting the hoof".

"**And cleaveth the cleft into two claws**"

— This contributes to surefootedness, or, figuratively, the practical application of what "rightly dividing the Word" shows should be done.

"**And cheweth the cud among the beasts**" — To chew the cud is to thoroughly masticate that which is eaten by repeatedly bringing it up for that purpose. Such animals have several stomachs by which food is retained, and by which this is done. Concerning this, Brother Roberts writes in *The Law Of Moses*:

"It is the spiritual import of the law that is important for us to discern. What then was the import of those peculiarities upon which the cleanness or uncleanness of the animals was founded? What sort of men are they who correspond to the type of cud-chewing and hoof-parting animals? We are in the presence of at least the shadow of an answer when we hear the modern phrase 'chewing the cud of reflection'. The literal act of chewing the cud is part of the process of preparing the food for assimilation by the animal tissues. Digestion is the grand requisite. For gross organizations, no great thoroughness is necessary in the process: a short alimentary canal is sufficient for the carnivorous races. The lion and the tiger bolt their food and it is converted quickly. But in the higher races, where a finer result is aimed at, in producing food for man in the flesh of the ox and sheep, there is a greater elaborateness in the structure provided for the conversion of grass and turnips into beef and mutton. The chewing of the cud belongs to the greater elaborateness of structure; the thorough preparation of food for conversion into life is the essential idea of this act.

"It is not difficult to go from the typical to the spiritual in this matter. There is spiritual food and there is spiritual life that results from the eating and assimilation of that food. 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them', said Jeremiah. 'The entrance of thy word giveth light', wrote the Psalmist. 'He that eateth me shall live by me', said Christ; 'the words that I speak unto you are spirit and life'. Men, then, who are given to turning over in their minds the divine knowledge conveyed in the words of truth are men who spiritually chew the cud. They are spiritually ruminant animals. They are the clean among men. As Jesus said, 'Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.'

"There is nothing mystical about this. It is the obvious fact that a man with the word of God stored in his mind, is a clean man by comparison with the man in whom the mere mind of the flesh prevails. He is clean in thought, clean in action, clean in all his ways — in a word, holy. His holiness is not the result of natural organization, but of the presence in that organization of the truth which sanctifies. The truth is the sanctifying power, and this not merely as a thing once learnt, but a thing constantly read and thought about.

"The sheep nibbles the grass all the day long. Men of God are in harmony with the command which says 'Be thou in the fear of God all the day long'. The sheep is constantly growing as a sheep. If it ceased its activities as a living animal, it would die. In the antitype, the process of spiritual life is constantly going on. There is no arrest or suspension. The word of God is read and pondered every day: God is thanked every day, 'in sincerity and truth', both at meal tables, and at bedside night and morning. God is before the mind every day, as a factor in all life's calculations. The truth is much more than a knowledge of the fact that man is mortal and that Christ is the Saviour and that the Kingdom is coming. It is a knowledge of God as the possessor of heaven and earth and the weigher of actions. This knowledge cannot be retained except by the constant reading and reflection typified by the chewing of the cud by the clean animals — reckoned clean because they did so.

"Israel were to eat such animals. Men figuratively eat one another in taking in what they say and do. They assimilate to each other by the act: men become like one another by intercourse. Here is where it becomes wisdom to choose your company, and not consort with fools because they are agreeable. 'He that walketh with wise men shall be wise.' The men who chew the cud, not only benefit one another, but are pleasing to God. 'He taketh not pleasure in fools.' 'The Lord taketh pleasure in his people.' 'The Lord hath chosen the man that is godly for himself.' This is the testimony of the word, and it is in harmony with reason. Creation is for God's pleasure, little as we may realize the idea of the Creator having pleasure. 'For thy pleasure they (all things) are and were created.' But there are things in which He

takes no particular pleasure. 'The Lord taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man, or in the strength of a horse.' Mere mechanical energy or artistic beauty is but an element in the scheme of things. Enlightened intelligence in harmony with Himself is the apex of the scheme. This is the centre of the circle. Apart from this, other things and qualities are but as the disjointed parts of a machine. This intelligence is the result of observation and reflection of which God has made the human brain capable. Knowledge and understanding directed to Himself are the conditions in the human mind that afford Him pleasure. The majority of men have no pleasure in this knowledge. 'They say unto God, Depart from us: we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' They prefer sensation on the basis of the instincts which they forget are God's invention with a right place when He is head. 'They hate knowledge, and do not choose the fear of the Lord.' They are not given to reflection: they are given to sociality, conviviality, emulation, excitement. They do not chew the cud: they belong to the unclean animals. It is a great revelation that God approves of those only who know Him and delight in His memory and His service and His praise. It is a revelation that comes to us in many ways, and in none more forcibly than in the command to Israel that only those animals that chewed the cud were to be eaten, and that all others were to be unclean and defiling."

"**That shall ye eat**" — As such beasts were deemed suitable and acceptable for food, Israelites were drawn to consider the reason why. They were taught to observe nature and to draw lessons therefrom. To "part the hoof" or to learn to discriminate between right and wrong; to "be clovenfooted" or to apply those principles in practice, and to "chew the cud" or to thoroughly masticate the spiritual food provided by Yahweh are all pleasing characteristics to Him.

VERSE 7

"**Nevertheless these ye shall not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof**" — Israelites must not be led astray by animals that *seemed* to qualify; a careful observation so that the animals qualify in every particular is thus invited.

"**As the camel**" — The camel chews the cud, but does not divide the hoof. A per-

son may ruminate on the Word, and yet not apply in a practical way the very principles upon which he delights to think or discuss. He is a mere theorist. He is like the camel in that regard. He may ruminate upon the Word, but his walk leaves something to be desired. He should take heed to his ways so as to correct his faults. The word "camel" is from the Hebrew *gamal* and signifies *labour* or *burden-bearing*. Dr. Strong derives it from a root denoting "to treat either good or ill." The camel has some good qualities. It is an excellent worker noted



for its strength and endurance. It is a speedy traveller, and a storer of water, so that it has the unusual ability to do without replenishment for some time. These are attributes that, in a spiritual sense, every true Israelite should aim to emulate. But the camel does not "divide the hoof". It has a ball at the back of the foot in the nature of a heel, but it does not truly divide as required in v. 3. The construction of the hoof is excellent for travelling on sandy soil, but not so good for rocky terrain. Therefore, its ability is greatly impaired when the way is hard. Because it chews the cud, but divides not the hoof, the camel can be likened to those whom the Lord described as "hearing these sayings of mine, but doeth them not", so "building their house upon the sand" (Matt. 7:26). There is a type of believer who delights to "hear the word, but they will not do" what it requires. "With their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness" (Ezek. 33:31). The camel illustrates that principle; for excellent worker though it is, it has an evil, uncertain temper, and its foul breath is repulsive.

"**And the hare**" — The hare *appears* to "chew the cud" but in fact does not. Thus this animal represents the person who praises the Word, but seldom studies it! The type who is meticulous in doing the daily readings as a habit, gulping down whole chapters of it, but who never analyses that which is read, nor meditates

upon it so as to draw out its personal application. Such may be present at all the meetings, but fail to take in or give out what is taught.

"**And the coney**" — Like the camel, the coney has good qualities which, however, are outweighed by those to be avoided when they are spiritually interpreted. In Hebrew, the word "coney" is *shaphan* from a root signifying to *conceal*. This is illustrative of the coney which, not having any means of defence, seeks to conceal itself from its enemies. The animal is somewhat similar to a rabbit, but it lacks the ability to burrow, and so has to seek the natural caves and the clefts of rocks in which to make its home (see Psa. 104:18). In *The*

"**For they chew the cud, but divide not the hoof; therefore they are unclean unto you**" — Despite the good qualities of the animals enumerated, they were to be avoided as food by Israelites for the reasons given. There are men and women of kindly disposition in the world who are prepared to extend themselves on behalf of others, but who nevertheless are not motivated by the Truth. Despite their undoubted good qualities, they are to be avoided by those who are separated for Yahweh's use.

VERSE 8

"**And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud**" — The word "swine" is from the Hebrew *chaziyir* signifying "to inclose" and suggesting the selfish, selfcentred characteristics of the pig in its grunting greed. The swine is not "cloven-footed" though it appears so, but actually has four toes. This *appearance* of sure-footedness is also characteristic of men of the flesh. Though, they seem surefooted and confident in their ways, in fact their institutions and attainments are very temporary (2 Cor. 4:18). Therefore those who put confidence in them actually dwell "in slippery places" (Psa. 73:17-18).

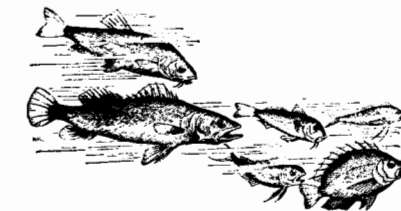
"**It is unclean unto you**" — The carnivorous attributes and filthy habits of the pig cause it to be an object of revulsion (see 2 Pet. 2:22). In its natural state the pig is a vegetarian, and will feed on grass and roots, but it will also feed upon meat and offal, and is known even to consume its own young. Though its meat is said to be rich in certain vitamins, it is also said to be more susceptible to disease than most other forms of food. It is claimed that cancer is more widespread among

those people who delight in eating the pig. Peter likens those who turned "from the holy commandment delivered unto them" to the washed sow turning "to her wallowing in the mire". In prohibiting the pig as food, the Law taught Israelites to avoid imitating, in a spiritual sense, the characteristics of the animal.

"**Ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase**" — Israelites were taught to remain strictly separate from the types of persons suggested by the camel, coney, hare and swine. To impress the lesson, they were ordered to avoid even bodily contact with the carcasses of these animals.

VERSE 9

"**These ye shall eat of all that are in the waters: all that have fins and scales shall ye eat**" — As the sea is representative of Gentile nations (Isa. 57:20), and humans are described as fish (Matt. 4:19; Rev. 5:13), so the same discrimination is made by the Law in regard to fish as it does in relation to the animal world. "Fins" and "scales" assist the fish in balance, direction and protection. These are all valuable in life's journey, and particularly in the way leading to life eternal. That which one eats is absorbed into one's being, and becomes part of one's self. Therefore, to eat the type of fish defined, suggests a development of balance, direction and protection in life.



VERSE 10

"**Whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye may not eat; it is unclean unto you**" — Figuratively, this description relates to the majority of mankind, noted for their aimless, purposeless wandering through life, "without God in the world", and thus without that protection He manifests towards His own, or the purposeful direction the truth gives in the journey of life.

VERSE 11

"**Of all clean birds ye shall eat**" — The birds of the air, lifted high above the earth

and sea and therefore typifying the elevating influence of the spirit word and categorised as fit to eat.

VERSE 12

"But these are they of which ye shall not eat" — The unclean birds reveal that it is not sufficient to be elevated in mind by the Word, that Word must be manifested in action.

The Eagle: cruel and ruthless — avoid these characteristics.



"The eagle" — The eagle has outstandingly good qualities. It is far-seeing, having microscopic eyes that can see a small object, such as rabbit, upwards of four miles away; it is speedy in flight, some species being able to attain unto speeds of 250 km per hour; it has great strength, enabling it to lift its heavy prey



The sharp, cruel claws of the eagle illustrative of the Hebrew meaning of its name — "to tear to pieces."



by its claws and carry it some distance away; it manifests great love for its young, and will expend great care on their behalf (Exod. 19:4). The eagle is commended in Scripture for its solicitude (Exod. 19:4), its mastery of the air (Prov. 23:5; 30:19); its speed of flight (Deut. 28:49; 2 Sam. 1:23). Why then is it interdicted? Because of an attitude which cancels out these good points, and must be

avoided by true Israelites at any cost. It is cruel and ruthless. Its very Hebrew name emphasises that fact, for *nesher*, "eagle" is from a root signifying *to lacerate, to tear to pieces*. The eagle shows no pity, it "hasteth to the prey" (Job. 9:26). This outweighs its good points. In classifying the eagle as "an abomination", Israelites were taught that ruthless cruelty must be avoided. If it is persisted in, good works in other directions will avail nought. See James 5:11; 1 Peter 3:8.

"And the ossifrage" — The ossifrage is another fierce bird of prey. The word signifies *bone breaker* from *os* "bone", and *frango* "I break". The Hebrew title *peres* signifies *to split or break in two*. The ossifrage not only strips the flesh off its victim, but breaks up its bones in order to extract the marrow which makes the blood. Like the eagle, it is known for its fierce ruthlessness, an attribute Israelites were taught to hold in abhorrence; to treat as abominable.

The Osprey: noted for greed.



"And the osprey" — The Hebrew title is *oznujah* from *oz* signifying "strength". The bird is known as the sea-eagle, and is noted for both its strength and its greed. It fishes along the coast of the Mediterranean and in the Huleh valley, greedily gulping down the fish whole, as if it were boasting in its fleshly strength. Israelites were to avoid fleshly greed and display of strength.

VERSE 13

"And the glede" — The Hebrew title is *Ra'ah* signifying "to see", and denoting a bird of keen visage, perhaps a buzzard. The bird is not listed in Leviticus 11, and therefore its presence here is considered by some as a clerical error for *da'ah* rendered *vulture* in Lev. 11:14. The difference between the two Hebrew letters *rosh* and *daleth* is so slight that a writer could easily make a mistake. The *Septuagint* only includes two birds in this verse, which probably should be the case here as the vulture is included in the next verse.

"And the kite" — The Hebrew title is

'ayah, signifying a *screamer*, and rendered as *falcon* in the RV. The kite is between vultures and hawks in size, all of which are masters of flight being noted for their strength and speed in the air. However, other of the kite's characteristics are not so attractive and should be avoided by Israelites.

"And the vulture" — The Hebrew *dayah* signifies *to dart*, indicative of its rapid flight, and is derived from *da'ah*, rendered *vulture* in Lev. 11:14. The vulture is a migratory bird, appearing in Israel at Passover time. But it feeds on offal, whereas true Israelites should feed spiritually on the pure manna of life. Therefore, it was to be held in abomination. The RV renders the word as *the kite*.

"After his kind" — The prohibition included species of the birds named.

VERSE 14

"And every raven after his kind" — The raven is a symbol of the flesh (Song 5:17). Its Hebrew title *oreb* signifies that which is *dark*. It feeds, in part, on seeds and fruit, and is thus fed of God (Luke 12:24). But it also loves carrion. It captures small creatures alive and picks out the eyes of its victims (Prov. 30:17). It can be tamed of God to provide for His servants (1 Kings 17:4,6; Prov. 21:18), but the raven is noted especially for having left the ark and failing to return (Gen. 8:7). It preferred the darkness of Gentilism, hence its Hebrew name which signifies darkness. In that, it was unlike the dove. How often has a man of flesh been partially tamed of God, only again to return to the beggarly elements of the world which he loves. Israelites were taught to avoid such a characteristic.

VERSE 15

"And the owl" — The Hebrew *bath*



ya'anah signifies *daughter of noise*. The title has been rendered as "ostrich" in the

A. V. Unger states that it "is certainly the ostrich", though a different word is used for "ostrich" in Job 39:13-18 where the reference undoubtedly points to that bird. On the other hand, the usually very reliable C. S. Casdala in his extremely valuable and interesting book, *Animals Of Bible Lands* states that the title refers "not to the ostrich as suggested by some authors and followed in RSV". He suggests a species of the owl. Accepting the Hebrew word as relating to the owl, we note that there are several species of this bird in the Land, though "only three such are likely to come to the attention of ordinary folk". The owl is a night bird of prey, and is very secretive in its habits. And both these are mannerisms that should be avoided by true Israelites. Christ warned against "secretive night birds" saying, "This is condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (John 3:19-20). The secretive Screech Owl (and the Hebrew suggests this species of owl), whose strange calls are heard around buildings and in ruins, illustrates the Lord's exhortation. Being able to see in darkness, it pounces on its unwary prey with swift, destructive skill. All species of owls are so secretive, so much creatures of darkness and of the night, as to be hard to observe except by skilled naturalists. By prohibiting the owl as food, Israelites were taught to avoid such secretive love of darkness; and to look upon such characteristics as "abominable".

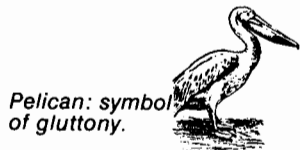
"And the night hawk" — The Hebrew *tachmas* (rendered "night hawk") is from the root *chamas*, "to be violent, to maltreat". There is division of thought as to what particular bird is intended, but the principle is clear: true Israelites should avoid violence and injustice. The bird, in question, has been identified by some with the oriental owl which haunts ruins and old deserted houses. It is very rapacious, and is even known to fly into windows of homes of a night, and to have killed small infants (see *Animals Of Bible Lands*).

VERSE 16

"The little owl" — The Hebrew is *cos* signifying *cup*. The owl is a bird of the night, a carnivorous bird of prey. The

ancients esteemed the bird as supremely wise, and the Greeks identified it with the goddess Athena, the goddess of wisdom and war. But the habits of the so-called wise bird were to be accounted "an abomination" to Israelites. By observing the owl, and bearing in mind the prohibition of the Law, Israelites were induced to reason for themselves the exhortation stressed by Paul in 1 Cor. 1:19-31: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

VERSE 17



Pelican: symbol of gluttony.

"And the pelican" — The Hebrew word is *ga'ath*, signifying vomiter. This word expresses the habit of regurgitation that is characteristic of this bird. It feeds its young by partly digested food, taken by the chick as it puts its head down its parent's throat. True Israelites are expected to carefully masticate their spiritual food, and feed their young on "the milk of the word."



"And the gier eagle" — The Hebrew word *racham*, rendered gier eagle, signifies loving. The bird is probably the Egyptian vulture which is noted for its tenderness towards its young. It is a true scavenger, picking its living from town rubbish heaps and being seen everywhere from its arrival in the Holy Land in spring to its departure in the autumn. It rears its family in the Holy Land, and then leads

them back into Egypt! How often does the misplaced love of parents do the like for their children. They, themselves "come out of Egypt," but in their over-indulgent love they encourage their children to make their mark in the world, and so encourage them back into Egypt. True love towards children is revealed in keeping them separate from the world, in discipline often enforced by punishment. "Spare the rod and spoil the child", so much out of fashion today, is a principle clearly advocated in the Proverbs. Israelites were taught to observe the Egyptian vulture, so as to avoid its ways. Unfortunately, they failed to do this, and so sought Egypt for help (Isa. 30). The prohibition on this bird, whose Hebrew name is *Loving*, therefore, teaches that there is a form of "love" that should be avoided by saints: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:15-16). The over-indulgence of parents towards their children at the expense of the demands of the truth is disastrous to their spiritual future. Israelites were taught to recognise that that form of love is an abomination to Yahweh. *Gier* is ancient English for vulture.

The Cormorant: a bird of prey whose sharp beak casts down its victims.



"And the cormorant" — The cormorant is a large black-plumaged bird that lives by fishing. It suddenly and swiftly pounces upon its prey with its darting beak. Its Hebrew title *shalak* takes heed of its habit of driving its cruel beak down upon its prey, for it signifies to cast down. Once again, in its prohibition of this bird, the Law taught that those who prey upon their fellows, hiding their intention until they find opportunity to unexpectedly pounce upon them (and there are many such "birds" among humanity) are to be accounted as "an abomination".

VERSE 18

"And the stork" — The Hebrew title *chaciydah* is from a root signifying constant, loyal, loving, kind, pious. The same root is elsewhere rendered saint, godly. There are several species of stork, but the

one most familiar in the land is the White Stork. It is a large bird, standing well over 3 ft high on its long, red legs. It

Stork: symbol of hypocrisy.



sports a long, red beak, and black-and-white plumage. The stork is very loyal to its mate, and barring accidents it will mate for life. It is also devoted to its young, thus deserving the Hebrew title given it. However, the basic diet of the stork is carnivorous, and includes mice, snakes, fish, worms, insects and frogs, and these it frequently seeks in swampy or dirty places. Indeed, the more filthy these places, the greater seems to be the enjoyment of the stork, so that it is frequently seen with its long, red legs, daintily stepping through muck to fill its stomach. Thus its loyal, loving characteristics are offset by its enjoyment of filthy places, its love of the haunts of man, so that it was classified as "an abomination" to Israelites. What does the stork symbolise? Undoubtedly it represents the religious hypocrite in bird life, hence its name which designates it as saintly, but its habits which show its enjoyment in stirring up filth. The stork is a migratory bird, travelling from Egypt, through Israel to Europe. It does this at Passover time, when flocks of these large and beautiful birds are to be seen gracefully sailing through the air in formation. Because of this, the stork is very effectively used in the symbolism of Zechariah's prophecy to describe how the false religious system of Judaism would migrate from the Holy Land to "the land of Shinar" to set up its house there (Zech. 5:9). In *Eureka*, Brother Thomas expounds upon the significance of this. The influence of Egypt polluted the truth as revealed by Moses to Israel, and when the false religious system of Judaism in turn polluted the truth as proclaimed by the Apostles, it was driven from the Land in A.D. 70, to find a resting place in Europe at Rome, the headquarters of Babylon the Great. The Roman Catholic Church comprised "the house in the land of Shinar" to where religious hypocrisy and error migrated as represented by the stork. Classifying the Stork among unclean birds, therefore, taught Israelites to exer-

cise the greatest care in regard to those who manifested an external appearance of piety, particularly if this is joined with an enjoyment of that which can be described Scripturally as filth. As members of a holy nation, Israelites should manifest holy ways, and avoid hypocrisy in all its forms.

The angry Heron — a characteristic to avoid.



"The heron after her kind" — The Hebrew title of *anaphah* is from 'anaph, "to be angry" — a characteristic to be avoided by true Israelites lest it lead to sin (Eph. 4:26). The heron is a long-beaked, long legged bird, that frequents shallow water, and waits for its prey, standing as still as a statue until it appears when, swift as lightning, it pounces upon it and grasps it in its cruel beak. It represents smouldering anger that may be repressed but is never forgotten, and awaits the time to pounce in flaring attack. Against such an attitude the word exhorts (Prov. 14:17; 22:24; 29:22; Eph. 4:26).

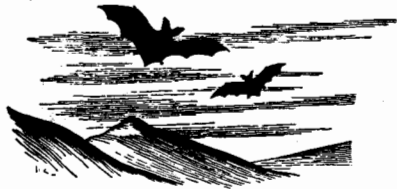
"And the lapwing" — The Hebrew title is *duwkiyphat*, a word which Gesenius suggests signifies mountain cock, or cock of dung or manure. It is

The Hoopoe: its beauty belies its filthy habits.



identified by some as the hoopoe (see *American Standard Version*). The hoopoe is a beautiful bird of coloured pinkish-brown plumage with boldly barred black and white patterns on the wings. Nevertheless, in spite of its beautiful appearance, it is a dirty bird. Its droppings foul the nest beyond description. It probes in rubbish and manure heaps for worms and insects, demonstrating that its beauty is but outward show. It appears on Egyptian monuments as representing gratitude. It is called by some, the doctor bird, and its elegant head, with

high protruding crest is used for witchcraft. No wonder it was to be held as an abomination! True Israelites are called upon to be "all glorious within" (Psa. 45).



"And the bat" — The Hebrew *'ataleph* or *night flier*. The bat is creation's most expert flier, for it is fitted with an inbuilt radar! which enables it to avoid objects in thick darkness. But, against this, bats are extremely odorous, whereas cleanliness is expected of Israelites.

VERSE 19

"And every creeping thing that flieth is unclean unto you: they shall not be eaten" — The locusts and grasshopper were the only insects to be eaten. Concerning them *Animals Of Bible Lands* states: "They have mouths with powerful mandibles with which they cut up leaves and other herbage; locusts and grasshoppers are entirely vegetarian in all their stages, which is one reason why they were allowed as food to the Hebrews."

Yahweh has typed His will and purpose with man in the laws of nature, so that natural things teach spiritual principles. The heavenly bodies are set in place "to be for signs" as well as for seasons (Gen. 1:14), the lower creation of beasts, birds and so forth typify those over whom the second Adam and his bride shall rule (Gen. 1:26). Therefore these creatures were categorised as clean and unclean: the former representing Israel in its relationship with Yahweh, and the latter typifying the Gentiles. That is how Peter understood the matter when he saw the sheet filled with unclean animals and was invited to kill and eat, for the time had come for Yahweh to "cleans" that which He previously set aside as "unclean" (Acts 10:12-15). This view of natural things taught Israelites to observe the habits of God's creatures large and small, and because this categorised them as clean or unclean, to imitate or avoid the characteristics and habits thus revealed. By this means they received daily exhortations in nature.

VERSE 20

"But of all clean fowls ye may eat" — By "fowls" is meant birds of all kinds.

VERSE 21

"Ye may not eat of any thing that dieth of itself" — This prohibition related to both clean and unclean beasts and birds. Those used for food had to be prepared in a proper manner with the blood poured out and covered with earth as specified (Lev. 17:13). This manner of killing and disposing of blood was not for purposes of hygiene but religious in significance. Blood represented the life of the animal or bird, and if this was shed to sustain or satisfy the flesh, it had to be hidden by earth. If it was shed for sacrificial purposes it was placed upon the altar, or poured out at its side as a witness.

"Thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien" — The stranger in the wilderness would have become a proselyte in the full sense of the word styled *ger tzedek*, but in the Land there may be many who may abandon idolatry (which should, in any case be destroyed by the Israelites) but may not fully embrace the Mosaic Covenant. They were styled *ger toshai* denoting a stranger dwelling temporarily in the Land, that is, a resident alien. The Jews claim that the term describes an uncircumcised stranger who

takes upon himself to avoid idolatry and "observe the residue of the commandments which were commanded to the sons of Noah, but is not circumcised nor baptised". A Gentile who embraced Judaism completely had to be both circumcised and baptised. Even so he had to carry out the requirements of Lev. 17:15.

"Or thou mayest sell it unto an alien" — An alien was a foreigner, not resident in the land.

"For thou art an holy people unto Yahweh thy God" — As a holy, people, made so by the Covenant of circumcision, Israelites were treated as "clean" in contrast to the Gentiles who were categorised as "unclean", and so the status of the nation was typified in the classification of animals, birds and fish into "clean" and "unclean" categories. As a "holy" people Israelites were separated from all others for the purpose Yahweh required of them.

"Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk" — That which is designed for life (a mother's milk) must not become the cause of death! How often does the re-

verse become the case! Parents, by their unwise over-indulgence of children, spoil them, and so project them along a course of life that leads to death. This is equivalent to "seething a kid in his mother's milk".

It is highly significant that the personal laws in the *Book of the Covenant* (see Exod. 24:7) terminates with this remarkable law which is thrice repeated (see Exod. 34:16; Deut. 14:21). It has been the over-indulgence of children that has been the sad cause of many lives being lost for the Kingdom, including Eli's sons (1 Sam. 3:13) and Adonijah (1 Kings 1:6). Let parents take heed. Modern child psychology which frowns upon any restraints being placed on children, and advocates granting them free expression, is an illustration of that which is prohibited by this law. See the warning of Prov. 19:18; 23:13-14; 29:15; 1 Tim. 3:4, and learn to apply it in family life. In this age of over-indulgence to children the Scriptural principles of family control tend to be overlooked even by those who should know better.

DISTINCTION IN MEATS — A SUMMARY

The basis of the obligation to observe the distinction in meats was the call to the Hebrews to be the peculiar people of Yahweh. It was something in their daily life to remind them of the Covenant which distinguished them from the nations of the world (Lev. 11:47; Acts 10:9-16). It was the spiritual lessons that had to be discerned and enforced, for as Paul taught in regard to meats for eating, "there is nothing unclean in itself (Rom. 14:14-20), and that "meat commendeth us not" (1 Cor. 8:8), for "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). Christ declared: "There is nothing from without a man, that entereth into him can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man" (Mark 7:15-18).

Therefore, it was not the meats that defiled, or were to be treated as abominations, but what was represented by them. Nevertheless, the law of love, even now, would lead a follower of Christ to respect the scruples that any might show towards those items that were listed by the Law as being defiling (see Rom. 14:13,21; 1 Cor. 8:13).

A summary of those things permitted or condemned are as follows:

QUADRUPEDS — Those permitted are animals that

divide the hoof and chew the cud representing sure-footedness and meditateness (cp. 1 Sam. 2:9; 2 Sam. 22:34; Psa. 18:33; Hab. 3:19).

FISH — Those with fins (guidance) and scales (defence — as scales are silvery in appearance, and silver is the metal of redemption, scales speak of divine protection); but no cruel, rapacious sharks, nor those of uncertain, cunning ways, wriggling their way along like eels. There are “fish” of all kinds in the sea of nations (cp. Matt. 13:47-48).

BIRDS — Carnivorous birds of prey manifesting unholy appetites are excluded. Such birds lift themselves high above the “earthy” but actually hide their true intentions (cp. Prov. 30:18-19).

CREEPING THINGS — Leapers are permitted. They use the earth only for essentials and for locomotion to rise above it. Though related to the earth, they are not “of the earth earthy.” The land-bound are excluded. In them the earthiness, ugliness, and repulsiveness of sin are clearly indicated.

CLEANSING THE UNCLEAN — The vision given to Peter revealed that previously “unclean” Gentiles are “cleansed” by accepting the Gospel. What is accomplished in that way on a personal basis, will be accomplished nationally in the Age to come. Hence Isaiah prophesies that “the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid” (Isa. 11:6). Hence previously “clean” and “unclean” animals will associate together, as Israel and the Gentiles will under the rule of Christ. But no longer will the “lion” and the “leopard” nations manifest their cruel, carnivorous ways, but shall be tamed by the Lord of all the earth.

Tithing For Divine Service — vv. 22-27

The regulations for tithing set down in these verses are clear and uncomplicated. Each year the increase of seed had to be tithed, and the firstlings of the herds and flocks taken to the place of the sanctuary. If it were too far from the home of the Israelite he was permitted to sell the produce and the animals and purchase what he desired at the sanctuary. See summary of tithing on p. 173.

VERSE 22

“Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year” — On tithing see the note on Deut. 12:17-19. The adjective *truly* indi-

cates that the tithing was left to the conscience of the Israelite. He knew the amount he should bring. If he failed to do so he was deemed guilty of “robbing Yahweh” Who had the ability to know when this was done and of punishing accordingly (Mal. 3:9). Figuratively, tithing anticipated the judgment of the Age to come. In that regard “the field represented the world” and the tithes constituted that “good seed” representative of “the children of the kingdom” (Matt. 13:38), selected from all other as being particularly given to Yahweh.

VERSE 23

“And thou shalt eat before Yahweh thy God, in the place which He shall choose to

put His name there” — See the Summary of tithing on p. 173. These instructions are a variation of those found in Num. 18:24-28, which provided for the wilderness journey. In the Land there would be a superabundance of increase providing ample food for the Levites as required by the command of Num. 18, as well as for the feast here indicated, and for the special arrangements for the third year tithing (vv. 28-29). Therefore, the tithe here levied appears to have been a second tithe providing for the expenses of appearing before Yahweh at the times specified, and to be shared with the Levites and the poor. Though an annual tithe, it accumulated for every third year (vv. 28-29).

The place chosen of Yahweh for this purpose was first Shiloh, and later Jerusalem (Psa. 132:13-14). It was to Shiloh that Elkanah took his wives Peninah and Hannah together with his family for an unspecified feast before Yahweh (1 Sam. 1:1-3).

“The tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks” — The purpose of this tithe, as distinct from the tithe specifically gathered in for the Levites was to celebrate the goodness of Yahweh in a special feast. See *Summary of Tithing* p. 173. The word here rendered “wine” is *tyrosh* and is derived from a root signifying to *expel*, therefore implying new wine as just squeezed out, or what we would term grape juice. It is frequently used in the expression “corn and wine” to signify prosperity (Gen. 27:8; Deut. 7:13; 11:14 etc.).

“That thou mayest learn to fear Yahweh thy God always” — This is the Biblical term for being filled with the sense of dependence upon God. That was the purpose of commanding that this second tithe be eaten in the Holy City. It would publicly acknowledge that the year’s produce was the bounty of Yahweh. Furthermore, as the man and his household would not likely consume the whole of the tithe, he would be compelled to give part away in charity. By that means the feast expressed his gratitude to God for the abundance he had received, and which he now shared in thoughtfulness for others less fortunate than he.

VERSE 24

“And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the

place be too far from thee, which Yahweh thy God shall choose to set His name there, when Yahweh thy God hath blessed thee” — As the Promised Land extended from the River Euphrates to the River of Egypt it could be only with extreme difficulty and great loss of time that the tithe of produce, or the firstlings of herds or flocks could be transported to Shiloh or Jerusalem, so that some concession was necessary.

VERSE 25

“Then thou shalt turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which Yahweh thy God shall choose” — Compare this concession with that granted in Deut. 12:21. These amendments to the Law were made necessary by the change of conditions in the Land. Similarly, though the Law of Moses will be reimposed as a guidance to people in the Millennium (see Mal. 4:4), it will be amended to apply to the changed conditions of the worldwide worship to be set up. Ezekiel, in his Temple prophecy, reveals some of the changes to be made at that time.

VERSE 26

“And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth” — The “soul” was considered as the seat of emotion and appetite by the Hebrew; and in this feast of gratitude the Israelite was permitted to gratify it in whatever way he pleased. In contrast to v. 23, the word for “wine” in this place is *yayin* from a root signifying to *effervescent* i.e. to ferment, and, therefore, wine as matured. The word “strong drink” is from the Hebrew *az shatah* which expresses the potency of the liquor. Both wine and strong drink were permitted in moderation under the Law, though there are warnings against over-indulgence (see Prov. 23:30; 25:31). However the use of both was prohibited the priests when officiating (Lev. 10:9), or Nazarites during the period of their vow (Num. 6:3-4).

“And thou shalt eat there before Yahweh thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household” — As the Feast of Ingathering was decreed as a time of rejoicing this time of feasting could synchroise with that festival (Lev. 23:40). In

the abundant tithes which tokened the rich harvest, the Israelite and his family had evidence of the goodness of God toward them.

VERSE 27

"And the Levite that is within thy gates" — Levites were stationed throughout the land to assist the people in their worship of Yahweh. As they had no individual inheritance, Israelites of other tribes were expected to share their abundance with those Levites stationed within their city. See Deut. 12:19.

"Thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee" — The Levites were given certain cities with their suburbs, or waste land, but not a specific section of the land like the other tribes. They were scattered throughout the Land of Israel illustrating the parable of "strangers and pilgrims in the land" (see Num. 18:20). As such they were a constant reminder to Israel that the nation as then established, was only a temporary arrangement, and not the ultimate purpose of Yahweh. That required the coming of the Messiah, and the establishment on earth of Yahweh's rule in its fulness.

The Tithe of Alms or Charity — vv. 28-29

The third year was appointed as the year of tithing for which special arrangements were made. See Summary on Tithing p. 173.

VERSE 28

"At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up, within thy gates" — Every third year the whole tithe of the year's produce was to be set apart for use in their towns as described in the next verse. Rotherham renders "all the tithe" as *both* the first and the second tithe (see summary p. 173). On this occasion it was not to be taken to the sanctuary, but stored up locally. For reference to the third year tithing, see Deut. 26:12; Amos 4:4.

The variation in tithing as laid down here, in contrast with that set forth in Numbers 18, was due to the changed circumstances of Israel. In the wilderness the tithes were for the exclusive use of the Levites, but as no harvesting of crops took place there, they were limited to cattle as Num. 18:27-30 implies (note the comment

"as though it were the corn of the threshing floor"). In the restricted conditions of the desert, the Levites would require all their portion of increase; but in the Land of Plenty there would be abundance for all (Deut. 26:1,9), so that a feast could take place as now commanded, in which the stranger and the needy could be invited to share (Deut. 26:12). On this occasion each third year the festival was preceded by a special ceremony in which the Israelite, by a set speech recorded in Deut. 26:12-15, gave expression to the goodness of God in the bounty received, and his own position of privilege in his relationship with Yahweh.

VERSE 29

"And the Levite (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee)" — The Levite participated in this feast of the third year.

"And the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied" — The Israelite had to give special care and help to those in need, and the people were warned against avoiding this responsibility (Deut. 24:17). In the third and sixth years of the Sabbatical period, instead of the Second Tithe (or its equivalent) being consumed in Jerusalem it was retained at home to be partly used at the feast previously described, and the balance distributed among the needy. This year was called *The Year of Tithing* (Deut. 26:12). By this command hospitality for the stranger and care for the unfortunate were commanded (Deut. 16:11,14; 24:19-21; 26:12-13), as well as for those who labour in the Word, as did the Levites. See the principle of this command advocated by the Lord (Luke 14:12). What Israel did by command, saints are expected to do voluntarily (See Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8; Heb. 13:2; James 1:27; 1 Pet. 4:9). A true Israelite did this in faith, recognising that as Yahweh had extended Himself to help him when he was unable to help himself, it was his duty to manifest this Divine characteristic to those less fortunate than he. See Exod. 22:21-24; Lev. 19:34; Job 31:16-22.

"That Yahweh thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest" — If we obey Yahweh's commands, we will never lack His blessing. See Deut. 15:10; 24:19; Psa. 41:1; Prov. 14:21; 19:1; 22:9; Mal. 3:10; Luke 6:38.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE SABBATICAL YEAR

The chapter divides into four parts: 1 — The provision of a Sabbatical Year as a Year of Release for debtors; 2 — The attitude to be adopted towards those in need as the Year of Release approaches; 3 — The liberty to be granted slaves after six years of labour; 4 — The setting apart of the firstlings of the herd and flock unto Yahweh. The Chapter emphasises the obligation of Israelites to assist their brethren in need. Those in prosperity are called upon to recognise that their abundance comes from God's blessing, and as His children, they are to manifest that family characteristic by acts of kindness to others in need. The key word of the chapter is Release (v. 1); and the way in which this should be shown to others is outlined in vv. 7,8,10. The basis of this action is expressed in v. 6: "Yahweh thy God blesseth thee". The Year of Release typifies the Grace of the Gospel in which is proclaimed the "acceptable year of Yahweh" (Luke 4:19), through which release from "debts" is granted, if the same measure of forgiveness is extended to others.

A Sabbatical Year of Release For Debtors — vv. 1-6

The word "release" means to remit a debt, as here, or to let ground lie fallow, as in Exod. 23:11, both of which are commanded for the seventh year. The remission of debts on this occasion is limited to fellow Israelites, both neighbour and brother. The privilege is not extended to foreigners (v. 3). The debts incurred, and which are to be forgiven, relate to conditions of poverty experienced in a rural community; they do not apply to a commercial nation where credit is a basic part of the economy, and is extended for business purposes. In fact, under conditions then prevailing, poverty should not have been experienced by any (v. 4). It would come only through disobedience to God. This fact links this provision for forgiveness with Christ's prayer: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12).

VERSE 1

"At the end of" — This is a Hebraism

implying in the 7th year. Thus the expression "in the seventh year" (v. 12) is rendered "at the end of seven years" in Jer. 34:14. The provisions laid down for this year were to continue until its end.

"Every seven years" — The seventh year being the covenant year.

"Thou shalt make a release" — The Hebrew *shemittah* signifies to let drop or lapse. In this place it means to remit a debt, but in Exod. 23:11 it is used in regard to the ground which is to lie fallow in the seventh year. The Sabbatical year brought rest to the land which was not sown nor reaped, and the produce of which became the common property of all (Lev. 25:2-7), reminding the Israelite that the increase he received came not from his personal labour merely, but was a blessing from "the Giver of every good and perfect gift" (James 1:17). In return for the abundance God promised, the Israelite was to manifest consideration and kindness to the poor as Yahweh had to him in Egypt (Deut. 24:19-22); and as he had been for-

given much by God, he was to waive all debts owing to him for the time being (Deut. 15:1-2). At the same time, lending to the poor must not be relaxed because the seventh year was approaching, for Yahweh Who heard Israel's cry in Egypt would hearken to the voice of the poor, and punish the hard-hearted (vv. 7-10). The lending to which the Law took heed was that to those in extreme want through adverse personal circumstances. It did not relate to loans for business purposes, commercial interests, purchase of property and so forth (see Deut. 15:4; Exod. 22:25; Lev. 25:35-38; Deut. 23:19-20). In addition, Hebrew slaves were to be released, and liberally helped (Deut. 15:12-18) every seventh year, though this did not necessarily synchronise with the Sabbatical Year.

VERSE 2

"And this is the manner of the release" — Hebrew *shemittah*. See above. The word "manner" is from *dabar*, signifying matter of teaching. The Oxford Gesenius renders *shemittah* as "a letting drop of exactions, a (temporary) remission". From this it is claimed that debts were to be treated as the land, and no exactions or payments made for twelve months; in fact a moratorium for one year on the money owing. From this, many believe that instead of the debts being completely cancelled on the seventh year, they were merely held in obedience. However, Jewish interpreters understand it as a literal discharge of the debt; and that seems to be the real intent of the command.

"Every creditor" — The Hebrew expression signifies *Lord of a Loan*, implying the dominant status of a creditor, and the subjection to which debts reduce one who is brought under the power of them.

"That lendeth ought unto his neighbour" — The word "neighbour" is from the Hebrew *raia* and denotes an associate, thus a fellow-Israelite. The law of Release, therefore, was limited to Israelites (Cp. v. 3). However, Israelites were strongly discouraged from borrowing except for urgent, personal needs. The nation was established upon a rural basis; the land was divided by Yahweh to each family group; the blessing of God was promised in regard to the increase thereof. Therefore, no poverty would have been experienced, except by those who failed to heed His commands, and lacked the Divine blessing. Under normal cir-

cumstances, therefore, there would be no need to borrow. These facts should be clearly kept in mind in regard to the provisions of this Sabbatical year.

"Shall release it" — The word *shamat* signifies to let drop or lapse (see Exod. 23:11; Jer. 17:4). In regard to the land, it denoted to lie fallow; in regard to debts, to be remitted.

"He shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother" — The debt of any Israelite was to be remitted. See Isa. 58:6, and contrast with Neh. 5:7-11. See present application: Matt. 6:12,14,15; 18:25-35; Luke 6:34-38; 7:42. The main thought behind the provision, therefore, is the forgiveness of sins in a practical manner as an extension of the forgiveness one expects from God. In that regard, the limitation of this law to either a neighbour (see note above), or a brother, is significant. It means that if any wish to profit by its provisions they had to be in covenant-relationship with Yahweh. That also, is a necessary prerequisite for forgiveness of sins in Christ.

"Because it is called Yahweh's release" — Rotherham renders this: "Because there hath been proclaimed a release unto Yahweh" — Young implies that the initiative should come from the debtor: "all may avail themselves of it". It is given the title of *Yahweh's Release* because:

- * He extends Himself to relieve the poor. He heareth such (Psa. 69:23), and desires His people to manifest His characteristic in that regard.

- * He desires all to recognise their real poverty as being in need of Yahweh's forgiveness, whatever their material prosperity may be.

- * He desires His people to learn mercy and have compassion on the poor and needy — vv. 7-11; Matt. 5:44-48; Heb. 5:2 recognising their own spiritual poverty, and the debt they owe to God.

- * He desires His people to reciprocate His goodness and to become the channel through which flows Divine blessings to others. Because of that they were not only to forgive debts, but also to release slaves — vv. 12-15.

- * The land had rest in the seventh year, bountiful harvests being provided for that purpose, pointing forward to the rest to come — Heb. 4:11.

- * The Law reminded the people that their prosperity came from Yahweh, and that in gratitude thereof they should show reciprocal kindness to their fellowmen on

the basis of 1 John 4:20. It also underlined the fact that if they wanted forgiveness of their shortcomings from God they must be prepared to forgive the debts their fellowmen owe them; this, indeed being the basis of the covenant of Grace — and hence appropriate in relation to the seventh year.

VERSE 3

"Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again" — The Hebrew word for foreigner is *nokri*, a stranger of another nation, having no internal social relation to Israel. The word is used as distinct from *ger*, the foreign client, or settler in Israel. See Deut. 14:21 where the term *ger* is used. The foreigner, having no covenant relationship with Yahweh, could not claim the special remissions and privileges of the Sabbatical year. He did not have to remit his labour that year, and therefore could earn an income, and also was exonerated from liability to discharge a debt. Being in a similar relationship to those who have not accepted Christ today, the forgiveness of sins available in the Lord, was not open to him. The fact that foreigners were excluded from the benefits of the Law might encourage them to become converts to Yahweh, and accept His way through the covenant of Moses — as it was open for them to do.

"But that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release" — See note on the word "release" (v. 2).

VERSE 4

"Save when there shall be no poor among you" — The R.V. renders this: "Howbeit there shall be no poor with thee. . ." This statement describes what would be the case if Israelites kept the Law; therefore the evidence of poverty indicated violation of the Law.

"For Yahweh shall greatly bless thee in the land which Yahweh giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it" — The R.V. places these words in parenthesis, making the blessing conditional upon the obedience of the people. Specific promises of help were given by God to the people if they proved obedience (Deut. 28:1-14). When the contrary occurred the blessing was withdrawn (cp. Ruth 1:6).

VERSE 5

"Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of Yahweh thy God to observe to

do all these commandments which I command thee this day" — The R.V. places the "If" at the beginning of the sentence, emphasising the conditions of blessing: "If only thou diligently hearken . . ." thus linking the statement with the "you" of v. 4. Blessing was promised the people conditional upon their observance of the Law. See Lev. 26:3-14; Deut. 4:9; 11:13-15; 28:1-14; Psa. 19:11.

VERSE 6

"For Yahweh thy God blesseth thee, as He promised thee" — Yahweh promised to bless the people, conditionally upon them obeying the Law as stated in the previous verses. If they proved obedient, the blessing would be of such an extent that they would not experience any poverty.

"And thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow" — The literal Hebrew is *thou shalt take, but shalt not give pledges*. The promise is that of a large foreign commerce, selling goods to other nations profitably on credit. See also Deut. 28:12,42.

"And thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee" — This promise was partly fulfilled under David and Solomon. See also Deut. 28:13.

There Must Be No Reduction of Lending as The Year of Release Approaches — vv. 7-11

Moses warns against any attempt on the part of the thoughtless to forestall the effects of the Year of Release by refusing assistance as the time approaches. A refusal to help because it is at hand is described as a "wicked thought of the heart" (v. 9).

VERSE 7

"If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in the land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee" — The affluence Israel enjoyed came from God. This imposed a responsibility to share the benefits received with their needy brethren. This is described as "lending unto Yahweh" Who has promised to repay with interest (Prov. 19:17).

"Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand upon thy poor brother" — Consider the exhortation of Prov. 21:13; James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17.

VERSE 8

"But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him suffi-

cient for his need in that which he wanteth" — To open the hand wide is to manifest open-hearted generosity. See Psa. 37:26; 112:5; Prov. 19:17; Matt. 5:42; Luke 6:34-36. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that the reference is to needs, not wants. A person's wants are more than his needs, and the former must not be mistaken for the latter. The word "need" is from a Hebrew root signifying to lack. The reference is to a lack of the essentials of life. Even the word "wanteth" in this verse, in its Hebrew form, denotes a need rather than a want. Yahweh has promised to supply our needs, but not necessarily our wants. In this age of greed and affluence, wants are far in excess of needs. See Psa. 37:25.

VERSE 9

"Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart" — The word "beware" is from the Hebrew *shamar*, to hedge about; therefore, to be on guard with respect to yourself. The word "wicked" is *belial*, signifying *worthlessness*; and "thought" is *dabar*, *word*. The idea is that out of an empty, worthless heart, a person might reason with himself.

"Saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand" — This is the statement that the empty, worthless heart might utter to evade the commandments of God. And every heart is worthless until filled with the word of God.

"And thy eye be evil against thy poor brother" — The idea is that the eye becomes cruel or grudging (see Deut. 28:54,56), the opposite of tender or compassionate.

"And thou givest him nought; and he cry unto Yahweh against thee, and it be sin unto thee" — Under the circumstances that which may be considered as prudence to man, could well become a sin in the eyes of Yahweh. Note the indictment of Christ against those who have refused to help when it has been in their power to do so (Matt. 25:41-42). In refusing to help the poor brother, a follower of the Lord may well be treated as though he has refused Christ.

VERSE 10

"Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him" — See the application of this principle — Luke 6:34-35; Acts 20:35; Rom. 12:8; 1 Tim. 6:18-19. "God loveth a

cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:5-7).

"That for this thing Yahweh thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto" — See Deut. 14:29; 15:4. Yahweh promised a reciprocal blessing for those who sacrificed self-interest to help their needy brethren.

VERSE 11

"For the poor shall never cease out of the land" — See Christ's use of this warning — Matt. 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12:8. Mary had been extravagant in showing her love of her Lord by the purchase and use of the jar of ointment, and had earned the rebuke of the covetous Judas and the other Apostles for "wasting" money on a useless act — as they interpreted it. Judas declared that the ointment thus expended could have been sold and given to the poor — not that he cared for the poor. The Lord responded with the statement that opportunity to relieve the poor was ever present, but not the opportunity to manifest love to him. In other words, mere acts of charity do not compensate for serving Christ in the way he approves. Moses' words in this verse imply that some in Israel would fail to perfectly observe the Law, and thus would fall short of the promised blessing contingent upon obedience.

"Therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land" — The word "poor" in this place is different to that used elsewhere in this chapter, and denotes one who is depressed and afflicted by circumstances. The word indicates the mental condition of the one concerned, doubtless caused by his lack.

Slaves To Be Freed And Helped — vv. 12-18

Slavery was a part of the contemporary circumstances, but the Mosaic Law modified its harshness, and provided for its termination on generous terms. These verses are an amplification of Exod. 21:1-6.

VERSE 12

"And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee" — The causes of slavery were mainly those of poverty or crime. A man who could not pay the dowry of a bride might serve for her a term of years, as did Jacob (Gen. 29:18); a father might sell his children either through poverty, or desire to con-

nect his house with that of an influential neighbour (Exod. 21:7); the insolvent debtor could be sold to pay his debts (2 Kings 4:1; Neh. 5:5,8); a man through want might be forced to sell himself (Lev. 25:39); a thief might be sold to make good what he has stolen (Exod. 22:2). However, slave-trading by stealing and selling a person was punishable by death (Exod. 21:16). Nevertheless contrast to other nations, conditions of slaves in Israel were generally good. Slaves were offered all the benefits of religion (Deut. 5:14-15; 12:18; 16:11), even though they were considered as the property of their masters (Exod. 21:20-21,32). The Law guarded against excessive abuse (Exod. 21:20,26), and it was to benefit of the master to care for those under his control (See Eph. 6:9).

"And serve thee six years" — The number of years was chosen because of its numerical significance. Six is the number of flesh, and typically represents the period of six thousand years, leading to the Millennium.

"Then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee" — Though this is here recorded on the background of instructions regarding the Sabbatical Year, in fact it does not relate to that year, but the seventh year of service on the part of the slave (See Exod. 21:2-6). The seventh year typified the Millennium. In accordance with Scripture, and in conformity with the type, mankind is in a state of servitude to the slave-owner styled by the Apostle: Sin (Rom. 6:16); but in Christ there is a change of ownership, and freedom from Sin (Rom. 6:14,17-18). Full and complete liberty, however, will be granted them at the seventh Millennium from when Sin commenced its domination at Creation: "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). This provision under the Gospel of Grace was foreshadowed in the Law by its instructions relating to slavery.

"Thou shalt let him go free from thee" — The complete liberty from Sin's domination will be when the accepted are granted a change of nature and eternal life at Christ's coming and judgment.

VERSE 13

"And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty" — This is a most humane and merciful addition to the Law as stated in Exod. 21:2-11. A faithful slave makes nothing for himself whilst helping to enrich his master, and it is according to the principle

of justice that at the conclusion of his servitude, the latter should liberally respond. Note the rebuke administered to Laban because of his parsimonious attitude (Gen. 31:42). See the manner in which Yahweh compelled the Egyptians to liberally reward their Israelitish slaves when they released them (Exod. 3:21). Because they had experienced such treatment, Israelites were commanded to manifest similar consideration for their fellow-Israelites who should be treated as Yahweh's bond-servants (Lev. 25:42-44). See the principle extended: Prov. 3:27-28; Jer. 22:13; Mal. 3:5; Col. 4:1. The command of the verse before us is an extension of that previously stated in Exod. 21:2-11, but not a contradiction of it. Moses, here, is expressing the spirit by which that previously commanded should be observed.

VERSE 14

"Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress" — The word "furnish" in the Hebrew literally signifies to *lay on the neck*, that is adorn the neck of the liberated slave with gifts. The manifestation of liberality is a principle also set forth by the Lord (see Luke 6:38). The discharged slave would be given gifts of the herd, grain and winepress sufficient to make him independent.

"Of that wherewith Yahweh thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him" — This is the first of three reasons for the master to so treat the liberated slave, because he, himself, had been generously treated by Yahweh. The other two reasons in this threefold motive is expressed in verses 15,18.

VERSE 15

"And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondsman in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing today" — This is the second reason for the command. Yahweh had freed Israel as a nation, and the same consideration should be extended to fellow-Israelites.

VERSE 16

"And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee;" — A bond servant may be so well treated by his master that he has no desire for liberation. This was the case

with the Lord Jesus. He is described as the bond servant of Yahweh; but so loved his Lord and his house that he elected to remain in servitude for ever. Hence, today, he continues to labour for the members of "his Father's house" (John 14:2-4). See Exod. 21:5-6.

VERSE 17

"Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through the ear to the door" — The word for "aul" is *martsea* from a root to pierce. The symbology of the act proclaimed that the servant, or slave, had voluntarily agreed to serve that house forever, and therefore his ear was permanently opened to all that was required of him in relation to it. The type is used of the Lord Jesus. In a Messianic Psalm (Psa. 40:6-8), prophetically setting forth the principles of Christ's sacrifice, the Spirit is represented as saying:

"Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire;

Mine ears hast Thou opened;

Burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required.

Then said I, Lo, I come;

In the volume of the book it is written of me

I delight to do Thy will, O my God:

Yea, Thy law is within my heart."

These words are cited in Hebrews 10:5-8 and applied to the Lord. The statement: "Mine ears hast Thou opened," is rendered by the R. V. as "Mine ear hast Thou pierced." Pierced ears, or "dugged ears" (see A. V. mg) are ears open to receive the instruction and teaching of God, and because of this, become part of "a body prepared" to do the will of the Father. Hence the explanatory rendering of Heb. 10:5. The Lord's willingness to serve the Father because of his great love for both Him and his bride is thus prophetically expressed in the ordinance concerning willing slaves provided for in the Law. Here, again, the Law becomes a shadow "of good things to come" (Heb. 10:1).

"And he shall be thy servant for ever"

— When a person finds pleasure in his labour, he does not want release from it, no matter how exacting or how difficult it might be. His joy is in the successful completion of it, and in the pride of work well done. Most of the industrial strife today stems from complete boredom in work, and the failure to find pleasure in labour. What does the Psalm say? "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within

my heart" (Psa. 40:8). It was this that made the Lord's offering so acceptable, for as the Psalm implies, Yahweh does not desire "sacrifice and offering" in the absence of such an attitude; He desires sacrifice, when offered in the right spirit: salted with the offerer's delight in giving that in which God takes pleasure. Love of God will motivate an offerer to render such a service.

How could the servant serve his master for ever? It was a physical impossibility, for in the course of nature both would die. But what of those who have been "bought with a price," and constitute "slaves of righteousness?" For how long will their service last? For ever! So Paul concludes "The wages of sin (our previous slave-owner — see v. 17) is death; but the gift of God (the gracious gift that He extends to those servants who love Him, and whom He loves in return) is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

"And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise" — In the servant there is foreshadowed Christ, and in the maidservant, the Ecclesia.

VERSE 18

"It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee" — The command is not to begrudge the slave his liberty (cp v. 10). Even though it may have cost something to acquire the slave, the owner should recall that Yahweh freely liberated the nation from Egypt, as, in the case of believers, He has paid the cost of their liberty with the blood of the Lord (Gal. 5:1).

"For he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years" — A hired servant would expect to work only certain hours and would demand a stipulated pay. Not so the bondsman.

"And Yahweh thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest" — If the slaves owners show liberality to their slaves, they are promised a reciprocal liberality from heaven (Mal. 1:6). See also Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1.

Firstling Males of Flocks and Herds To Be Sanctified To Yahweh — vv. 19-23

The firstborn males of the flocks and herds must be set aside for Yahweh, to be used according to His commandment. There must be no tampering with the terms of sanctification by using the firstborn bullock in the work of the farm nor by the taking the wool of the firstborn sheep for use

of the household. However, if there be any blemish in the animals, they could be used as ordinary livestock, even as common meat. This provision of the Law taught the people that they were to consecrate only the best to Yahweh, and to do it wholeheartedly.

VERSE 19

"All the firstling males that come of thy herd and of thy flock, thou shalt sanctify unto Yahweh thy God" — The use of "sanctify" in this relationship illustrates the meaning of the word. A sanctified person is not necessarily a righteous one, but one who is separated for Divine use. Of course, the firstborn of the herd and flock represented Israel as the firstborn nation unto Yahweh (Exod. 4:22), and the command taught that they should give themselves to God in consecrated service even unto life itself. The lesson reaches down to these times, for Christ's disciples are treated as Yahweh's "firstborn" (Heb. 12:23; James 1:18; Rev. 14:4).

"Thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock, nor shear the firstling of thy sheep" — See introductory note above.

VERSE 20

"Thou shalt eat it before Yahweh thy God year by year in the place which Yahweh shall choose, thou and thy household" — This doubtless was done at one of the three great festivals (see Deut. 12:5-7,17); perhaps at the Passover, hence its position here (see Deut. 16:1). The eating was sacrificial in intent.

VERSE 21

"And if there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill

blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto Yahweh thy God" — See Lev. 22:20; Deut. 17:1; Mal. 1:7-8. Even the firstborn were excluded if any blemish were found. That, also, will be the fate of the antitypical firstborns if blemish is discovered in them. Those accepted, however, are described as being "without fault" (Rev. 14:5). Though conscious of failings they have sought the forgiveness of "him that is able to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). Obviously an inspection was made of the firstlings of the flock and herd to make sure they were fit for the sacrificial feast; and at the Judgment Seat of Christ a similar inspection for a like purpose will be conducted in regard to his firstborns from the nations.

VERSE 22

"Thou shalt eat it within thy gates: the unclean and the clean person shall eat it alike, as the roebuck, and as the hart" — The "roebuck" is the gazelle and the word is rendered as such in the R. V. Both it and the hart, or deer, were "clean" animals, but were not used in sacrifice as were domesticated cattle and sheep. If a blemish were found on the firstlings, they were accounted unfit for sacrificial use and derated to animals killed for meat. See note on Deut. 12:15.

VERSE 23

"Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof; thou shalt pour it upon the ground as water" — See note Deut. 12:23-24. See also Lev. 3:17; 7:26; 17:10-14; Ct. Ezek. 33:25. The blood was poured out "as water" because the expression denotes an action of deterioration (Gen. 49:4).

The Sabbatical Year Called The Year of Release Deut. 15:2

• It was the year of forbearance for debts contracted, the type of "the acceptable year of Yahweh" (Isa. 61:2; Luke 4:19; Cp. 2 Cor. 5:19; 6:20; Matt. 6:12). Of freedom from servitude (the seventh year of service being the personal sabbatical year for all slaves) Rom. 6:18.

• As a moral exercise it was a check on human greed. Debts were remitted, and the ground left untilled. The poor had to be helped in recognition of help the creditor had received from

Yahweh and the dependence of all on Yahweh's bounty Cp. Matt. 6:12; 25:31-46; James 2:5-9,16-17; 5:1-4; 1 John 3:17.

- It was the year of personal release, for slaves were liberated, as well as debts cancelled. It was a reminder to all Israelites that "they were not their own for they were bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

- The land was left fallow, a reminder that all increase came from Yahweh, and that prosperity was dependent upon Him. The labourer in the field learnt that he was a "labourer together with God" (1 Cor. 3:8-9).

- The firstborn were reserved for God, to be delivered up to Him in sacrifice, a witness to the status of the nation, as firstborn among all nations to Him (Exod. 4:22; See Heb. 12:23; James 1:18; Rev. 14:4).

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

ATTITUDE TOWARDS YAHWEH'S APPOINTED TIMES

Attendance at three national Festivals is obligatory upon Israelites (vv. 1-17). The festivals are the Passover typifying Deliverance; Pentecost commemorating the giving of the Law and the Firstfruits; and Tabernacles, pointing forward to the full and final ingathering. The chapter concludes with instructions for the appointment of Judges and Offices (vv. 18-20), and listing one of the worst crimes (vv. 21-22). In describing the Festivals, the chapter omits the days of convocation at the conclusion of Pentecost and Tabernacles, as given in Leviticus 23 (see vv. 3,7,8,21,24,27,35,36), for the reason that it does not aim to give a list of all the special days, but only of the three main obligatory festivals. Therefore, special days, such as the Day of Atonement, the New Year, and the Days of Convocation are omitted.

The Passover To Be Observed — vv. 1-8

Brief instructions are given regarding the observance of the Passover. For thirty-eight years it had been neglected (cp Josh. 5:8-9), but from now on it must be strictly kept.

VERSE 1

"Observe the month of Abib" — The word *Abib* signifies *Green ears of corn*, suggesting the appearance of new life, i.e. a resurrection. The word is rendered in the *ear* in Exod. 9:31, relating to the barley

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harvest which would then be ripe (Lev. 23:10). According to *The Companion Bible* the word is Egyptian in origin and is not used in the Bible after this place. Instead, the word "Nisan" appears.

"And keep the Passover unto Yahweh thy God" — Instructions concerning the original Passover are given in Exodus 12. The etymology of the word is very significant. It is *pesach* in the Hebrew. It occurs in the Old Testament 56 times, forty-nine of which relate to the festival or offering of Passover, and therefore provides no indication of the proper significance of the word. It is generally thought that it signifies the action of the angel of death in *passing over* the houses of the Israelites with their blood spattered door-posts and lintels. Therefore, it is usually related to the next verse where Yahweh states: "For I will *pass through* the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn." But the Hebrew verb of that verse bears no relationship to the noun before us. Its root is derived from the verb *pasach* rendered *pass over* in v. 13, but actually having the meaning of *to spare*. It is rendered in the Septuagint as *protect* in the sense of overshadowing.

The use of the word elsewhere in Scripture indicates that its true meaning is *to hover over, stay over, protect, abide over*. Therefore instead of "pass over," it would be more correct to render as "remain over." In I Kings 18:21 the word is rendered *halt* and in v. 26 as *leaped*. The references are to the people of Israel who *halted, wavered, or hovered* between two opinions, and to the priests of Baal who *hovered* anxiously over their altar, not "leaped upon" it as rendered in the AV. The word occurs again in 2 Sam. 4:4 which records how that Mephibosheth fell, "and became lame." In fact, he began to limp, and the swaying motion that followed his fall suggested the wavering of a bird over its young. Hence the use of *pasach* in this place.

In Isaiah 31:5 the word occurs again, and in a most interesting and significant way. The prophet declared: "As birds flying, so will Yahweh of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it; and *passing over* He will preserve it." But, in fact, Yahweh did not pass over Jerusalem; He *hovered over* it and so protected it, thus justifying the use of the word *protect* by the Septuagint in Exod. 12:13.

The use of the term by Isaiah is

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significant in view of the statement of the Lord on the eve of Passover, recorded in Matt. 23:37-39: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem. . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The anxious hovering of the mother bird over her chickens is illustrative of the protection afforded by the first Passover.

If we use the term *hover over to protect* in place of "pass over," the real idea will become apparent. Thus:

"When I see the blood, I will *hover over to protect you*, and the plague shall not be upon you" (Exod. 12:13).

"When He seeth the blood. . . Yahweh will *hover over* the door to protect you, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses" (Exod. 12:23).

"Yahweh *hovered over to protect* the houses of the children of Israel" (Exod. 12:27).

The angel did not pass over the houses of the Israelites when he saw the blood, but *hovered over* to protect them. He remained there with them, whilst the angel of death passed over to destroy the firstborn of Egypt. A.H. Broughton describes it as the Feast of the Hover-over, or Abiding Presence, and writes: "That is a true translation: the 'Feast of the Passover' is not. When God saw the blood on the doorposts He did not, as the English Bibles say, pass over the door, He *hovered over* it. The Feast itself is not that of a Pass-over but that of a Hover-over."

The Passover as a festival, therefore, celebrated the invisible but real presence of Yahweh, hovering over His people at a time of extreme peril. It witnessed to the Abiding Presence of Yahweh as provided in the lamb and all that it signifies. It does so also in the provision of our Passover Lamb each Sunday Morning. The Abiding Presence of Yahweh and His son hovers over the celebration of it, and though unseen their presence is nevertheless real and powerful to save.

A second Passover was provided for those who could not celebrate the first Passover. See details in Num. 9:9-14.

"For in the month of Abib Yahweh thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by

night" — The Israelites were delivered by night (Exod. 12:31). Figuratively, it is night-time for disciples of the Lord, so long as he is absent (John 9:4). It is significant that in the parable of the Lord's coming that it was at "midnight" that the cry regarding his coming was heard (Matt. 25:6).

VERSE 2

"Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto Yahweh thy God" — The Passover in Egypt prefigures that appointed by the Lord (Matt. 26:2,17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:8). However, a new meaning is given to that instituted by Christ (Luke 22:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:7), and therefore a careful distinction is preserved between the "Jews' Passover" (John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55), and his.

"Of the flock and the herd" — The Lamb was the Paschal sacrifice (Exod. 12:3), that being all that was required for the first occasion it was celebrated. Subsequently, additional offerings were required (Num. 28:19; 2 Chron. 35:7,13).

"In the place which Yahweh shall choose to place His name there" — In the re-introduction of the Passover, when Israel came to the Promised Land (Josh. 5:10-11), it was required that the Lamb be slain before the Sanctuary, wherever it was established (Shiloh, Nob, Jerusalem), and not in the individual homes of the Israelites as on the first occasion. Ultimately, Jerusalem became the centre where this was done, as it will be in the Age to come (Psa. 132:13-14; Zech. 14:16).

VERSE 3

"Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou comest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste" — Because of the haste with which they departed from Egypt, the Israelites baked unleavened bread (See Exod. 12:39). Therefore, because it was produced in circumstances of trial and pressure, unleavened bread is called *The Bread of Affliction*. It figuratively represented the exclusion of the lusts of the flesh in overcoming sin. See 1 Kings 22:27; Psa. 102:9; 127:2; 1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Thess. 1:6.

"That thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life" — The Israelites were then compelled to bake unleavened bread because the urgency of de-

parture did not permit them time to produce leavened bread. Therefore it not only represented the putting away of sin (leaven), but the urgency which should attach to so doing. If the Israelites had delayed in their departure to make that which is more palatable to the flesh, they would have been slain by the Egyptians. So, in this case, leaven (sin) was connected with death. These things Israelites were expected to recall in their celebrations (see Deut. 15:15; Psa. 111:4), so that the keeping of the festivals was not to be mere formalism devoid of thought upon, or application of, the principles involved. Similarly, disciples, today, are expected to recall their present position of privilege in comparison with their previous hopeless state (Eph. 2:11-12).

VERSE 4

"And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days"

— The Hebrew does not have "bread" only leaven, i.e. yeast, and this is how it is rendered by Rotherham and in the Revised Version. The use of leaven, or yeast, therefore, was strictly prohibited in preparation of bread for the Passover. Indeed, in view of the prohibition of leaven itself, a careful search of Israelitish homes was made in order to remove the slightest amount of the offending substance. Typically this signified that their homes were dedicated to doing the will of God, and unleavened bread became a type of purity. On the other hand, leaven, which causes disintegration and corruption, symbolised sin and the energy of sin, and therefore, sin in the flesh which must be overcome. In view of the teaching of the Law, whatever was in a decaying state suggested the idea of uncleanness and corruption. Leaven grows and increases; so that a small portion of it soon penetrates a large mass of dough. So it is with sin unless repressed. Leaven aerates the bread, blows it up and makes it puffy, and so activates it like the sin of pride. In two instances, however, the Law permitted its use: with the offering of the two loaves presented at Pentecost (Lev. 23:17), and in connection with the thanksgiving offering (Lev. 7:13). The reason for the exception at Pentecost is that the two wave loaves of fine flour typified the two-fold Ecclesia of Jews and Gentiles brought into being by the proclamation of the Gospel of Grace in the name of Christ Jesus on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 12:12,13). They contained leaven because

of the imperfections manifested by the Ecclesia; but it is to be carefully noted that the loaves with leaven were baked; that is, the manifested evil in the multitudinous body of Christ was judged in his death, and so reduced in its activity. In the O.T. leaven is always symbolic or typical of evil (Exod. 12:8,15-20,34,39); so that unleavened bread set before Israelites the ideal of sinlessness to which they were to aim. In the N.T. it is related to "malice and wickedness" in contrast with "sincerity and truth" represented by unleavened bread (1 Cor. 5:6-8). It represents false doctrine in its threefold manifestation of Phariseeism, Saduceeism and Herodianism (Matt. 16:16; Mark 8:15). Religious formalism, devoid of true warmth and significance constituted the leaven of the Pharisees (Matt. 23:14,16,23,28). The unbelief of the miraculous was the leaven of the Saducees (Matt. 22:23,29). And the policy of worldly compromise and doctrine of expediency comprised the leaven of the Herodians (Matt. 22:16-21; Mark 3:6).

Leavened bread was offered with the thanksgiving offering of Lev. 7:13 to remind the offerers that the spontaneous expression of thanks and devotion represented by the offering came from those who recognised that their lives were not entirely rid of sin and evil. It also emphasised the principle taught by Paul that everything eaten can be sanctified "by the Word and Prayer" (1 Tim. 4:4-5; 1 Cor. 10:23,30), for leavened bread represented that which is defiled (cp. Acts 10:14), and is the normal bread eaten. In this instance, therefore, the Law supported the teaching of the Lord that food that enters the stomach does not defile, but that which "cometh from within" the heart does do so (Matt. 15:11).

On the Day of Preparation, before the Passover was slain, the houses of Israelites were searched to remove all traces of leaven. It is obvious, therefore, that when the Lord introduced his Passover, he used unleavened bread to emphasise the teaching of the type that sin should be excluded from the lives of his disciples as much as possible. The unleavened bread represented "his body" that was crucified, for he suppressed sin so that it was not active in him. However, though the active manifestation of sin had no part in his character, the flesh in which this perfection was revealed was crucified by "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23) to display before all mankind

that more than mere strength of will and determination of flesh are required to conquer. Christ's strength that comes from God (Psa. 80:15), from whence ours must come also if we would succeed (Phil. 4:13). Christ inherited the potential to triumph over the flesh; we obtain it in measure through the spirit-word and prayer.

"Neither shall there any thing of the flesh, which thou sacrificest the first day at even, remain all night until the morning"

— See Exod. 12:10; 34:25. The flesh of the Lamb was to be entirely consumed either by eating, or by fire. None of it was to remain on the morning. The fulfilment of the type is seen in Christ when he rose from the dead, for he rose to eternal life. In him nothing of the flesh, as previously constituted, then remained. In life he had never given way to sin, and at his resurrection he was changed to immortality by the Spirit symbolised in the Passover celebration by fire. That ideal is set before all who partake of the Lord's Passover. Their aim in the present life is to conquer the lust of the flesh as best they can with the help of God, seeking His forgiveness where they fall short; and with the ultimate objective of complete conquest of mortal flesh through the change to spirit-nature in the Age to come.

VERSE 5

"Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which Yahweh thy God giveth thee"

— The Passover Lamb had to be taken to the place of the Sanctuary as appointed by Yahweh, and there slain. Therefore, the present celebration of Passover by Jews is unsatisfactory, as being a violation of this principle set down by the Law. Accordingly, and because they rest on the Law and reject the Grace found only in Christ, the former continues to condemn them (Gal. 5:3). But let Christ's disciples also recognise that the Law in this instance has a spiritual application to their worship, for sometimes there is a tendency for some to "forsake the assembling" of the saints together in the places (the Ecclesias) today appointed. The Apostles warned against such a practice (Heb. 10:24-25). The acknowledged centre of Ecclesial meeting is the place appointed of Christ as the place of worship, and should not be varied in that regard. The *Ecclesial Guide* makes this abundantly clear, setting down the only possible reasons for one to avoid the

appointed places of meeting, or move to form a new meeting.

VERSE 6

"But at the place which Yahweh thy God shall choose to place His name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover" — See Deut. 12:5-6.

"At even" — See Exod. 12:6. Christ our Passover died at the same time as it was appointed the Lamb so to do.

"At the going down of the sun" — The sun commences to decline, or "go down" at noon, but its "going down" is more particularly marked after 3 p.m. Noon is styled "the sixth hour", and 3 p.m. the "ninth hour". Christ was on the cross at the former time, and at about 3 p.m. made ready to die (see Matt. 27:45-46). All the ordinances relating to the Passover foreshadowed the one great offering upon which all sacrifice and offerings converged.

THE THREE PILGRIMAGE FESTIVALS DEUTERONOMY 16

Three Pilgrimage Festivals are listed in Deut. 16 as obligatory upon Israelites to attend — Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. They each had reference to an historical incident of importance: Deliverance; the Giving of the Covenant; and Wandering in the Wilderness. But they also marked the three seasons of the agricultural year: Spring, Summer, Autumn, with the Beginning, Fulness and Completion of harvest. These stages of the year and harvest foreshadowed the purpose of Yahweh in regard to His harvest of immortals. It, too, had a beginning in Israel; it widened into a fulness when the Gospel was preached to all the world; and it will witness its Completion at the Millennium.

Concerning these Festivals, M. Joseph has written:

"It is well to keep in view the agricultural aspect of the Three Festivals. It helps us to realise the fact that Israel was once an agricultural people, and that its commercial character is not, as is commonly thought, inborn, but is the result of the unkindly condition in later ages. It is good for us, and for the world at large, to remember that the history of the race has its idyllic side."

"At the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt" — Accordingly, the Passover festival emphasised the principle of Divine Deliverance and Separation.

VERSE 7

"And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which Yahweh thy God shall choose" — In the Hebrew, the word "roast" is *bashal*, which strictly signifies to boil; hence to be done (i.e. *cooked*), or to ripen (see *Strong's Concordance*). Doubtless in this place, the word has been used in the general sense of to cook, without specifying what form the cooking should take. In fact, the Passover Lamb had to be barbecued. It was actually "crucified" or

impaled with a thick bough of a pomegranate tree, and cooked by direct contact with fire. The Lamb, however, was not the only offering. The Passover celebrations included other offerings among which was the sin offering, part of which was eaten by the priests after boiling (Num. 28:16-25). So perhaps the term "roast" or "cook" is used for the general offerings. The word *bashal* is translated "ripe" in Gen. 40:10; Joel 3:13; suggesting the heat of the sun. In 2 Chron. 35:13, the same word is translated both roast and sod, or to boil; and the context shows this to be correct. The word "roast" in Exod. 12:8,9 is a different word, *tselee* in the Hebrew.

"In the place which Yahweh thy God

shall choose" — Ultimately that was Jerusalem. And in obedience to the will of his Father, the Lord, in due time, made his way to Jerusalem, to participate in the ceremony, and partake of the Lamb (John 2:13).

"And thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents" — The wording of this statement is a little awkward for these times, and is clearer as rendered in the NIV: "Then in the morning return to thy tents". Once the Temple was established, and the Passover properly celebrated, the Lamb was eaten in the guest-chambers of local residents, in an all-night vigil, after which visiting Israelites returned home, or to the temporary dwellings of pilgrims on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

VERSE 8

"Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread" — The eating of unleavened bread extended for seven days in all, for the six days were in addition to the Passover celebration (see Lev. 23:6).

"And on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to Yahweh thy God" — See Lev. 23:8. The words "solemn assembly" *atzereth* signifies a day of restraint (see margin), that is, the closing assembly, bringing to conclusion the Passover services. See Lev. 23:6; Neh. 8:18; Joel 1:14. In Lev. 23:6 it is described as a "holy convocation". Hence this eighth day of the feast was an extraordinary day. In John 7:37, the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles, also described as a "holy convocation", is described as "the last day, that great day of the feast". Eight is the number of perfection looking beyond the Millennium to the ultimate consummation of Yahweh's purpose when the earth will be filled with His glory (Num. 14:21): "Then cometh the end, when God shall be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:24-28). In the antitype, this shall comprise a "holy convocation", or gathering together of all peoples in one, for then sin and death shall be eliminated. The Passover celebrations foreshadowed this glorious consummation.

"Thou shall do no work therein" — In Lev. 23:7 this is described as "servile work". "Servile" work is *slave* work. As such it is a reminder of the condition of Israelites in Egypt, and from which they had been delivered. In abstaining from normal labour, therefore, they re-enacted their deliverance from the land of sin and death. It is said that they were permitted

to prepare for the day's necessities of life, but to go beyond that would involve them in "servile work".

Feast of Weeks To Be Kept — vv. 9-12

The Feast of Weeks was celebrated after seven weeks had elapsed from the beginning of the harvest immediately after Passover. It was to be commemorated joyfully with a freewill offering by the head of every Israelite household, in which all members thereof were invited to participate. In addition, the local Levites, and the poor of the city from whence each Israelite came were invited to come and enjoy the feast at the one Altar. The Feast of Weeks is also called the Feast of Pentecost, from "pente" signifying "fifty" (see Lev. 23:15-18; Acts 2:1).

VERSE 9

"Seven weeks shall thou number unto thee" — Seven is the number of the covenant and of completeness. In Hebrew, the word *sheba* does duty for both the numeral seven, and *oath*. Seven sevens give added emphasis to this thought, underlining the certainty of fulfilment of the covenant.

"Begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn" — A more specific dating is given in Lev. 23:15-18. Israel was commanded to "count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath", the sabbath being that which followed Passover, when a sheaf of the firstfruits of the harvest was "waved before Yahweh" (Lev. 23:10-11). That sheaf, the first of the harvest, was of the barley crop, for barley ripens before wheat. In its status, as the first of the harvest, and its humility, as being accounted the lesser grain, the barley sheaf represented Christ in his status and humility (1 Cor. 15:23). From the sabbath after the first Passover, Israelites had to number the days of Pentecost: "ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath" (Lev. 23:15). The emphasis upon *you* made it the individual responsibility of every head to the house to review his spiritual development or otherwise since he had last kept the Passover. Under the circumstances of the first deliverance from Egypt, the fiftieth day from Passover brought them to a very significant development. The arrival of the Israelites at Sinai is recorded in Exod. 19:1. They claim that this occurred on the first day of the month, which, therefore,

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER (1 Cor. 5:7)

"None can eat his flesh, if they would, but those who are circumcised in heart; for to eat his flesh is to digest, and to make part of our mental selves, the Truth concerning the Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ. . .

"The bread and wine of the Lord's supper are the remains of the Passover, which are to be shared by the circumcised of heart and ears, until Christ comes in power and great glory. I am informed by a Jew that when they eat the Passover, they eat no lamb, but have a dry bone of one on a dish; and that all who celebrate take hold of the lip of the dish, and unitedly offer a petition. This is remarkable. They have slain the true Lamb, which believers of the Gospel feed upon; while only a dry bone remains to them, strikingly illustrative of themselves. Faith in the Lamb of God supplies the absence of the Lamb in the Lord's supper. The broken bread and poured out wine memorialise his sacrifice for believers; and the testimony, 'This do in remembrance of me till I come' keeps alive the hope of his appearing in the Kingdom of God. When hope becomes a reality, the supper will give place to the Passover; for when Christ comes, the memorial of his coming ceases to be prophetic of the event" — *Elpis Israel* 296, 297, 298.

What the Jew told Bro. Thomas remains an item in the celebration of the Passover to this day. In *The Passover Haggadah* which explains the details of the Festival, attention is given to the bone which is used, and the comment is made: "On the right-hand of the tray is placed a portion of the shankbone of a lamb, roasted. This is intended to commemorate the actual Paschal lamb which was sacrificed in the Temple at the Passover; originally the essential feature of the observance, but now no more than a symbolic relic." It is further explained that the *zero'a* — forearm — the Hebrew name given to the shankbone, was selected to be placed on the Passover Plate because it gives opportunity to tell the story of how it was "with an outstretched arm" that Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt.



THE ARI

This is how the *seder*-plate is prepared for the Passover celebrations, the term *Seder* relating to the first night's meal. *Mazzot* is the plural name for unleavened bread; *maror* relates to the bitter herb. *Karpas* is a vegetable to be dipped in salt water. *Haroset* is a concoction of wine and other ingredients. The illustration gives an explanation as to what these things signify to those celebrating the Passover in that way.

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was the time of the new moon. The LXX together with other translations render the statement as: "On the first day of the third month . . ." This would approximate to our June, and would be mid-summer. Arriving at Sinai on the first day of the month, Moses ascended on the second day (Exod. 19:3). On the third day, he received the people's reply (v. 8). On the fourth day, he made the second ascent, and received the command to institute a three days' preparation (v. 11). At the conclusion of this time, the divine apocalypse of glory and revelation took place, and the Ten Commandments, forming the basis of the covenant, were publicly proclaimed (Exod. 13). Accordingly, a further seven days elapsed, after arriving at the mount, after which the nation was formerly incorporated into the divine covenant. As the children of Israel left Egypt on the 15th day of the first month, which was a Thursday (the first Passover being killed on a Wednesday), the first sabbath took place on 17th day of Abib, which meant that the end of the 2nd month was 43 days later. Add to those days, the seven days of negotiation at the mount, and the first fifty days were completed. Imagine the Israelites going back over those eventful days, as they recounted them in their minds. They would recall the manner in which Yahweh had saved them at the Red Sea, their ingratitude as later they complained, the manner in which the divine protection had been extended to save them from Amalek, and how they had found all their needs supplied. On the other hand, they would recall their continual complaining and grumbling, and their many other failures. This retrospection would have a salutary effect upon those spiritually minded, causing them to resolve to act more in accordance with the divine will in the future.

Consider the Apostles going back over the fifty days prior to the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2. They would recall their initial doubts, the revelation given them, the manner in which their unbelief had been swept away by the appearances of the risen Lord. Such retrospection would have a valuable effect upon them as well. So with ourselves, as we bear in mind our own failings, and renew our determination to act more consistently with the requirements of Yahweh in the future. Paul wrote: "Therefore, remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh . . ." (Eph. 2:11). It is beneficial to recall the past,

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and bearing in mind the great privileges that are ours in the present, give ourselves to the will of Yahweh in the future.

In a comment upon "counting the days", one Jewish commentator wisely wrote: "We count the days that pass since the preceding festival, just as one who expects the most intimate friend on a certain day counts the days, and even the hours. This is the reason why we count the days between the anniversary of our departure from Egypt, and the anniversary of the Law-giving. The latter was the aim and object of the exodus from Egypt." This teaches that the deliverance from bondage was not an end in itself; but the prelude to Sinai (Exod. 3:12). Liberty without Law is not good for flesh, for it tends to decline into licence.

It was obligatory for all Hebrew males to appear before Yahweh at the time of this festival as on other occasions (Exod. 34:22; Deut. 16:9).

VERSE 10

"And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto Yahweh thy God" — The word "weeks" is *shabuoth*, the Hebrew name given to this Festival. It is also called *The Feast of Harvest* (Exod. 23:16), *The Day of Firstfruits* (Num. 28:26), *The Day of Pentecost* (Acts 2:1). It is significant, and illustrative of the antitype, that on the Day of Pentecost when there were presented the firstfruits of the harvest in the form of two leavened loaves, that the proclamation of the Gospel in the name of the Lord Jesus was proclaimed, and the Ecclesial firstfruits gathered in and presented before Yahweh. That Day of Salvation is still with us (2 Cor. 6:2).

"With a tribute" — The Hebrew word *missath* signifies abundance, liberality. In this context it expresses the liberality or sufficiency (see margin) of the offering to be presented (see v. 16). The *Septuagint* renders the Hebrew by the Greek *kaihos* which denotes a sufficiency, or what is appropriate to offer unto Yahweh in view of His generosity as witnessed in the harvest gathered in. The *New International Version* renders the verse: *Then celebrate the Feast of Weeks to Yahweh your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings Yahweh your God has given you.* When, through poverty, an Israelite was not able to give back to Yahweh with the liberality he would desire to do, merciful provision was made by God for a lesser offering to be presented. See the marginal

rendition of Lev. 5:7.

"Of a freewill offering of thine hand which thou shalt give unto Yahweh thy God" — There were compulsory sacrifices prescribed by the Law that had to be offered during the Feast of Weeks (Lev. 23:17-20,38), but, in addition, Israelites were expected to voluntarily give of the substance they had received through the Divine blessing.

VERSE 11

"And thou shalt rejoice before Yahweh thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which Yahweh thy God hath chosen to place His name there" — See Ch. 12:7,12,18; 14:26. The Israelite, as the head of the family, was to draw the whole household together as a rejoicing unit, even any slaves associated therewith; and they were to be joined together in the fellowship of joy at the Festival. The Levites resident in the city were invited to participate in this happy occasion, for, after all, their ministrations provided the channel of Divine blessing, helping to unite the family with Yahweh. Those less fortunate of the city were likewise invited to share in the bounty, for every Israelite had a responsibility to his fellow citizen. The poor, in turn, could see in the harvest, and their sharing of its benefits, evidence of Divine blessing in spite of their desolate state. In that way, all were invited to celebrate Pentecost at Jerusalem, and to rejoice before Yahweh. However, it was not obligatory for all members to do so, but only the adult males as representatives of the families (see v. 16). What rejoicing there must have been in Jerusalem 1900 years ago when all present in the city were invited to share in the bounty that Yahweh had made available to them in the grace of the Gospel; and when in wonderment the people exclaimed: "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11).

VERSE 12

"And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe to do these statutes" — The rejoicing of Israelites at such times contrasted with their cries for help whilst in Egypt; their liberty in Yahweh was a contrast to their bondage in Egypt. In like

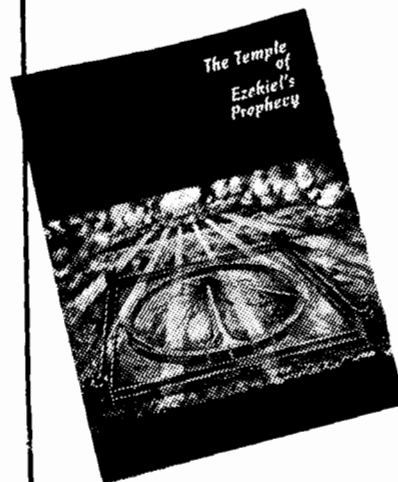
manner, disciples are called upon to "remember" their state of privilege (Eph. 2:11), and to rejoice before Yahweh (Phil. 4:4).

The Feast of Tabernacles To Be Commemorated — vv. 13-15

The rejoicing at Pentecost is to be repeated at Tabernacles. There is even greater cause for happiness on that occasion, for now the whole of the harvest is gathered in (Lev. 23:29), and the full measure of Divine bounty is evident. As Pentecost types the acceptance of the Covenant, Tabernacles points forward to its consummation, and therefore foreshadows the Millennium. As there is cause to rejoice at the former occasion, how much greater is there in anticipation of the latter at the coming of the Lord. The Festival of Tabernacles is also called the Feast of Ingathering (Exod. 23:16; 34:22). It was celebrated for seven days, and on the eighth a special day of celebration concluded it (see Lev. 23:39-40).

VERSE 13

"Thou shalt observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days" — The word "Tabernacles" is from the Hebrew *Sukkoth*, which literally signifies *plaitings* or *interlacings*, and relates to a hastily constructed and unsubstantial edifice. The significance of this is explained in Lev. 23:42-43, "that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt". For the circumstances, see Exod. 13:20. The *Festival of Booths*, therefore, drew attention to the status of Israelites as a separated people, strangers and pilgrims in the land. It is also called *The Feast of Ingathering* (Exod. 23:16; 34:22), because it was related to the "ingathering of the fruit of the land" (Lev. 23:39). The Festival was celebrated for seven days, and on the eighth day a special day of rest was held. In type, the Feast of Tabernacles foreshadowed the Millennium, the grand rejoicing together which will take place after the present harvest has been gathered in. On the Mount of Transfiguration, when the three selected Apostles awoke from their sleep (foreshadowing their resurrection), and in their confused state saw the Lord in glory, Peter imagined that the Kingdom was about to be re-established in power, and recognising the significance of the Feast of Tabernacles in that regard, declared: "Lord, it is



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good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias" (Matt. 17:4).

"**After that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine**" — The grapes were the last to be harvested, so the Feast of Tabernacles took place after that time (See Lev. 23:39). Literally, the Hebrew of this verse should be rendered, *thy floor, and thy winepress*. For the symbolical significance of the winepress, see our notes relating to Rev. 14:14-20 in *Apocalypse Epitomised*.

VERSE 14

"**And thou shalt rejoice**" — See notes on v. 11. The Millennium, foreshadowed by the Feast of Tabernacles, will be a time of great family reunions and rejoicing. See Isa. 64:5; 66:10-14; Hab. 3:18; Rom. 5:11.

"**In thy feast**" — To do that effectively, is to anticipate the joy of the future: keeping it always in mind. See Ecc. 9:7; Isa. 12:1-6; 25:6-8; 30:29; 35:10; 1 Thess. 5:16.

"**Thou, and thy son, and thy daughter,**

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and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates" — All are to rejoice in recognition of God's goodness in the present, as well as in anticipation of greater joys to come.

VERSE 15

"**Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto Yahweh thy God in the place which Yahweh shall choose: because Yahweh thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice**" — The Oxford Gesenius renders the last as "be altogether rejoicing", in other words, gather all together in the stimulation of enthusiastic rejoicing at the recognition of God's goodness. Rotherham renders it as "Do nothing but rejoice," or drive from the mind all depressing circumstances in the mutual rejoicing such as the Truth creates. See Rom. 12:12; Phil. 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:16. Rejoicing before Yahweh is an essential feature of worship which the flesh tends to overlook.

The Christadelphian Expositor



A Verse by Verse Commentary Upon the Scriptures

Editorial

BIND YOUR COPIES

The Christadelphian Expositor is produced as a part-publication which can be linked together, and bound to make a complete book. That is why each number, even at the conclusion of a Volume, might stop at the end of a verse, or even half way through a verse! Some find this strange, and some amusing, but those who go to the trouble of keeping their copies to bind together into a complete volume covering the Book of the Bible treated with, find they provide valuable exposition in depth of the part of Scripture expounded. We were recently shown a complete set of the books from Genesis to Numbers bound in individual volumes, and were very impressed, and encouraged, by the appearance of them.

Certainly it has afforded us both profit and pleasure to prepare the material. Our knowledge of the Word has been

PASSOVER AND TABERNACLES: A COMPARISON

The religious year for Hebrews commenced with the celebration of the Feast of Passover, and concluded with that of Tabernacles. Whereas during winter (when nature figuratively dies) no feasts were provided by the Law, the religious year commenced with Spring (resurrection) and concluded at Autumn (the full ingathering of the harvest). Interesting comparisons exist between the first and last of the Festivals held.

- Passover was at the beginning of the religious year; Tabernacles at the beginning of the civil year.
- The former commemorated a change of status on the part of the Israelites; the latter a new beginning of the year — foreshadowing the changes to be introduced at the restoration of the Kingdom.
- On the 10th day of the 1st month, a Lamb was taken; on the 10th day of the 7th month, the Day of Atonement was celebrated.
- On the 15th day of the 1st month, the Passover feast commenced and continued for seven days; on the 15th day of the seventh month, the feast of Tabernacles commenced and continued for seven days.

- Passover was held during the Spring Equinox when the length of day and night are equal; the Feast of Tabernacles was held during the Autumn Equinox when the length of day and night are equal.

- Passover was held before the grain harvest; when everywhere there were signs of new life, and the first crop (barley) stands in the green ready to be harvested; Tabernacles was celebrated when the last of the harvest was brought in.

- Passover marked the beginning of the harvest; Tabernacles marked its completion, and the beginning of a new agricultural year. Farmers make preparation at this time for the new ploughing season — anticipating the work of the saints in the Age to come.

- Passover pointed to the impending harvest, and typed the offering of Messiah (1 Cor. 5:7) and the impending harvest in Christ (John 12:24); Tabernacles pointed to the fulness of ingathering at the return of Christ (Rev. 7:9-16), and the preparations to be made for the renewal of labour (see Rev. 14:14-20 — compare the grain and vine with the “corn and wine” of Deut. 16:13); Joel 3:14.

- At both Passover and Tabernacles the moon (symbolic of the Nation or Ecclesia) is at the full, and the two feasts equally divide the year. There was a careful watching for the full moon at Passover, and proclamation made throughout the land. S.J. Segal in *The Hebrew Passover* states: “Intercalation was regularly effected in the Israelite calendar by the insertion of an extra month, and normally before the end of the year”.

The typical significance of the three great Festivals in the Hebrew calendar were therefore clear and striking, particularly after the true Lamb and Passover had been revealed.

Liberality Enjoined At The Feast — vv. 16-17

These verses recapitulate the principles stressed in the previous verses, emphasising the importance of the instructions given.

VERSE 16

“Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before Yahweh thy God in the place which He shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles” — See also Exod. 23:14,17; 34:23. Whilst on normal occasions the family could be represented by the adult males of a household, and the others need not attend, in the seventh year all without exception

must attend the Feast of Tabernacles to hear the Law read; even strangers and little children (Deut. 31:10-13).

“And they shall not appear before Yahweh empty” — Liberality towards the things of God was required, for humanity is dependent upon Him for life itself, as well as the blessings of life. See Exod. 23:15; Prov. 3:9-10; Hag. 1:9; Mal. 3:10; 2 Cor. 9:7.

VERSE 17

“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of Yahweh thy God which He hath given him” — The Festivals were designed as times of grateful joy manifested in grateful giving. See 2 Cor. 8:9-12.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS GOVERNMENT — v. 18-17:20

Religious worship and grateful giving to Yahweh is of little real value in the absence of consistency of conduct. So now, Deuteronomy outlines the respect that should be paid towards the Government of the Land; which would be, in fact, a Divinely regulated rule. Judges and officers are to be placed in authority throughout the nation and are to administer punishment to any who break the Divine laws given. Crime is to be acknowledged as such, and to be suitably punished. The Government thus established is to be viewed as an extension of the Government of heaven, for those placed in authority are to rule for God. Therefore, duties Godward previously set forth are now changed to duties manward as in the Ten Commandments (the first five relating to Yahweh and the last five to social behaviour). The respect paid to Rulers is to reflect the honour paid to the rulers in the Family of God. This is to commence in the home, with proper regard and honour being paid to parents.

Judges And Officers To Be Appointed — vv. 18-20

The duty of Judges and officers has already been set forth (Deut. 1:15-18). In the Millennium similar arrangements will be set up, in order that proper control and government may prevail.

VERSE 18

“Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates” — See reference to these in Deut. 1:16; 2 Chron. 19:5,8. The Hebrew word for judges is *shophetim* and denotes one who pronounces sentence on an issue. The word for officers is *shoterim*, and denotes writers who act as clerks recording matters. See Deut. 20:5,8,9; Num. 11:16; Josh. 1:10. They were to be appointed to various locations throughout the land, and to be stationed in the gates of the cities. The gate was the place where the elders of a city sat and important matters were decided (see Ruth 4:1). The method by which appointments were made is not here given, but it would probably be on the same principle observed in Deut. 1:13-15.

“Which Yahweh thy God giveth thee,

throughout thy tribes; and they shall judge the people with just judgment” — Every section of the nation was to be serviced by the officers appointed.

VERSE 19

“Thou shalt not wrest judgment” — The Hebrew *thou* is in the singular number and comprises a personal exhortation to each judge individually as to what would be expected of him. To “wrest judgment” is the Hebrew idiom for “showing partiality” (see James 2:4; 3:17). Impartial judgment was required towards all, whether poor or rich. An unjust judgment can be given out of sympathy for the poor, or to humiliate one held in high esteem before the people. See Exod. 23:2,6; Lev. 19:15; Deut. 24:17; Prov. 17:23; Ecc. 7:7.

“Thou shalt not respect persons” — There can be a tendency to soften or harden judgment because of a judge’s relationship to others. This also is prohibited. See Deut. 1:17.

“Neither take a gift; for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise” — The gift referred to is in the nature of a bribe, not a present

to express regard for a person. This is prohibited. See Exod. 23:8; Ecc. 7:7.

“And pervert the words of the righteous” — The Hebrew *dabarim*, not only signifies “words” but the matter or intent expressed by the words. See margin.

VERSE 20

“That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee” — The word “just” signifies that which is right. The rulers were to “follow” that which is just. The idea is not merely to desire it, but to indefatigably *hunt* after it as expressed in Deut. 13:14: “inquire, make search and seek diligently” The appointed judges were required to do that in regard to all matters presented to them for consideration. Continued life in the land was shown to be conditional upon proper government of the people.

The Hebrew of this statement is very emphatic. Literally it reads: *Justice justice thou shalt follow*. The duplication emphasises the supreme duty of evenhanded Justice to all whether it be to the advantage or otherwise of the one administering it; whether it be pronounced by word or action, whether it is in regard to believer or to non-believer; for Justice is the vindication of truth and righteousness (Psa. 72:2; Amos 5:24). Indeed, in Scripture, Justice is related to holiness: “God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness” or Justice (Isa. 5:16). On the other hand, where there is no Justice there is a negation of Truth in action, whether or not it has been expressed. Therefore the oppressor is ever set forth in Scripture as the opponent of God and man. The reference from Isaiah above relates to the Millennium which will see the vindication of sound Justice in the earth (Psa. 72:12-14; Isa. 32:17). Just as Truth is usually preceded in Scripture by reference to Loving-kindness, to remind true Israelites that it must be proclaimed in love, so Justice is associated with Mercy to teach that strict Justice must, in its execution, be mingled with pity and humanity (Mic. 6:8). The world could not exist on Justice alone. As Shakespeare wrote: “In the course of Justice none of us would see salvation”. Hence whilst Justice must always be proclaimed, it needs to be administered in pity.

The Worst Crime: Treason Against The Supreme Power — vv. 21-22

The command to appoint judges is followed by three cases of religious crimes. The first is a prohibition to set up any object as an Asherah (vv. 21-22); the second warns against offering blemished animals in sacrifice to Yahweh (Ch. 17:1); and the third is a warning against apostasy (Ch. 17:2-7).

VERSE 21

“Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees” — The word “grove” is *Asherah* in Hebrew, and is the name of a god; it should be rendered as a proper noun here, as it is in the *Revised Version*. The idol was in the form of either a pole, a stone pillar, or a tree shaped in a certain manner. The “planting”, therefore, relates to setting it upright in the ground, rather than to the sowing of a seed of a shrub or tree. See note at Deut. 7:5.

“Of any trees” — The Hebrew construction relates this to the *Asherah*, therefore, an *Asherah* of any tree i.e. of timber.

“Near unto the altar of Yahweh thy God which thou shalt make thee” — To set up such a form of worship would be insulting to the holy God of purity. It is significant, that the first mention of the *Asherim* in the Bible occurs in Exod. 34:13, and the context stamps it as the special object of Yahweh’s abhorrence. Accordingly, He there proclaims for the first time His name as being *Jealous*. To do what is suggested in the verse before us would be to arouse His intense anger against Israel.

VERSE 22

“Neither shalt thou set thee up any image” — The margin gives this as statue, or pillar. The idea, of course, is for such to be set up as objects of worship. This is in antagonism to the express command of God (Exod. 23:24); which Roman Catholicism with its image — worship should remember. For that matter, all should bear in mind that “covetousness is idolatry” (Col. 3:5).

“Which Yahweh thy God hateth” — He hates such action because it is designed to turn the people from Him, and render ineffective all that He has done for their moral transformation.

LAWS CONCERNING IDOLATORS AND OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY

God would have men possess a dread of being drawn into worshipping false gods, which is the highest affront that can be offered to the King of heaven. Therefore, a key thought of the chapter is the warning against “transgressing His covenant” (v. 2), and important instruction in guarding against this is set forth in vv. 18-20. Accordingly all sacrifices offered are to be perfect, because they type the one great Offering ultimately to be made (1 Pet. 1:19): the Lord Jesus who was perfectly pure from all sin and all appearance of it. Idolatry, therefore, is to be ruthlessly suppressed, and all idolaters put to death. Judgment in these matters, is severe but just when the implications are borne in mind. Finally the Chapter anticipates the elevation of a supreme authority in the Land, a King who will reign for Yahweh; and to that end must be educated in Divine principles (vv. 14-20).

Things Sacrificed Must Be Sound — v. 1

To offer in sacrifice a bullock or sheep with any defect is obnoxious to Yahweh.

VERSE 1

“Thou shalt not sacrifice unto Yahweh thy God any bullock or sheep, wherein is a blemish” — See Lev. 22:19-24; Deut. 15:21; Mal. 1:8. The sacrifice typed the Redeemer promised from the beginning (Gen. 3:15), whose perfect obedience would conquer the grave itself (Acts 2:24), by which the way out of sin and death would be opened for all who would come to Yahweh through him. To offer a blemished sacrifice, therefore, would be tantamount to teaching that Christ was a sinner.

“Or evil favouredness” — The Hebrew *ra’ dabar* signifies a bad word, matter, doctrine or thing, and therefore any evil thing. Physically, in the animal, it would relate to any maim (Lev. 22:22), but in the offering of an individual it signifies any vice or wrong doctrine. Christ, of course, as the perfect offering, was guilty of no vice or error, but inasmuch as he was a

representative offering, and not a substitutionary one, his perfection is something his followers must aspire as an ideal. They will not reach that ideal, of course, but they can aim at it, and by so doing become conscious of their own failings, and express regret whilst seeking forgiveness. To fail in this could be guilty of that which the Law forbade.

“For that is an abomination unto Yahweh thy God” — The Hebrew word signifies that which is revolting and disgusting. Blindness to one’s failings is an abomination to Yahweh; it is like offering an evil-favoured animal in sacrifice.

Idolatry To Be Ruthlessly Suppressed — vv. 2-7

If idolatry be discovered, and the crime established, those guilty are to be put to death. However, confirmation by witnesses must be sought. Idolatry leads to the practice of “the abominations which Yahweh hateth” (Ch. 12:31), the threefold channels of which are listed in Ch. 13. There is to be no pity for those guilty of this crime.

VERSE 2

"If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which Yahweh thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of Yahweh thy God" — The Hebrew expresses the definite article: *"the wickedness"*, i.e. idolatry.

"In transgressing His covenant" — Achan's sin of covetousness (Josh. 7:21), is described as "transgressing the covenant" (Josh. 7:11,15), for "covetousness is idolatry" (Col. 3:5). See the expression used in Josh. 23:16; Jud. 2:20; 2 Kings 18:12; Isa. 24:5; Hos. 6:7; 8:1. Idolatry is not limited to bowing before an obvious idol; it describes anything that comes between a worshipper and his God. In Deut. 4:23, the same sin is described as "forgetting the covenant"; and in v. 13 it is linked with the Ten Commandments. Any breaking of those Commandments, therefore, is a form of idolatry. A covenant was confirmed between the two contracting parties by sacrifice, emphasising the solemn responsibility of both to keep their parts of it.

VERSE 3

"And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded" — The heavenly bodies were commonly worshipped by pagans of old. See Deut. 4:19; 2 Kings 21:3; Jer. 8:2; Ezek. 8:16.

VERSE 4

"And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel" — A peace-loving Israelite, whilst deploring the evidence of idolatry, might prefer to ignore it for the sake of peace. This he was not permitted to do. The explicit words of this command illustrates that. He was bound to investigate the matter, and in this he is told to "enquire diligently" (see also Ch. 13:14). The circumstances must be thoroughly investigated, and not established on mere hearsay. It is very easy for such matters to be distorted, and on the grounds of rumour true facts to be obscured. It is so sometimes in these times with the accusation of false doctrine. However, where evidence of such is suspected, a believer does the propagator of it a service by quietly taking the matter up with him and ascertaining

whether it is justified or otherwise (see Matt. 18:15).

VERSE 5

"Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman" — The gates were the most public places of a city. It was there that the judges met, and cases of dispute were decided. Having made diligent enquiry, and found the accusation proved, and the guilty parties having refusing to mend their ways, the next act in the process was to lay the accusation before the judges who met at the gates of the city. See Matt. 18:17.

"And shalt thou stone them with stones, till they die" — The case of idolatry having been proved, the execution was by stoning. This form of punishment was commanded by the Law because all who took part therein endorsed the penalty, on behalf of the whole of the city and nation. Moreover, death by stoning separated the executors from the guilty party, so that no ceremonial defilement followed as would be the case if they were to lay hands upon the one condemned to death. See note on Deut. 13:10. Ecclesial disfellowship in the Apostolic Ecclesias likewise required communal endorsement when the facts of persistent wrong-doing or false doctrine were proved. The Ecclesias "gathered together" for this purpose (1 Cor. 5:4), and formerly pronounced the action to be taken. However, through the grace provided in Christ Jesus, the punishment was not absolute, for upon retraction, the guilty party could be restored (2 Cor. 7:9-13).

VERSE 6

"At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death" — Corroborative evidence was required before the death sentence could be pronounced. See Deut. 19:15; John 8:17-18. The spirit of this law should be observed by Christ's followers, even in lesser matters. See Matt. 18:16. It was denied Christ. In condemning him, Caiaphas asked, "What need we of further witnesses?" and on the unrighteous decision of one man, Christ was unlawfully given over to death (Matt. 26:60-66). In fact, according to Jewish jurisprudence, Christ should have been given opportunity to de-

monstrate his claim that he was the Son of God, but his accusers were afraid of the evidence he could advance, for among others, he could have submitted the evidence of Lazarus, a man who had been raised from the dead (see John 12:10-11). Others who had benefited from the miracles he had performed, likewise could have testified, and against such evidence the Sanhedrin would have had no answer. The condemnation of Christ was quite illegal. Moreover, having sentenced him to death on a charge of blasphemy, the Jewish leaders should have carried out the execution by stoning in accordance with the requirements of the Law, but that would not have satisfied their scheming, and therefore, quite unlawfully, they called upon the Roman Governor Pilate to put him to death by crucifixion. The trial of Christ was conducted in a most unlawful manner.

VERSE 7

"The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death" — This stringent rule would tend to prevent accusations being lightly pressed. The accuser became the executioner. See Acts 7:58. This law, therefore, required that Caiaphas should aim the first stone at the Lord, but death by stoning (quite legitimate at the time Christ was put to death — See Acts 7:58) did not suit the purpose of the Sanhedrin. Its members did not want merely the death of the Lord they desired his death by crucifixion, because that brought the curse of the Law publicly upon him (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13). Therefore, they unlawfully called upon Pilate to execute him. Pilate invited them to judge Christ according to their law (John 18:31); but if they had heeded that exhortation, they would have been compelled to release him.

"And afterward the hands of all the people" — The accusers aimed the first stones, and afterwards representatives of the people. This was a public witness that the accused was worthy of death, and that the whole nation endorsed the sentence.

"So thou shalt put the evil away from among you" — This law also has an application in these times, when, Ecclesially, instead of death, recourse is made to dis-fellowshipping an erring member who refuses to reform or conform. See 1 Cor. 5:13.

Final Appeal In Controversies To Be Decided By Judges — vv. 8-13.

Cases too hard for the local courts (Ch. 16:18-20) are to be taken before the Priests at the Sanctuary, and the High Judge of the time, whose decisions are to be strictly obeyed. The man who presumptuously refuses to do so shall be put to death. The Priests and the Judge as representing the religious and civil authority (see 2 Chron. 19:8-11) combined to administer justice according to the Law. When the nation became a monarchy, the King took the position of the Judge; therefore the instruction concerning the election and duty of a King that immediately follows this section are appropriate.

VERSE 8

"If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment" — The Hebrew for "hard" signifies *too marvellous*; that is, something extraordinary, which could not be decided by the judicature of the local court set up in the various cities (Deut. 16:18). It then referred to a higher court at the Sanctuary. See Deut. 19:17; 21:5; 2 Chron. 19:8-10; Hag. 2:11; Mal. 2:7. A similar arrangement will be established during the reign of Christ (Mal. 1:11; Psa. 122:5; Ezek. 44:24).

"Between blood and blood" — To decide whether a person is guilty of manslaughter or murder. Exod. 21:12-15; Num. 35:12. Those accused of killing anybody had to seek protection in a City of Refuge, until his guilt or otherwise was determined by a properly constituted court of enquiry.

"Between plea and plea" — This relates to disputed rights or claims. See 2 Chron. 19:10.

"Between stroke and stroke" — Accusations of strife or bodily assault. See Exod. 21:18.

"Being matters of controversy within thy gates" — The cases, first considered by the local court, fail to be satisfactorily solved.

"Then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which Yahweh thy God shall choose" — See Deut. 12:5. This shall also apply in the Age to come. See Ezek. 44:24; Psa. 122:5.

VERSE 9

"And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites" — All priests were Levites, but all Levites were not priests. Priests

were limited to the descendants of Aaron who was of the tribe of Levi.

“And unto the judge that shall be in those days” — The word “judge” is from a Hebrew word signifying to pronounce sentence. A supreme Judge was appointed from time to time in addition to other lesser judges (cp. Deut. 19:17). The position of the supreme Judge was subsequently taken over by the King (2 Sam. 14:3; 15:2; 1 Kings 3:16) assisted by officers appointed by him (2 Sam. 15:3). Jeremiah, on the complaint of the priests, was tried by the appointed Sarim, lay officers, or princes. The final decision, however, rested with the King, to whom a last appeal could be addressed (Jer. 26:10-12).

“And they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment” — The verdict will be pronounced by them.

VERSE 10

“And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which Yahweh shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee” — The reference is to the Supreme Court ultimately set up in Jerusalem (Deut. 12:14).

VERSE 11

“According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left” — The word “sentence” in this verse is different to that in v. 10. There it is *dabar*, “word” or “verdict”; here it is *peh*, and signifies “mouth”, and therefore denotes the *mouth of the law*, or that which it proclaims. The word *dabar*, rendered “sentence” in v. 10 denotes the verdict established on the basis of the Law. The warning against deviating to the right hand or to the left is constant throughout Deuteronomy. See 5:32; 17:20; 28:14. See also Jos. 1:7; 23:6; 2 Sam. 14:19; Prov. 4:27.

VERSE 12

“And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before Yahweh thy God, or unto the judge” — The word “presumptuously” is from a Hebrew word signifying to *see the, be insolent*, and therefore denotes an attitude of arrogance that refuses to accept a decision

whatever it may be. To “hearken”, therefore, is to do so with intent to submit in the sense of Deut. 13:11: “All Israel shall hear, and fear, and do no more any such wickedness”. See Mal. 2:7; and consider the authoritative instruction of Yahweh’s representatives (Luke 10:16; John 12:48). To refuse to hearken is to reject what is heard.

The reference to “*the priest*.” is to the ecclesiastical president of the Court who would officially proclaim the sentence. The administration of the Law in Israel, therefore, was not determined by jury, but by representatives of the civil and ecclesiastical authority acting according to the strict code of God’s Law. To challenge the decisions given was treated as acting presumptuously, repudiating the authority of God. This was treated as blasphemy.

“Even that man shall die” — The decisions of the courts set up by Yahweh (v. 8) must be strictly obeyed. To treat otherwise the ruling of a Theocracy would be to defy Yahweh (Deut. 19:17), and the punishment for so doing was severe. See the warning of Paul to those in Christ based upon this requirement of the Law (Heb. 10:26-31).

“And thou shalt put away the evil from Israel” — To condone the insolent action of the presumptuous sinner would involve the nation in his offence, therefore there was require a general acceptance of the righteousness of the death sentence (cp. v. 7). In Christ, the presumptuous sinner is to be disfellowshipped (1 Tim. 1:20), and the action confirmed by the entire Ecclesia (1 Tim. 5:20).

VERSE 13

“And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously” — See note v. 12.

The Election And Duty of a King — vv. 14-20

Courts of justice combining priestly and civil supervision and administration are to be set up in the cities throughout the land, with a supreme Court of appeal and supreme Judge in the central place of worship to be selected by Yahweh (vv. 8-13). This provides a step towards the ultimate appointment of a King to preside over the nation. Certain limitations are imposed upon the King revealing that he is to be subject to the King of heaven whose status is that of King of kings. Among the guidelines set down for the direction of the appointed

king are the avoidance of war, women and wealth (v. 17), and strict adherence to the Law, a copy of which he is to prepare for himself (vv. 18-19). As an Israelite, he must remain as a brother to all though he be a King, and recognise himself as subject to the will and direction of Yahweh (v. 20).

VERSE 14

“When thou art come unto the land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee” — The fact that the land is Yahweh’s to dispose of is constantly asserted throughout Deuteronomy, occurring about 35 times (e.g. 2:29; 4:1,20,40; 5:16; 9:6 etc.). As Landlord, He can rightly demand the terms of occupancy (see Lev. 25:23).

“And shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me” — This statement of the Law anticipates the request made by the people to Samuel (1 Sam. 8:5, 19-20). Nevertheless, it was the intention of Yahweh from the beginning to set up His Kingdom on earth with a Monarch established thereover from out of Judah (See Gen. 49:10). Why then the delay in doing so? The sin of Judah (Gen. 38:25-30), and the restrictions laid down by the Law concerning illegitimate offspring made it inappropriate. Such sons were excluded from their full inheritance until the tenth generation (Deut. 23:2). It is significant that, according to the line of descent recorded in Matthew 1, David is the tenth generation from Judah (Matt. 1:3-6). It is doubly significant that the genealogy of David as given in *The Book of Ruth* commences from Pharez, the illegitimate son of Judah and lists ten generations to David (Ruth 4:18-22). Samuel would have known of the blessing of Jacob that allocated the kingship to Judah (Gen. 49:10), and therefore must have viewed the appointment of a Benjamite as a temporary measure. Ultimately it had to go to a son of Judah of the tenth generation. David fulfilled the requirements.

VERSE 15

“Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee whom Yahweh thy God shall choose” — Rotherham renders this awkward phrase as “*Thou shalt set over thee as king. . .*” Whoever the people desired as king had to be endorsed by Yahweh, (See 1 Sam. 9:15-17; 10:24; 16:12), Whose Kingdom it was (Exod. 19:6; Jud. 8:23:

Jer. 30:21). The Lord Jesus answers to this requirement (Psa. 2:2,6).

“One born from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee” — The King must be a true Israelite, born of Israelitish parents. The Lord Jesus answers to that requirement.

“Thou mayest not set a stranger over thee which is not thy brother” — Among the curses listed by the Law that Israel would experience if the people proved disobedient was the appointment of a stranger over them as king (Deut. 28:43). This was fulfilled when the Romans appointed Herod and his kinsmen, who were of Edomite descent, as kings of Judea. According to a Jewish tradition, when one of these Herodian kings, Agrippa I, read this verse in the court of the Temple at the close of a Year of Release, he burst into tears, deeming himself unworthy of kingship on account of his alien ancestry, whereupon the people reassured him with the words: “Thou art our brother! Thou art our brother!”

VERSE 16

“But he shall not multiply horses to himself” — In ancient times, horses were used only for war, warlike celebrations, or State occasions, such as when Joseph was granted use of Pharaoh’s chariot (Gen. 41:43). The horse is a proud animal, delighting in war (Job 39:19-25), and personifying fleshly pride. The multiplication of such animals was incongruous on the part of rulers who recognised that their power and status were of God. Unfortunately, Solomon erred in doing so (see 1 Kings 4:26; 2 Chron. 1:16; 9:28). Why did he do so? He evidently reasoned himself out of the obvious teaching of this Law. How could he do that? From 1 Kings 10:26-29 it is clear that he developed a very lucrative business in horse-and-chariot trading. He imported them from Egypt, and retailed them to the nations of the north. As horses were multiplied in the land for trade, it was not a great step backwards to use them as a potential means of defence, should the need arise. So Solomon, may have thought the circumstances justified the action, and what was considered in itself a mere commercial undertaking innocent of transgression soon became a feature of his rule. Notice how Samuel warned the people of this law when they made their request for a king (1 Sam. 8:11).

“Nor cause the people to return to

Egypt to the end that he should multiply horses” — Unfortunately Solomon transgressed in this regard. Moreover, under pressure of an international crisis, this is exactly what some in Judah did during the reign of Hezekiah (see Isa. 31:1; Ezek. 17:15). See also the apostasy of Johanan, ruler of the remnant in the land during the Babylonish captivity in going down to Egypt (Jer. 43:5-7). To “return to Egypt” is equivalent to a baptised believer returning to the world from which he has separated (2 Pet. 2:20-22). Unfortunately, Israel manifested a desire to return to Egypt (Num. 14:3-4), and God warned the nation that if it proved disobedient, it would be driven back there (Deut. 28:68; Hos. 11:5). This is what happened (Jer. 42:15-16).

VERSE 17

“Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away” — The multiplication of wives would tend to destroy the simplicity of life by the complication of domestic arrangements made necessary thereby. Moreover it is contrary to the spirit of marriage as established at the beginning (Gen. 2:24). Solomon ignored this law to his own hurt and disgrace (1 Kings 11:3-4).

“Neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold” — David certainly multiplied gold and silver, “but not for himself”; he stored it up for use in the Temple (1 Chron. 28:14-20). The purpose of the Law was to warn against the accumulation of wealth by the King for personal use; it was designed to protect the people against exploitation by a despotic monarch (see 1 Kings 12:4).

VERSE 18

“And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites” — The first duty of a king in ascending the throne was to write for himself a copy of the *Book of Deuteronomy*, so that its instructions might be impressed upon his mind; for real prosperity in Israel depended upon national adherence to the way of Yahweh. The King was expected to do this for himself, and not use the copy prepared by his father. When such matters are personally written they are more likely to be impressed upon the mind. That, indeed, is the value of personal Bible marking.

Such a book was handed to the infant

Joash by Jehoiada for his guidance (2 Chron. 23:11). A copy was also found in the precincts of the Temple, and given to Josiah (2 Chron. 34:15), the reading of which caused him much concern. The Hebrew *mishneh hattorah hazzoth* signifies a “duplicate of this law”. The phrase is translated by *The Septuagint* as *this deuteronomy*, and it is from this version that both the Vulgate and all modern versions have taken the name of this book. From the original word, the Jews call it the *Mishneh*. The original copy was kept by the priests in the Ark. See Deut. 31:9,26; 2 Kings 22:8; 2 Chron. 34:14.

VERSE 19

“And it shall be with him” — This book was to be the constant companion of the King (see Deut. 32:46-47; Josh. 1:8; Psa. 1:2; 119:16,18,24,97). Note David’s admonition to Solomon (1 Kings 2:3).

“And he shall read therein all the days of his life” — The daily reading of the Word was commanded the King. See the need to “meditate” upon what was read: Deut. 6:6-9; 11:18; Josh. 1:8; Psa. 1:2; 119:97-100; 2 Tim. 3:18-19).

“That he may learn to fear Yahweh his God” — The purpose of reading the Word is to learn to reverence God. Such fear or reverence will cause those exercised thereby to depart from evil (Prov. 3:7), for it is morally cleansing in its effect (Psa. 19:9; 119:9). The “fear of Yahweh is the beginning (Heb. *firstfruits*) of wisdom” (Prov. 1:7). Without it, knowledge is negative and sterile (see 2 Pet. 1:8-10).

“To keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them” — The word “keep” is from the Hebrew *shamar* which signifies to *hedge about, protect, guard*. The exhortation therefore, implies the careful preservation of the truth and its practical application: to refuse to allow its principles to be disputed or perverted. See 1 John 2:3.

VERSE 20

“That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren” — That he be not conceited, imagining himself to be above all laws that govern normal Israelites, and ignoring the requests of his subjects as though of little concern. This Rehoboam did. The king is commanded to treat his subjects as “his brethren” and not as his slaves. See Christ’s example (John 15:15). The King’s success was to be based on righteousness and justice, as outlined in Psalm 72.

“And that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left” — See Deut. 5:32; 17:11; 1 Kings 15:5.

“To the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom” — A wise reign would ensure that there be no rising up

(Prov. 30:31), resulting in a long and prosperous one (Prov. 10:27; Ecc. 8:13).

“He, and his children, in the midst of Israel” — The word “children” is better rendered *sons*. The reference is to an hereditary monarchy, with the rulership passing on to the King’s descendants.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN**INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING
YAHWEH’S MINISTERS**

The modern distinction between sacred and secular is foreign to the Israelites under Moses. They are taught to view all avenues of national life as being subject to God, and under His control. Therefore, instruction for various officials responsible for administering the Divine will throughout Israel continues in this Chapter, the Priests and the Levites being those involved. They are granted no land inheritance, for Yahweh is their inheritance, and they will live by the offerings to Him which this chapter outlines. The tribe is divided between Priests and Levites, the former being of the house of Aaron, the latter making up the balance of the tribe. The former are given the more onerous arrangements of the Temple and worship; the latter are allocated the position of assistants to the priests, and ministers to Israel throughout the whole of the Land. If a rural Levite earnestly desires to come to the One Altar to minister, he may do so, and discharge his duties equally with his brother Levites who already minister there (vv. 6-8). However, the fact that one tribe is selected for the work of Yahweh does not permit members of the other tribes to please themselves in worship. They are to exercise the greatest care to avoid the pagan rites of surrounding nations, to look forward in anticipation to the Prophet to come who will be greater than Moses, and meanwhile to sternly refuse to hearken to any false prophets that may arise. The Chapter can be sectionised as follows:

- * *Levi to have no tribal Land inheritance — vv. 1-2.*
- * *Levites to be supported by the people — vv. 3-5.*

* *All Levites to have opportunity to serve at the Altar — vv. 6-8.*

* *The abominations of the nations to be sternly suppressed — vv. 9-14.*

* *Israel to await the Prophet and Mediator to come — vv. 15-19.*

* *False prophets to be put to death — vv. 20-22.*

Key prophetic verses in the Chapter are vv. 15,18.

Levi To Have No Tribal Land Inheritance — vv. 1-2

No land allocation is granted Levi for Yahweh is to be their inheritance, and the offerings made to Him are to provide their sustenance. As an object lesson to all Israelites, they act the part of pilgrims in the Land, their prosperity or otherwise depending upon the manifestation of faith and obedience by the whole nation. So long as Israel remains true to its God, prosperity is promised it (see Ch. 15:4-6), and under such conditions, the priesthood will prosper.

VERSE 1

“The priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi” — This double title, which is peculiar to Deuteronomy, defines priests as being of the tribe of Levi. All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were Priests. The Priests were exclusively of the house of Aaron. The ordinances of this chapter, therefore, relate to the whole tribe.

“Shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel” — See Num. 1:47; 18:20-24; 26:62; Deut. 10:9 — see note. The tribe of Levi was given no individual tract of land as were the other tribes, but was divided among them in order that its members might minister in the worship and education of the other tribes in the things of Yahweh. Hence they acted as both priests and teachers throughout the land. This meant that their lives were devoted to Yahweh without the distractions of mundane things. It meant, also, that their prosperity depended upon the faithfulness of the people, for drought and bad seasons were forms of punishment that Yahweh brought upon the nation in times of apathy or apostasy; and such times would result in a lessening of offerings. The status of the Levites in Israel typed that of Gentile believers in the world for Yahweh is also their inheritance (Psa. 16:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:9).

They are promised that if they obey God they will never lack (Psa. 37:3,9,11,25,34; 84:11; Matt. 6:25-34; Eph. 1:3). Yahweh's inheritance is described as rich (Eph. 1:18), delightful (Psa. 16:6), enduring (2 Cor. 4:17-18) adequate for every circumstance (Psa. 73:26). As the Levites were granted privileges in Israel, so also are believers in the world in which they live. Sometimes it does not seem so, and material prosperity appears to be more attractive than a spiritual inheritance — but that is a test of faith.

“They shall eat the offerings of Yahweh made by fire, and His inheritance” — See Num. 18:8-9. As their sustenance depended upon the offerings of the people, it was to their material benefit that the nation remain faithful to its calling. See Paul's comment (1 Cor. 9:13; 10:18).

VERSE 2

“Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: Yahweh is their inheritance” — Yahweh will attend to their needs. He told Abraham that He is his great Reward; and He will prove to be such to all who serve Him faithfully in truth. See Gen. 15:1; 1 Pet. 2:5-9.

“As He hath said unto them” — See Num. 18:20, and note David's comment — Psa. 119:57.

Levi To Be Supported by Other Israelites — vv. 3-5

The Priests are granted a portion of the sacrifices made by the people. During the wilderness wanderings few offerings were made, but in the prosperity of the Land, ample provision will be provided.

VERSE 3

“And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep” — The offerings were made unto Yahweh, but as the Priests were His representatives

within the nation, they were permitted to share it with Him.

“And they shall give unto the priest the shoulder” — See Lev. 7:30-34. The priest acted as a mediator between the offerer and Yahweh, so that he was indispensable in the service of the Tabernacle, and for the prosperity of the nation. The shoulder of the animal is its main support, and when given to the Priest, indicated that the offerer's salvation was absolutely dependent upon the mediation of the priest.

“And the two cheeks” — The two sides of the face, were to be given to the officiating priests as Yahweh's representative. They signified that the offerer was prepared to hearken to Divine instruction given by Priest or Levite. See Lev. 10:11; Deut. 24:8; 2 Chron. 15:3; Mal. 2:4-7.

“And the maw” — The word “maw” is from the Hebrew *Qebah* signifying *hollow*. It is the fourth stomach of ruminants in which digestion is completed. In the offering, therefore, it represented the complete absorption of the Word. These portions of the offerings, considered as the choicest, were in addition to those demanded whilst in the wilderness. See notes Lev. 7:30-31; Ch. 17. The various parts of the animal here enumerated taught the offerer that he must lean on Yahweh, hearkening to His word, and thoroughly masticating its teaching so as to benefit from its instruction.

VERSE 4

“The firstfruit, also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil” — See Exod. 22:29; Num. 18:12.

“And the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him” — This was not previously prescribed (see Num. 18:12-13). Figuratively it represented the covering of the animals offered (cp. Gal. 3:27).

VERSE 5

“For Yahweh thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes” — The Priest represented the nation (Exod. 19:4-6) and was called and separated for that purpose (Deut. 10:8). In like manner, Christ's disciples have been called and separated to become Priests unto Yahweh (Acts 15:14; 1 Pet. 2:9).

“To stand to minister in the name of Yahweh, him and his sons for ever” — See Deut. 17:12. The Priest, as being called out of the nation, not only represented the people to Yahweh, but by “ministering in

the name of Yahweh, represented Him to the people. The appointment was hereditary, passing from father to son.

All Levites To Have Equal Privileges At The Altar — vv. 6-8

A Levite in a rural environment might desire to serve at the One Altar for sacrifice to be set up in the place appointed of God. He is permitted to do so, and to share the portions of sacrifices there allotted the Levites with his fellow-levites on an equal basis.

VERSE 6

“And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned” — Only portion of the tribe lived at the place appointed of Yahweh to set up the Altar of sacrifice (ultimately in Jerusalem); most Levites were scattered throughout the tribes (see Num. 35:2). Should any have an ardent desire to minister at the central Sanctuary, it is here laid down that he should be permitted to do so, and to share the priestly emoluments. This is in addition to what he may have received from the sale of any inheritance from his ancestors, for though no tribal allotment was given the Levites, they could acquire land or property (see Lev. 25:33).

“And come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which Yahweh shall choose” — It is understandable that one studying the Law as a conscientious Levite would do, would develop the desire to personally participate in ministering at the Altar itself; and as the feelings that dominated such a Levite would find fellowship with those of Yahweh, he was granted permission so to do. See Deut. 12:5; for the place of Yahweh's appointment; and for the feelings that should dominate true Israelites, as typical Levites, see Psa. 26:8; 27:4; 63:1-2; 84:5-7,10; 122:6-7; 137:5; Isa. 62:6-7. See the hope of ministering in the future Temple extended to Gentiles who embrace the Gospel (Isa. 56:6-7). In the Age to come, they will be appointed as priests after the order of Melchizedek, and though their ministry may be in various parts of the earth (Mal. 1:11), doubtless they will have a desire to sometime minister at Jerusalem. This will be granted them.

VERSE 7

“Then he shall minister in the name of Yahweh his God, as all his brethren the Levites do” — He shall be permitted to

minister on an equal basis with those already enjoying that privilege at the central Sanctuary.

“Which stand there before Yahweh” — The verb “stand” suggests two principles: *firstly* the posture of a servant, and *secondly* an indication that the work is never completed. The same term is used of the Priests, as of the Levites (Deut. 17:12), and on the use of this word, the Apostle contrasts the continuous labour of the Aaronic priesthood with the completed work of the Lord: “Every priest *standeth* daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, *sat down* at the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:11-12). This statement illustrates the superiority of the Melchizedek priesthood over that of the Aaronic.

VERSE 8

“They shall have like portions to eat” — See 2 Chron. 31:4; Neh. 12:44; 13:10.

“Besides that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony” — Though the Levites received no tribal land by lot, they were granted certain cities, and apparently were permitted to acquire personal property by purchase (see 1 Kings 2:26; Jer. 32:7-8). They could also acquire houses in their cities which would revert back to them in the Jubilee if not redeemed before (Lev. 25:32-34). Such property could be passed on to the heirs of the Levites. Thus the word “patrimony” signifies of a father.

Gentile Abominations To Be Strictly Avoided — vv. 9-14

The cruel worship of Molech, and the delusive claims of spiritualists are to be strictly avoided as abominable to Yahweh.

VERSE 9

“When thou art come into the land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee” — See Deut. 17:14, note.

“Thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations” — The term “abominations” expresses that which is abhorrent. See its use in Deut. 12:31. It is applied to idolatrous worship with its evil rites, such as the Israelites would see in the Land of Canaan.

VERSE 10

“There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daugh-

ter to pass through the fire” — As children are treated as “an heritage of Yahweh”, to offer them in sacrifice to the evil god Molech was not only an unnatural act, but was particularly abnoxious to Yahweh, and dishonouring to His name. See note at Lev. 18:21. Claiming the firstborn of Israel as His own (Exod. 13:12), Yahweh in His indictment of Israel through Ezekiel, advanced this worship as one of the worst sins (Ezek. 16:20).

“Or that useth divination” — Divination in this context relates to magic. This was widely practiced in ancient times. Nebuchadnezzar is said to have governed his decision as to whether to attack Jerusalem or Rabbah by divination. This was determined by a priest placing some arrows upright and allowing them to fall. The direction to which they pointed determined the issue. Another method was by seeking an augury in the liver of a sacrificial animal (Ezek. 21:21). In this case God overruled the decision, and the King of Babylon marched against guilty Judea and Jerusalem. How dishonouring to Yahweh it would have been for His children to govern their decisions by such means when they could turn directly to Him for help.

“Or an observer of times” — This title is said to be derived from a Hebrew word signifying to cover or cloud over, and hence to use covert arts or mysterious means such as smoke to hide the pretended magical arts. Rotherham renders the term as *hidden arts*, the Revised Version has *that practiseth augury*.

“Or an enchanter” — The word signifies one who *practices magic*, or divines by signs or omens (see Num. 24:1). The root word is from the same as that rendered *serpent*, and signifies to hiss or whisper.

“Or a witch” — The Hebrew word is also derived from a root to whisper or enchant. The Revised Version renders *sorcerer*, and Rotherham has *who muttereth in incantations*. It refers to another form of the occult.

VERSE 11

“Or a charmer” — The Hebrew word signifies to bind with spells. Rotherham has *who bindeth with spells*.

“Or a consulter with familiar spirits” — The Hebrew word *owb* is similar to *ab*, or “father”. The term is used to describe one who claims to have power to call up the dead. It is rendered *bottles* in Job 32:19,

and there related to the belly. Like ventriloquists, a consulter with familiar spirits is one who spoke from the belly, thus imitating the supposed dead whom they claimed to have called up. They developed the ability, by speaking from the stomach, to throw the voice with various modifications into different places, so that it would seem to come from a grave or from an image of a dead person. The *Septuagint* renders Isa. 8:19: “And if they say unto you, seek the ventriloquists and those speaking from the earth, and speaking vain things, who speak from the belly”. The Vulgate renders “familiar spirits” as *Pythons*, for which see the margin of Acts 16:16. “Python” was the name of the supposed serpent, dwelling in Pytho, at the foot of Mt. Parnassus guarding the oracles of Delphi, which, in Grecian mythology, was slain by Apollo. Thence the name was transferred to Apollo himself. Diviners, soothsayers and ventriloquists were popularly regarded as inspired by Apollo, and therefore to have “a spirit of Python” as the Greek of Acts 16:16 expresses it.

“Or a wizard” — The word signifies a *knowing one*; hence one claiming to have an insight into mysterious matters.

“Or a necromancer” — The Hebrew *darash muwth* signifies to follow the dead, or to consult the dead. This, with the other terms here used, indicates that spiritualism and occultism were widespread in the Land of Canaan. The danger was that the Israelites might be induced to follow it, out of curiosity to investigate the claims of the mysterious, or to contact the dead. In Isaiah 8:19 these terms are prophetically aligned with the pretensions of the Apostasy and its clergy.

VERSE 12

“For all that do these things are an abomination unto Yahweh” — The word “abomination” indicates that which is repulsive, such as a bad smell or stink from which one automatically revolts.

“And because of these abominations Yahweh thy God doth drive them out from before thee” — In the days of Abraham, the iniquity of the Canaanites was not full; but since that time their wickedness had increased so that they deserved to be driven from the land. See Lev. 18:24; Deut. 9:4. The warning of the verse before us was that if the Israelites imitated the ways of the Canaanites, they would ex-

perience a like fate: they also would be driven from the land.

VERSE 13

“Thou shalt be perfect with Yahweh thy God” — The word “perfect” in this context means to be mature, upright or sincere. The exhortation was given to Abraham that he should “Walk before Me and be perfect” (Gen. 17:1), that is to be mature in spiritual thinking, and upright in action. Some have rendered it as “be whole-hearted”; that is, not given over partially to demonic powers or evil superstitions, but to walk with Him wholeheartedly and hope in Him. Men of faith will be satisfied with the revelation of Yahweh in the Word, and will not try to pry into the future by the aid of magic, or by a superstitious regard for the stars. They will accept the present and future as revealed by God, and walk accordingly in faith.

VERSE 14

“For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, Yahweh thy God hath not suffered thee so to do” — The fallacy of the Canaanites seeking to comprehend the future from superstitious sources was illustrated by the fact that the Israelites would drive them from their possessions. How foolish for the Israelites, in turn, to follow the practices of the defeated and banished Canaanites! Whereas Yahweh would not “suffer” Israelites to walk in these ways, He had suffered the Gentiles to do so (Acts 14:16). Israel, however, constituted His covenant people, and as such should be “holy as He is holy” (Lev. 11:44).

The stern and detailed denunciation of dealings with soothsayers, wizards and the like, served to illustrate the important place occupied by the prophet in Israel, reference to which immediately follows.

Israel To Await The Mediator And Prophet To Come — vv. 15-19

Having ordered that Israelites must not seek to the occult influences of the Canaanitish religion with its wizards and witches, attention is drawn to the source of information provided by Yahweh, even the prophet Moses, and the greater prophet yet to appear among them. As Moses is unique (Ch. 34:10), so also will the one be whom Yahweh will send, the antitype of Moses who will bring to an end all need of further

prophesying. This section of Moses' speech, therefore, sets forth the ideal King (Ch. 17:14-20), Priest (Ch. 18:5) and Prophet (v. 15), the three offices of which are combined in Christ.

VERSE 15

"Yahweh thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee of thy brethren" — This is a direct reference to Christ as Prophet, as Peter showed when he cited this passage in proclaiming the Gospel (Acts 3:22-23). But it does not mean that there would not be other prophets before the appearance of the Christ; indeed, in context with his statement, Peter referred to others by making mention of "all the prophets" (v. 24). So Moses, in the chapter before us, sets forth the test of a prophet (vv. 20-22). The word prophet is from the Hebrew *nabi*, derived from the verb *naba*, "to boil or bubble over". Gesenius declares that it is taken from "the metaphor of a fountain bursting forth from the heart of a man into which God hath poured His spirit". The Greek word rendered prophet signifies *to speak for, or in the place of*. A prophet not only fore-told the Divine purpose, but also forth-told it. In other words, he not only predicted things to come, but made known the will of Yahweh. In that way he spoke "unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor. 14:3). The unique prophet promised by Yahweh would be raised up from among the midst of the nation as a brother Israelite: surely a complete answer to the trinitarian concept of the Lord commonly set forth by Christendom. At his first advent, Christ was recognised as the prophet predicted by Moses (John 1:45; Acts 3:22-23; 7:37).

"Like unto me" — Moses occupied a unique position in his ministry to Israel (see Deut. 34:10) as does the Lord Jesus. He received the revelation of truth direct from the angel (Num. 12:8) as the Lord did from the Father (John 7:16; 12:49; 14:24). He acted as mediator between God and man (Deut. 5:5; Gal. 3:19) as does the Lord (1 Tim. 2:5). He was also "mighty in word and deed" (Acts 7:22), as is also the Lord (Luke 24:19). But though "like Moses", the Lord is of higher status. Moses was a servant; the Lord is the Son (Heb. 3:2-6), and in that fact is all the difference between type and antitype.

"Unto him ye shall hearken" — Israel, as a nation, refused to hearken unto the Lord when he appeared among men. The

people rejected his Messiahship, and desired a murderer in his place; they repudiated his kingly claim, and declared that Caesar was their monarch. Into the hands of Caesar they were given, and the nation was overwhelmed and scattered among the Gentiles in fulfilment of the warning of Scripture.

This phrase in Moses' prophecy, therefore, has never yet been fulfilled, but the time is coming when the people of Israel will be compelled to do so (Luke 2:34; John 11:52). Meanwhile, the invitation has gone forth to those with "hearing ears" to hearken to his counsel of Truth and salvation (See Matt. 17:5; Luke 9:35; 10:16; John 6:29).

VERSE 16

"According to all that thou desiredst of Yahweh thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly" — The word "assembly" is *qahal*, the Hebrew equivalent of Ecclesia, and the reference is to when the nation was called together as an Ecclesia at the foot of Horeb.

"Let me not hear again the voice of Yahweh my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not" — The nation requested that Moses act as mediator for the people, claiming that the manifestation of power and glory was too overpowering for them to bear and see. See Exod. 20:18-20. The statement before us is most significant, for it reveals that the coming Prophet would also be Mediator for the nation as well as for individuals. His national mediatorship has not yet been manifest, though it has been promised (Luke 2:34; John 11:50-52; Rom. 11:26). See the comment of Paul in Heb. 12:18-29.

VERSE 17

"And Yahweh said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken" — Yahweh agreed to the request, bearing in mind the weakness of flesh and the failure of the people to that point of time. See also Deut. 5:28.

VERSE 18

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee" — In so describing the coming Prophet, the clear statement is made that he would also be a mediator, and therefore a redeemer. Flesh of itself cannot render to God the obedience He requires, so that a Redeemer is necessary.

"And will put My words in his mouth" — Christ proclaimed the words and doctrine of Yahweh, as he himself declared. See Isa. 50:4; 51:16; John 3:34; 8:47; 12:47-50; 14:10. How foolish is the doctrine of the Trinity which claims for the Lord equality with his Father. He disclaimed that the words he spake originated from himself, and declared plainly that they came from Yahweh.

"And he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" — This statement also emphasised the subordinate status of the Son. Christ told the people that Moses

spoke of him (John 5:45-46). He obeyed the commandment of Yahweh to speak plainly unto the people.

VERSE 19

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My name" — The Lord Jesus spoke in the name of his Father, but the people failed to effectively hearken. In dishonouring the Son they dishonoured the Father (John 5:23).

"I will require it of him" — In his proclamation of the Gospel, Peter warned the

THE PRIESTHOOD AS TYPICAL

Deut. 17:14-18:22 depicts three offices of authority and administration in Israel: Prophet, Priest and King, and describes the ideal. In each office the ideal was, is, and will be exhibited by the Lord Jesus Christ, and in measure, by his brethren as the Prophets, Priests and Kings of the Age to come (Rev. 5:9-10). In regard to the Priesthood, note the following:

	Priests	Christ	the Redeemed
* Chosen and set apart by Yahweh	Deut. 18:5	Heb. 5:4-5	John 15:16
* Holiness typical of bodily perfection	Lev. 21:16-24	Heb. 7:26	Heb. 3:1
* Garments for glory and beauty	Exod. 28:2	Psa. 45:8	Psa. 90:17
* Dedicated to Divine work	Lev. 8	Heb. 6:20	1 Pet. 2:5
* Representative of the people to Yahweh	Exod. 28:12	Heb. 4:14-16	James 1:18
* Representative of Yahweh to the people	Num. 5:8-9	John 14:9	Rev. 3:12
* The right of access to Yahweh	Num. 3:8-10	Heb. 9:12	Heb. 10:19-21
* Presents sacrifices	Lev. 1:5	Heb. 10:12	Phil. 4:18

The King ruled for Yahweh governing the people according to His will; the priests were as a wave offering: a body of men consecrated for the service of the Sanctuary as the ritual of their consecration revealed (Lev. 8:22-28) assisted by the Levites (Num. 8:10-11). The prophets set forth the will and purpose of Yahweh, and showed the practical application of His truth in daily living. All these services will be needed in the Age to come, and then the offices, as ideally set forth by Moses, will be fully manifested.

When an Israelite presented a Peace Offering, he gave the breast (Lev. 7:31) and other portions (Deut. 18:3) to the priests. In so doing, he acknowledged his dependence upon their service of mediation for the maintenance of his fellowship with Yahweh. The officiating priest stood for Yahweh (Num. 5:8-9), and the rest of the priests for the mediation between God and man.

Jewish people that if they rejected the teaching of the Lord they would be punished. He did so on the authority of the passage before us (Acts 3:23). Because the people of Israel constituted Yahweh's covenant-people, a responsibility rested upon them to hearken and obey His words. When they failed to do that, the nation was overthrown and the people scattered into all the world.

False Prophets To Be Destroyed — vv. 20-22

As there were true and false ways of seeking knowledge of the Divine will, there were also true and false prophets. Any claiming to be prophets are to be subject to test. A true prophet's words will be authoritative; what he predicts will come to pass. If his words fail to do so he is to be rejected.

VERSE 20

“But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in My name which I have not commanded him to speak” — To “presume” is from the Hebrew *ziyd*, the meaning of which is given in the comment on Ch. 17:12. For a prophet to speak in the name of Yahweh when not so directed is to treat God and His name lightly, and so manifest a degree of insolence or presumption towards Him. Such would reveal him to be a false prophet, like the Pope of Rome. See Jer. 14:14-15; Rev. 16:13. It is possible for flesh to be so deluded as to do this. In the Age to come, any so guilty will be instantly put to death. (See Zech. 13:3).

“Or that shall speak in the name of other gods” — See Jer. 2:8; Matt. 7:15; 2 Pet. 2:1-2.

“Even that prophet shall die” — The penalty for blasphemy was death by stoning.

VERSE 21

“And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which Yahweh hath not spoken?” — There have been false prophets arise who have spoken in the name of Yahweh in such a way as to delude those who hearken to them. Cp. Jer. 28:10-17.

VERSE 22

“When a prophet speaketh in the name of Yahweh, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Yahweh hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him” — The test by which it was to be discerned whether a prophet was true or false, was by the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of his prediction. Jeremiah used this test against Hananiah who spoke falsely in the name of Yahweh (Jer. 28:9-17). When Hananiah opposed Jeremiah's warning prophecy, and declared that Judah would not be taken into captivity by the Babylonians, Jeremiah imposed the Mosaic test of a prophet by proclaiming “this year thou shalt die” (v. 16). Hananiah died that same year, proof positive to those who heeded the sign that Jeremiah was a true prophet. A true Israelite will not fear such a prophet as Hananiah, but will ignore his warnings or teaching. It is significant that the word rendered “afraid” is from the Hebrew *guwr* which signifies not merely to fear, but to be so moved by what has been proclaimed as to *turn aside* from the way of righteousness.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS MUTUAL ANTAGONISMS

Having legislated for various administrations of Justice (Ch. 17), and shown that first priority should be given to the things of God (Ch. 18), Moses now turns to the task of providing detailed applications of these laws. The Chapter is a mixture of statutes and judgments. Statutes are prefaced by “thou shalt”, and “thou shalt not” (e.g. v. 2); whilst Judgments are phrased, “If a man” (e.g. v. 11). The laws provide justice for the defenceless. First, there is justice for the unintentional killer, by the provision of Cities for Refuge (vv. 1-13); Second, there is protection for the Landowner from the unscrupulous encroachment of a neighbour who may remove a landmark (v. 14); Third, there is justice for any accused by the command that evidence advanced against any must be fully corroborated. Accordingly, the Chapter can be sectionised: (1) Cities of Refuge to be appointed — vv. 1-3; (2) For whom they are designed — vv. 4-10; (3) For whom they are not intended — vv. 11-13; (4) Landmarks not to be removed — v. 14; (5) Accusations to be properly corroborated — v. 15 (6) False Witnesses to be severely punished — vv. 16-21. Key verse of the Chapter is v. 10; and its main thought is the need to exercise consideration towards others.

Cities of Refuge To Be Appointed — vv. 1-3

Six cities of Refuge for the administration of Justice are to be appointed in accordance with the instruction of Num. 35:1-34: three on each of the eastern and western sides of the Jordan. Already, the three cities on the east have been appointed (Deut. 4:41); and the appointment of the three on the west awaits the conquest of the land by Joshua (Josh. 20). These Cities of Refuge foreshadow the hope set before the believer in the Gospel (Heb. 6:18-20). Each city is to be in a prominent place, as the Gospel is to be prominently displayed before all; and are appointed throughout the land so as to be convenient for any who may need their use, even as the word of faith is nigh those who need it (Rom. 10:8). To assist in the cause of Justice and Mercy, instructions in

addition to those already given are now laid down, particularly the command to maintain the roads in such order as to make the cities so designated of easy access to all.

VERSE 1

“When Yahweh thy God hath cut off the nations, whose land Yahweh thy God giveth thee, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their cities, and in their houses” — One of the objects of Deuteronomy was to remind Israelites of any amendments of the Law already given that would need adjustment when the nation became a settled community in the land. See Ch. 6:10; 7:1-2; 12:29.

VERSE 2

“Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of the land, which

Yahweh thy God giveth thee to possess it"

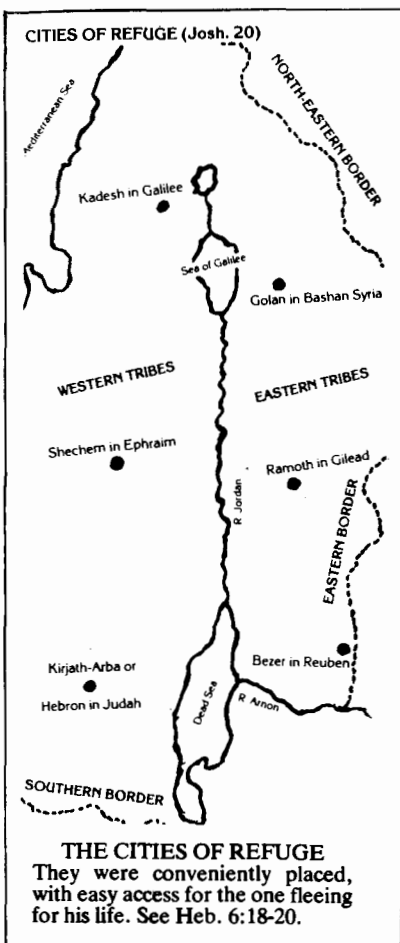
— Six cities were to be separated as Cities of Refuge (Num. 35:11), three on each side of Jordan. Three had already been appointed on the east (Deut. 4:41), and the work was completed by Joshua (Josh. 20:1-9). The expression "in the midst of the land", means in the Land of Canaan proper. There were provisions of the Law that it was not possible to implement whilst the Israelites were in the Wilderness (see, for example, Lev. 23:10). These are to be implemented when Israel occupies the Land.

VERSE 3

"Thou shalt prepare thee a way" — Roads were to be properly constructed so as to give easy access to the Cities of Refuge. As the appointment of these Cities typed the Gospel, the "way" thereto, foreshadowed the "way of salvation". This "way" had been opened to sinning humanity in Eden, when the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" was offered, and the "way of the Tree of Life" was "kept" or maintained by the presiding angel (Gen. 3:24). That "way" was corrupted by the antediluvians (Gen. 6:12); Moses requested greater illumination in regard to it (Exod. 33:13); the Psalmist prayed for greater understanding of it (Psa. 25:9); it is described as "the way of holiness" (Isa. 35:8), the Way of Yahweh (Isa. 40:3), the Way of Understanding (Isa. 40:14); the Way of the Ransomed (Isa. 51:10); the Way of Peace (Isa. 59:8). Christ declared, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6), and elsewhere the Gospel is likened to a City of Refuge (Heb. 6:18-20). In the Acts of the Apostles, the Gospel is described as "this way" (Acts 9:2), the "way of salvation" (Acts 16:17), "that way" (Acts 19:9,23; 22:4).

In contrast, there is the "way of sinners" (Psa. 1:1); a "way that seemeth right but leads to death" (Prov. 14:12); the "way of Egypt" (Jer. 2:18); the "way of the heathen" (Jer. 10:2); the "way of Balaam" (2 Pet. 2:15); the "way of Cain" (Jude 11). Very important was the figurative teaching of the way to the Cities of Refuge. The roads had to be carefully maintained, foreshadowing that there should also be a careful inspection of what is taught as the Gospel message.

"And divide the coasts of thy land, which Yahweh thy God giveth thee to inherit into three parts" — The "three parts" represented the whole, as in the



parable of the woman who hid leaven in three measures of meal (Matt. 13:33). The division of the land in such a way, and the placing of the Cities of Refuge therein would provide convenient access to any who through urgency of need required to get to a city quickly. So also with the Gospel. Paul wrote: "The word is nigh thee . . . that is the word of faith, which we preach" (Rom. 10:8).

"That every slayer may flee thither" — See Num. 15:15-24; Deut. 4:42. Vengeance could be taken against any slayer showing the need to exercise the greatest care in case of accidents, for death itself no matter how it comes, is a negation of the

purpose of the living God in creation. Sin in the flesh, or the lusts of the flesh, is a murderer (John 8:44), and to give way to it, or to sow to it, is to court death (Gal. 6:8). Thus lawlessness, or rejection of Divine Law is a sin unto death (1 John 3:4; 5:16), and one who hates his brother without proper cause is a murderer, for whom there is no City of Refuge (1 John 3:15). But there are sins not unto death, for which forgiveness will be granted (see 1 John 1:9; 2:2; 5:16), and in the mercy of God most sins are forgivable (see Matt. 12:31). To obtain immunity from these killers, believers in the mercy and justice of Yahweh should seek protection in the Christ-City of Refuge (Heb. 6:18), moving thereto along the "living way" (Heb. 10:20).

For Whom Designed — vv. 4-10

As the Law provides the right of a next of kin to avenge the murder of his relative, provision is also made against the miscarriage of justice in the case of accidental death. The offending party had to hasten to a City of Refuge to have his case properly adjudicated.

VERSE 4

"And this is the case of the slayer, which shall flee thither, that he may live" — If any caused the death of another, his own life was in jeopardy, for the Law laid down the principle of life for life. He had to establish his right to life by showing that the death was accidental.

"Whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past" — See Num. 35:15. The word "ignorantly" signifies *accidentally*. Rotherham renders it *unwittingly*.

VERSE 5

"As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die" — By "helve" is meant the handle of the axe.

"He shall flee unto one of those cities, and live" — Though the death was accidental, it brought the one guilty of manslaughter under risk of death from the hands of the avenger of blood. To escape from him it was necessary to seek the shelter of a City of Refuge, where his case could be properly considered.

VERSE 6

"Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him" — The word "avenger" is from the Hebrew *ga'al*, and is elsewhere rendered as *redeemer* and *next of kin*. See this subject thoroughly covered in *The Book of Ruth*, pp. 91-96.

"Whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past" — It is significant that the murderer is defined as one who *hated his brother*, and that its legislation decreed that all such were worthy of death. John taught: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:15).

VERSE 7

"Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee" — Three Cities of Refuge had already been allocated east of the Jordan (Deut. 4:41), but three more were yet to be appointed in the Land of Canaan west of the Jordan (Num. 35:14).

VERSE 8

"And if Yahweh thy God enlarge thy coast" — See Deut. 12:20.

"As He hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which He promised to give unto thy fathers" — See Gen. 15:18-21; Deut. 1:8. In fact, Israel did not receive all the land promised Abraham because the people failed to keep to the conditions outlined in the following verse.

VERSE 9

"If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day" — Full possession of the land promised Abraham was conditional upon obedience under the Mosaic covenant.

"To love Yahweh thy God, and to walk ever in His ways" — This sums up all the requirements of the Law. See Deut. 6:4-6; Mark 12:29-34. If a person really "loves Yahweh", he will delight in pleasing Him; and that demands obedience.

"Then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, besides these three" — If necessary, with the extension of inheritance granted, the number of Cities of Refuge could be increased. The principle underlined in doing so was that mercy and justice shall always be available.

VERSE 10

“That innocent blood be not shed in thy land” — “Innocent blood” means life shed unnecessarily, or from wrong motives. See Deut. 21:8. Manasseh shed “innocent blood”, in other words, put to death people who did not deserve such a penalty (2 Kings 24:4), and the nation having endorsed or condoned his action suffered accordingly (Jer. 7:6; 22:17; 26:15). Such miscarriage of justice is hated of Yahweh (Prov. 6:17), and Jewry, in the days of the Lord, earned that hatred by putting Christ to death though innocent of any crime (Matt. 27:4-5).

“Which Yahweh thy God giveth thee for an inheritance” — The real ownership of the land was vested in Yahweh, which fact is constantly asserted throughout Deuteronomy.

“And so blood be upon thee” — There was no immunity, no City of Refuge for any guilty of shedding the blood of those innocent of guilt. The supreme penalty must be exacted against such. The Jewish people were guilty of this sin when they murdered the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 7:52), as even Judas ultimately warned their leaders (Matt. 27:4-5). They boasted that they had “no king but Caesar” (John 19:15), and boldly declared of the Lord’s execution “his blood be upon us and our children” (Matt. 27:25). In doing so they invoked this law against themselves. Yahweh gave them over to “their king”, Caesar, and in A.D. 70 they paid the penalty of their wickedness in the blood shed by the Romans. The Law condemned them for their action in repudiating Christ, a fact that those who visit the Fortress Masada should bear in mind.

For Whom The Cities Were Not Designed — vv. 11-13

Whilst the provision of Cities of Refuge ensures justice for those guilty of accidental killing, it provides no immunity for murderers. And figuratively, those who permit the lusts of the flesh to constantly dominate them are categorised as a family of murderers (see John 8:44). When this is done knowingly, and nothing is done about seeking the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ, those responsible are guilty of treading “under foot the Son of God” (Heb. 10:29), and are treated as murderers.

VERSE 11

“But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him,

and smite him mortally that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities” — A murderer may attempt to escape the consequences of his crime by seeking the shelter of a City of Refuge.

VERSE 12

“Then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence” — The congregation, through its representatives subjected refugees to examination, determining their guilt or otherwise, as would a jury today (Num. 35:24). If this enquiry established the guilt of the one seeking refuge, the elders of the criminal’s city were advised accordingly, and they had to take him into custody and deliver him unto the Revenger of Blood, or next of kin.

“And deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die” — See v. 6. The next of kin (Avenger of Blood) would proffer evidence accusing the killer of the crime of murder, and supplying evidence to justify this before the congregation in the City of Refuge in which the accused had taken refuge. If found guilty, the criminal would be placed into the custody of the elders of his own city, who would deliver him up to the Avenger of Blood who was then required to cast the first stone.

VERSE 13

“Thine eye shall not pity him” — See v. 21. This severity should also be manifested toward the Devil or sin in the flesh, which is a murderer (John 8:44). Paul exhorted: “make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:14). The tendency of flesh is to sympathise with fleshly emotions, refusing to bear in mind the fatal results of doing so.

“But thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel” — The verb “put away” is from a Hebrew word signifying to burn, i.e. to purge. See also Deut. 21:9. The need for the exercise of capital punishment is clearly set forth in Scripture. See Gen. 9:6; Lev. 24:19,21; 2 Sam. 21:1,14. It will be reinstated at the Lord’s return (Zech. 13:3).

“That it may go well with thee” — Sound discipline and punishment provide healthy restraints for society. The lack of such today is largely responsible for the growth of crime and violence. This statement is a recurrent phrase throughout *The Book of Deuteronomy*: e.g. 4:40; 5:16,29 etc.

Justice For the Landowner — v. 14

Boundaries of individual land inheritances were established by landmarks. To remove these is to undermine an owner’s divine grant and livelihood. Figuratively, this is tantamount to removing his inheritance in the Gospel.

VERSE 14

“Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour’s landmark” — A landmark established the boundary of a person’s inheritance. They are still used for that purpose in the countries of the Middle East. As the land promised belonged to Yahweh (Lev. 25:23), and was allocated to the tribes and families of Israel by divine decree, a solemn warning is used against any interference therewith (Deut. 27:17. See also Job 24:2; Prov. 22:28; 23:10; Hos. 5:10). To remove a landmark was to change and limit the divine inheritance. Naboth refused to sell his inheritance to Ahab, not because the king’s price was not adequate, but because he viewed his holding of greater importance than a mere tract of country or any sum of money: it was to him a divine grant, his small portion of the Kingdom of God, and no amount of compensation could satisfy that. He was prepared to suffer death for it. It is significant that the promise of the Gospel is described as an inheritance (Eph. 1:11,14,18), and accordingly, to remove a landmark, is typically to limit or alter its scope. This is equivalent to “proclaiming another Gospel” (Gal. 1:8). When the doctrines of the Truth are perverted or polluted, landmarks are figuratively removed.

“Which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that Yahweh thy God giveth thee to possess it” — The division and apportionment of the Land of Promise were decided when Joshua conquered Canaan (Josh. 14:1; 18:1-6 etc.), and according to the Law of the Jubilee, if disposed of in any way, should revert to the original family. Therefore, it represented an eternal inheritance in the Kingdom of God (the Land of Promise) as far as the tribe or family were concerned. A new generation, however, might question that which their forefathers have established, and alter at will the limits or inheritances laid down originally. Figuratively this has frequently occurred, in that the hope of the Gospel has been subjected to doctrinal challenges, with often a repudiation of the standards “of old time”. In the words of

Isaiah, “the child behaves himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable” (Isa. 3:5). There then is need for a revival, for a return to “the old paths” (Jer. 6:16; 18:15), or, figuratively, to replace the spiritual landmarks.

Justice For The Accused — v. 15

So that perfect justice may prevail all accusations against another are to be properly corroborated: two or three witnesses are required to endorse an accusation.

VERSE 15

“One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established” — In any matter of accusation more than one witness is required; in other words, all evidence must be substantiated (see Exod. 20:16; 23:1; Deut. 5:20). In Deut. 17:6, the need of corroborated evidence is stated as a necessity in support of a charge involving capital punishment. But here the need is extended to involve charges of lesser importance. In order to conform to this requirement, Jezebel provided carefully schooled false witnesses to endorse the pretended crime of Naboth, and on that evidence he was executed (1 Kings 21:10,13). The same hypocritical legality was attempted in the charges levelled against the Lord, but in that case it failed. There were some present at his trial (probably Joseph and Nicodemus) who were able to successfully challenge evidence submitted (Matt. 26:59-60). That forced Caiaphas to condemn Christ without a lawfully established case. How low will men descend to gain their way!

Perjury To Be Severely Punished — vv. 16-21

A deterrent is introduced against perjury shown towards one accused. When it is suspected, the evidence is to be sifted carefully. If proved, the perjurer is to be convicted and made to suffer the penalty he sought to bring upon his brother.

VERSE 16

“If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong” — False witnessing is perjury. It is specifically prohibited by the ninth Commandment (Exod. 20:16; Deut. 5:20), and is especially hated of Yahweh (Prov. 6:19). Perjurers are guilty of deceit (Prov. 12:17) and lies (Prov. 14:5); their punish-

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ATTITUDE TOWARDS WARFARE

The strict justice that is to characterise the internal affairs of Israel is also to direct its relations with other nations, even its enemies. Not only in its worship, but in its warfare it is to be holy: in righteousness judging and making war (Rev. 19:11). Warfare is to be conducted as a fight of faith. It is to be waged in the light of the exhortation: "the battle is not yours but God's" (2 Chron. 20:15; Rom. 8:37). Fear will find no place in such a battle if faith is strong enough, no matter how great the odds may be against the army (2 Chron. 20:12). Its warriors are not to fight in their own strength; but to go forth with a prayer on their lips (Num. 10:9), recognising the Divine aid that is available (vv. 3-4). The battle is to be conducted as a holy war, with Israel's warriors displaying kindness and mercy where they are appropriate. Accordingly, the betrothed are to be exempted from service; offers of peace are to be made to the enemy; and fruit trees are to be preserved in time of siege. But whilst peace is to be offered to those "afar off" (v. 15), ruthless opposition is to be shown to those in the land (v. 16). This is to protect Israel against moral pollution, and to cleanse the land as a Divine inheritance. Because of the restrictions of warfare laid down in their law, Israelitish kings were famed for their humanity and restraint (1 Kings 20:31), in contrast to the inhuman savagery and unrestrained devastation of forests and cultivated fields by Gentile conquerors (See Isa. 14:8).

Israelites To Fight in Faith — vv. 1-4

Confidence and courage provide the secret of success in fighting Yahweh's battles. Priests are to accompany the army in war, and exhort the warriors to fearlessness and faith in the fight. They are to remind them that they go forth in the strength of Yahweh, and that success will attend their arms if they do that which is right.

VERSE 1

"When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou" — In ancient times the chariot was the most feared war machine, and the horse was in-

variably used for battle. The strength of a nation depended on the number of these that could be mustered for war. See Josh. 17:18; Isa. 31:1. Israel, however, was not to put its reliance upon such means of offence and defence. Their trust was to be in Yahweh (see Psa. 20:7). The phrase, "a people more than thou," is literally "a people greater than thou". The ability of an army to successfully fight did not depend on the number of units, but upon the strength of those it was able to put into the field of battle. A small, well equipped, and properly trained army, could have a greater fighting potential than a large undisciplined mob. Horses and chariots

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could give added strength to an army, and instil fear in a people not used to such weapons of aggression.

"Be not afraid of them: for Yahweh thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" — There is need for courage in war. In that regard the Israelites could fortify themselves by recalling the wonderful victories of the past including that at the Red Sea. Egypt was noted for its horses and chariots, and its ability to wage war, but all perished in the waters of the ocean. Yahweh had delivered His people against great odds, and can do so at any time. So Israel, about to enter upon a campaign of war, needed to recall the victories of the past, that were won through the intervention of Yahweh. This exhortation is enforced by the following references: 2 Chron. 20:12,15; 2 Kgs. 6:15-17; Psa. 33:16-17; 46:7; 118:6; Rom. 8:31.

Israel's history provides many examples of Yahweh intervening to save His people against great odds. And therefore exhortations to courage abound. See the words of encouragement offered to Joshua (Deut. 31:6-8; Josh. 1:5-9); Gideon (Jud. 6:12); Hezekiah (2 Chron. 32:7-8); and compare with Psa. 46:7,11; 118:6. As the Israelites lacked the military organisation and weaponry characteristic of the more martially developed nations, the help of God was vital.

VERSE 2

"And it shall be, when ye come unto the battle" — When the army assembled for war, the silver trumpets were first sounded by the priests. This was to serve as a memorial to bring the soldiers into remembrance of Yahweh (Num. 10:8-9; 31:6). The Israelite army fought by Yahweh's directions (see Jud. 20:27-28; 1 Sam. 14:18; 30:7-8; 2 Chron. 13:12), and victory depended on Him.

"That the priest shall approach and speak unto the people" — The reference is not to the High Priest, but one appointed to accompany the army. The Rabbins claim that this priest was called: *The Anointed of the war*. From this, perhaps, came the expression: "consecrate war!" (Jer. 6:4; Joel 3:9). In Num. 31:6 Phinehas is represented as leading the army whilst in 2 Chron. 13:12 Yahweh is said to do so. He evidently did so through His appointed priest. In 1 Sam. 4:4,11 the wicked sons of Eli brought the Ark of the Covenant to the site of warfare, hoping to force Yahweh's

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hand to give them the victory. In this they failed. The verse before us instructs that after the army had been marshalled, and the trumpets had sounded, the appointed priest addressed the people.

VERSE 3

"And shall say unto them, hear, O Israel, you approach this day to battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint" — The Hebrew signifies to be tender. That is to be easily moved, and so be faint-hearted. All in that condition were to return home. See the exhortation of Psa. 27:1-3; Isa. 41:10-14; 35:3-4; Matt. 10:16,28,31. Israel's battles were to be fought in faith, foreshadowing the fight of faith that Christ's followers must engage in. See 1 Tim. 6:12; Heb. 13:6. The weaponry and armour of the soldier of Christ is described by Paul in Eph. 6:10-20.

"And do not tremble" — The Hebrew word *chaphaz* signifies to start, and is so rendered by Rotherham. It signifies to be easily startled or quickly frightened. True soldiers of faith must steel themselves for the battle.

"Neither be ye terrified because of them" — The word signifies to be in awe or dread. The Revised Version renders *af-frighted*.

VERSE 4

"For Yahweh your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you" — The statement, true as it was, demanded faith on the part of the Israelites, because they could not see Yahweh. Hence the importance of them remembering victories that had come through His intervention in the past. We, too, need to remember when God has been for us and has helped us out of our problems. To fortify our faith, it is helpful to recall incidents in the past in which Yahweh has unexpectedly or remarkably helped His people. Examples of this are found in 1 Sam. 17:47, when David gained the victory over Goliath; Isa. 37:36, when Hezekiah succeeded against Sennacherib; 2 Chron. 20:22, when Jehoshaphat in a moment of anxiety gained a victory without the need of fighting; 2 Kings 6:15-17, when the army ordered to capture Elisha was captured instead, and was brought blinded into the city of Dothan; 1 Chron. 14:15, when David was advised to change his strategy and to await "the sound of a going in the mulberry trees", an indication

that the invisible angels of heaven were active helping him.

All such incidents remind us that Yahweh has the power to grant victory, and we should act in faith accordingly. This is the substance of the exhortation delivered to the army before going into battle.

Those Excluded From Fighting — vv. 5-9

As proof of Yahweh's help, and also out of justice and kindness, certain classes of people are to be excluded from military service. In principle, those exempted are persons who have undertaken certain responsibilities, and have not yet enjoyed the privileges accruing therefrom. In addition, the fearful and faint-hearted are to be excluded. Their presence in the army may embarrass and weaken the more courageous and faithful warriors.

VERSE 5

"And the officers shall speak unto the people" — The Hebrew word for "officers" is *shoterim*, a word which signifies *writers*, and which occurs in Deut. 16:18. They were the recorders of the affairs of the nation (see Exodus 5:6; Num. 11:16). They were to address the people, and record the results of the instruction to be given.

"Saying, What man is there that hath built a new house and hath not dedicated it?" — This is a significant statement. It shows that a true Israelite of faith would dedicate his newly acquired home, so that it would conform to the requirements of Yahweh. This was evidently done by some unrecorded religious ceremony. See the title of Psalm 30, and compare with Neh. 12:27. The word in the Hebrew signifies *to initiate, discipline*. That is, to *limit* the use of the home to activities and conduct that Yahweh would approve. A faithful household provides an excellent basis of true spiritual development on the part of the nation, contributing powerfully to its real greatness. When the home is dedicated to Yahweh, the nation (or meeting) will be strengthened. The ceremony of dedication obviously would take place when it was completed, and before it was occupied. So the question relates to one who had built a house but had not enjoyed the use of his property.

"Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it" — There was a danger that a man that had built a house, but had not enjoyed his property, would die in the battle,

and another man occupy it. Why should this happen if Yahweh were with him? Particularly in view of the promise of Deut. 32:30? The answer is because his mind in part at least would be on his house, and not exclusively on the battle, and therefore his undivided attention would not be given to the warfare on hand. The battle of faith requires the concentration of our spiritual resources, which will be jeopardised if attention is diverted elsewhere. Complete dedication is required.

VERSE 6

"And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it?" — The Hebrew rendered "eaten of it" signifies to *profane* it. A fruit tree was profaned, or made available for common use, after a period of three years. Until then, the fruit was considered as uncircumcised, and therefore not to be eaten by the covenant people (See Lev. 19:23). One of the curses pronounced upon Israel if it failed to obey Yahweh was that others would eat the fruit of their vineyards (Deut. 28:30).

"Let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another eat of it" — See note v. 5.

VERSE 7

"And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife and hath not taken her?" — A man betrothed to a wife was granted exemption from military service for a period of twelve months (Deut. 24:5).

"Let him go and return unto his house lest he die in the battle, and another man take her" — See note v. 5.

VERSE 8

"And the officers shall speak further unto the people" — This change in the formula, and particularly the use of the word *further*, implies an attitude on the part of the people that is displeasing to God. The immunity granted those referred to in v. 5-7 is for legitimate reasons. Now the officers speak to eradicate those who lack the necessary faith.

"And they shall say, what man is there that is fearful and fainthearted?" — To be fearful and fainthearted in such a battle implies a lack of faith in the Providence of Yahweh. There was no place for such in His army. Accordingly, they were excluded from the forces of Gideon (Jud.

7:3). The Lord taught that any man "having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is not fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62); the "fearful and faithless" will be rejected at the judgment seat (Rev. 21:8).

"Let him go and return to his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart" — Fear, like enthusiasm, is contagious. One fear-dominated individual can discourage a whole division impregnating it with the spirit of defeatism. The word rendered "faint" in this verse signifies *to melt*, or to lose heart. See the adverse affects of faintheartedness expressed in Num. 13:31-14:3; 32:9; Deut. 1:28-32; Josh. 2:11; 5:1; 7:5; and note how that even Barnabas was adversely affected by the faintheartedness of Peter who feared the adverse criticism and challenge of the Judaizers (Gal. 2:13). How important it is, in times of need, to manifest faith, courage, and fearlessness in the face of opposition.

VERSE 9

"And it shall be when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people" — The *shoterim* (recorders or officers) having separated those who were to leave the army, then subdivided it, and appointed leaders over the various divisions. These were the captains set to lead the people. The word "lead" is from the Hebrew *rosh* and signifies to be *at the head* of the warriors. The instructions of Yahweh were conveyed through the priests and officers to the various sections of the army.

Rules for the conduct of warfare — vv. 10-18

A distinction is to be made between treatment to be meted out to the cities which are far off, and those of the Canaanites. Whereas the former are to be offered the option of peace on condition that they became tributaries to Israel, the latter are to receive no such concession. Because of their gross wickedness they are to be entirely eliminated, as a menace to Israel's faith.

VERSE 10

"When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it" — This was a practice with which the army of Israel was already familiar. Offers of peace were made by Moses to Sihon

king of Heshbon, before he attacked (see Deut. 2:26). This is also the objective in the fight of faith. In proclaiming the gospel soldiers of Christ (see 2 Tim. 2:3) are expected to vigorously defend the Truth against attack on the part of those figuratively "in the land" (Jude 3), whilst offering peace to those "without" when they are prepared to accept its terms (See Eph. 2:17; Luke 10:5-6; Acts 10:36; 2 Cor. 5:18-21). It is interesting that the symbol of the Israeli army today is an olive branch encircling a sword: symbolising that the army only fights to establish peace.

VERSE 11

"And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee" — An answer of peace required the acceptance of the terms imposed. These involved the endorsement of the hope of Israel and the Mosaic covenant in circumcision. In short, the condition for peace demanded the acceptance of the Truth. Part of this is acknowledgement of the higher status of Israel above that of any other nation (cp. Mark 7:27-29). However, this provision was only to be granted to those cities which were "very far off" (v. 15). It was not open to the nations of Canaan, though doubtless individuals as such could have saved themselves by becoming incorporated into the nation of Israel as did Rahab.

VERSE 12

"And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war, then thou shalt besiege it" — Against nations that refused Israel's offer of peace, there was to be no truce, but a long determined, protracted warfare. This was typical of the warfare of faith. See Rom. 6:12-14; Eph. 6:12; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; James 4:4.

VERSE 13

"And when Yahweh thy God hath delivered it into thy hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword" — For examples of this, see Num. 31:7-9, 17-18, 1 Kings 11:15-16. In the age to come, peace will be offered the nations "afar off" though not those found desecrating the Land (Psa. 2:10-12; Isa. 14:32; Rev. 14:6-7). However, if they reject that approach, they will suffer the consequences. See Psa. 2:6-12; 21:8-9; 110:1; Isa. 60:12; Luke 19:27; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

VERSE 14

"But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which Yahweh thy God hath given thee" — An example of this is recorded in the war with Midian. See Num. 31:9.

VERSE 15

"Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations" — The provisions above related to those nations outside of the Land of Promise. Those that inhabited the land of Canaan were to be exterminated. The provision of this verse, foreshadowed the actions of the apostles, when, as described by Paul, they "preached peace to them afar off" (Eph. 2:17).

VERSE 16

"But of the cities of these people, which Yahweh thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth" — See the instructions as recorded in Exod. 23:31-33; 34:11-16; Num. 33:52; Deut. 7:1-2. See the partial fulfillment of this in the record of Josh. 10:40; 11:14. Why was different treatment meted out to those in the land? Mainly because they were occupying the Land of Promise, a territory that Yahweh had separated unto Himself. They could only avoid extermination by removing themselves from that holy land, called "holy" because it was sanctified or set apart for Divine use. In type, therefore, those Canaanites inheriting the land, answer to those who take possession of the things of God, without carrying out the responsibilities thereto. Joshua's entrance into the land of Canaan, was tantamount to the judgment of the future age. There will be found many Canaanites among the Israelites gathered before the judgment seat of Christ, and they will be given over to death. However, to the nations at large, there will be extended the branch of peace. The treatment meted out to the Canaanites is indicative of the ruthlessness with which true Israelites must eradicate from their characters those things that are offensive to Yahweh.

VERSE 17

"But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely the Hittites, and the Amorites, the

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Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as Yahweh thy God hath commanded thee" — These inhabitants of the land of Canaan typified sin in the flesh. We are commanded to "mortify (or put to death) the deeds of the flesh" (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5). Baptism is a symbol of putting to death the old man of the flesh (see Rom. 6:6). Meanwhile, enmity continues between the mind of the flesh and the mind of the spirit (Rom. 8:7-8); for they are "contrary the one to the other" (Gal. 5:27). Peter refers to "fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11), and constantly the life of a follower of Christ is likened to a warfare (see 2 Cor. 10:3; 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 2:3; Jas. 4:1). The warfare is a difficult one, and faith and determination is needed to conquer. To that end, it is necessary for us to recognize the enemy. There were many in Israel who failed to do that as far as the Canaanites were concerned. When they had gained a victory over them, instead of carrying out the instructions of Yahweh, they compromised by making them tributaries (Jud. 1:28,30-35). It is interesting to note that in the verse before us, only six nations are mentioned, instead of seven as listed in Deut. 7:1-3. The Gergashites are here omitted. In explanation of this, the *Jerusalem Talmud* claims that they migrated to North Africa in fear of Joshua. This could be the case, although mention is made of them in Josh. 3:10; 24:11. But no mention is made of any specific warfare with them, and it could mean that, in fear of the Israelites, they migrated before they entered the land.

VERSE 18

"That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against Yahweh your God" — This was the purpose of the ruthless extermination of the Canaanites. To permit them to remain in the land with the Israelites would have been to jeopardise the spiritual development of the latter. The whole purpose of the doctrine of the atonement, as incorporated in the Law, and revealed in Christ, is designed to emphasise the defiling nature of contact with sin. Hence a person only had to touch a dead body, to be legally defiled thereby. The lesson of this is that sin is easily transmitted from one to the other, as believers become victims of their environment. When one embraces the truth there must be complete severance from the previous way of life (see Josh. 23:1-7;

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Jud. 2:3; Psa. 106:34-40). The life in Christ will only be successful if there is a ruthless suppression of fleshly desires, and refusal to condone such, or those dominated thereby (1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:14; 1 Tim. 6:5,14; 2 Tim. 2:17-18; Rev. 18:3-5). The bestialities and moral depravities of the Canaanites were abominable to Yahweh (see Lev. 18:26-28).

Care of Trees in Time of Siege — vv. 19-20

A final restriction in warfare forbade the destruction of fruit-bearing trees, which is a common policy among invaders. This care is advanced on the ground that anything that supports human life should be preserved.

VERSE 19

"When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege" — The key to this verse is in the words in parenthesis which literally can be rendered *for the man*

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is a tree of the field. In other words, fruit-bearing trees represented the righteous, and therefore needed to be preserved in the midst of war. The symbol pointed to the purpose of Yahweh in that regard. A tree is a wonderful symbol of the saints. Its leaves recyle and purify the carbon-dioxide breathed out by man, so that the presence of such is absolutely essential for the maintenance of life. See Rev. 22:2. The Scriptures constantly liken trees to men (Psa. 1:1; 92:12; Isa. 65:22) bringing forth fruit either good or bad (see Matt. 3:10; 7:15-20; 21:19; Luke 13:7-9; John 15:2-8). In the battle of faith, leading to eternal life such "trees" producing "good fruit" will be preserved for the Kingdom.

VERSE 20

"Only the trees that thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued" — Trees that are not fruit-bearing may be used in the siege against the enemy. The spiritual application is obvious.

SUMMARY:

DEUTERONOMY 20 AS A TYPE

The Chapter shows:

1. That Yahweh is active in the world recruiting saints, as soldiers for the battle of faith (vv. 1-4);
2. Those afar off who are prepared to capitulate in the battle, to be are made an offer of peace (v. 10-11);
3. Those who resist the terms of peace are to be given over to judgment (vv. 12-14);
4. The warfare must be continued until complete victory is gained (vv. 16-18).;
5. Care is to be exercised that anything producing fruit to the wellbeing of others is to be preserved in the siege (vv. 19-20).
See the application of these principles to those in Christ:
 1. They are engaged in a fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12);
 2. They are soldiers for Christ (2 Tim. 2:3-4);

3. Their commander is the Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. 55:4; Rev. 19:11-14);

4. Their weapons are weapons of faith (Eph. 6:14-18; 2 Cor. 10:3);

5. The enemy is clearly described (Rom. 6:6, 12-14; 2 Cor. 10:5; 1 Pet. 2:11).

The alternative is submission or extermination (2 Cor. 2:15-16). For those figuratively in the Land, within Ecclesias, there must be ruthless suppression of sin in the flesh; for those that are "afar off" (sin manifested in the world) terms of peace on capitulation are offered.

The application of this type is clear and powerful; the responsibilities of the truth are onerous, and must be conducted in full accord with the instructions of the Commander in chief.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

ATTITUDE TOWARDS HUMAN LIFE AND RIGHTS

The chapter sets out the attitude required of true Israelites towards human life and rights. It is divisible into four parts: 1. The treatment of an unsolved murder case (vv. 1-9); 2. Marriage with captive women (vv. 10-14); 3. The rights of unwanted heirs (vv. 15-17); 4. The punishment to be given rebellious children (vv. 18-21).

Since Yahweh requires the shedding of innocent blood to be punished (Gen. 4:10; 9:5; Num. 35:33), victims of unknown murderers present a special problem. The crime cannot be ignored. In the absence of the criminal it becomes the responsibility of the nearest city to re-enact the crime, and disclaim any responsibility in the matter of the death. This means that the case is not closed but remains open whilst search is made for the criminal. This right of an innocent sufferer to be avenged, is followed by legislation providing for the rights of captive women, of less favoured children, and the necessary respect due to parents. Each of the laws introduced has particular importance in view of the impending occupation of the land. They also each have an important spiritual symbolical significance.

Treatment of An Unsolved Murder-case — vv. 1-9

The laws of homicide demand that murder be punished with the death of the criminal. The purpose is to impress the sacredness of human beings who are made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-28; 9:6; James 3:9). Murder is the violent cutting off of one created to glorify Yahweh, and harshly terminates life designed for service and usefulness towards God and man in preparation for eternal life. The gravity of murder is emphasised in circumstances where the case is unsolved and no punishment is openly administered. In such cases, the nearest town must assume responsibility by a ceremony of repudiation of the crime. The requirements of the Law demand that murder must not be lightly passed over, or forgotten, even though those responsible cannot immediately be found.

VERSE 1

"If one be found slain in the land" — As "blood defileth the land", the divine law required that it must be requited (Gen. 4:10; 9:5; Num. 35:33; Psa. 9:12; Prov. 28:17).

"Which Yahweh Thy God giveth thee to possess it" — See Deut. 17:14 note.

"Lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him" — The body is found, it is obvious that a murder has taken place, but no clues are discovered to establish the identity of the murderer.

VERSE 2

"Then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain" — These elders and judges are the officials mentioned in Deut. 16:18-19.

VERSE 3

"And it shall be, that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take an heifer which hath not been wrought with and which hath not drawn in the yoke" — The officials mentioned determined which was the nearest city to the murder. Its elders were advised of the crime, and because it was nearest to the body, of the victim, had to assume the responsibility of bringing him to justice. Meanwhile, in the absence of the criminal, they had to perform a ceremony of repudiation. This involved a virgin heifer "which hath not been wrought with" or had never been used by man, or set to do any profane

work. The animal was killed by its neck being broken, this representing the crime committed. It also foreshadowed the death of Christ who though innocent of anything worthy of death yet was murdered by his people (Acts 7:52). He was the antitype of the virgin heifer, for of him it was declared: "who shall declare his generation?" (Isa. 53:8). But the fate of the heifer also represented the fate of the murderer when once found. The Law appointed that he should be put to death, without exception. This is illustrated by the Law of the Firstborn. It permitted the "firstling of an ass to be redeemed with a lamb"; but if that were not done its neck had to be broken (Exod. 13:13). The ass represented unredeemed Israel, as did the heifer. The form of death, however, taught that there was to be no mercy, or redemption for such. The murderer had murdered his victim without sound cause, or mercy, and was to suffer a like fate.

VERSE 4

*"And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown" — The Revised Version rearranges the verse to read: "unto the valley with running water, which is neither ploughed nor sown". This deserted spot represented the scene of the crime; a place unfrequented and deserted. The term "rough valley" is from the Hebrew *nachal aithar* which can be rendered, *rapid torrent*. The running stream in the valley represented the means of bearing away any guilt relating to the crime on the part of the city. The elders protest their ignorance of who committed the murder and certainly do not condone his action. The valley had to be one that had been "neither eared (old English for *ploughed*) nor sown"; an isolated deserted place not frequented by man.*

*"And shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley" — The Revised Version renders "strike off" as *break*. Hence, in the strict meaning of the term, the heifer was not a sacrifice, for its blood was not shed. As a young virgin-cow it was in full vigour of life; and in the violent death it suffered dramatised that of the victim. The form of death is similar to that administered to an unredeemed ass (Exod. 13:13). It testified that no redemption had been made for the crime committed, so that the responsibility remained on the nation to search out the murderer and administer the punishment due to such a crime.*

VERSE 5

"And the priests, the sons of Levi shall come near, for them Yahweh thy God hath chosen to minister unto Him, and to bless in the name of Yahweh" — In the drama enacted in the valley, the priests represented Yahweh who knew the guilty party. They acted in His name. See Num. 6:22-27; Deut. 10:8; 1 Chron. 23:13; Mal. 2:7.

"By their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried" — The priests acted as judges in the Theocracy of Israel. See Deut. 17:8-9; 19:17. The Hebrew word rendered "word" signifies *mouth*; and denotes *utterance*. Decisions of the priests as judges were binding.

VERSE 6

"And all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley" — The beheaded heifer represented the murdered party. Therefore in washing their hands over her, the elders of the city on its behalf, publicly disowned any involvement in the murder. See Psa. 26:6; 73:13. Note the ceremonial action of repudiation of guilt by Pilate (Matt. 27:24). The animal was not beheaded but had its neck broken.

VERSE 7

"And they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither hath our eyes seen it" — This was a disclaimer that the ninth commandment had been broken by them in fact or intent (see Deut. 5:20). In the trial of the Lord, the people shouted: "his blood be upon us, and upon our children" (Matt. 27:25), by which they endorsed the action of their leaders in claiming that the Lord was worthy of death. In their blindness, the people shewed themselves to be in a worse state than Judas, who at least recognised, and confessed to the crime. The Lord was murdered (see Acts 7:52), though the people were ignorant of the fact (Matt. 27:4).

VERSE 8

"Be merciful, O Yahweh, unto Thy people, Israel, whom Thou hast redeemed" — This plea testified that as Yahweh's redeemed people, they had an obligation to endorse the Truth. The word "merciful" is from the Hebrew *kaphar*, and signifies "atonement" or "cover". In Ezek. 16:63 it is rendered "pacified", be-

cause sins are forgiven or covered over (Psa. 32:1), and hence Yahweh's anger is pacified. Young translates the term, *receive atonement*. The elders are represented as asking forgiveness on behalf of the city in that it is unable to fulfil its obligation of punishing the guilty, due to ignorance of the identity of the criminal.

The word "redeemed" is translated from *Padah*, meaning to *sever or ransom*; in this case, from the power of Pharaoh and the Egyptian house of servitude and death. The description of Israel as Yahweh's redeemed people implied their obligation to carry out Yahweh's will — in this instance to punish the guilty.

"And lay not innocent blood unto Thy people of Israel's charge" — Innocent blood denotes blood (or life, for that is in the blood — Lev. 17:11) shed without just cause, and hence a murder. The term is frequently used throughout scripture. See 2 Kings 24:4; Psa. 94:21 (Prophetic of Christ's death); Jer. 7:6; 22:3; 26:15. See Paul's accusation against his own people (1 Thess. 2:15-16). The charge of "innocent blood" or murder would be borne by the nation if it failed to carry out Yahweh's will in seeking out and punishing those guilty of the crime.

"And the blood shall be forgiven them" — The responsibility of punishing a murderer rested upon the leaders of the nation (Gen. 9:5), represented by the nearest city. They were held accountable as condoning the sin if they attempted to evade the responsibility. However, in the case of an unsolved murder, a statement of intent to punish must be made as implied in this ceremony. Then, should the murderer subsequently be discovered, he must be put to death (Deut. 19:13); otherwise the whole land will be accounted as polluted (Num. 35:33).

VERSE 9

"So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of Yahweh" — See Deut. 19:13. The Law relating to an unsolved murder case, not only emphasised that loss of life must not be treated lightly, but that those guilty of violence must be dealt with according to its requirements. As shown by the following summary, this Law relating to an unsolved murder case has application to the unlawful and unrecognised murder of Christ.

THE LAW OF THE UNSOLVED MURDER

A murder has been committed, but the murderer is unknown and cannot be brought to justice. Yet the Law is explicit that such a crime must be punished with death. Responsibility to solve the problem and punish the criminal rests with the nation; and as representative of it, the leaders of the nearest city to the murder are required to participate in a ceremony of repudiation of responsibility for it.

They assemble with priests at a lonely valley through which flows a stream of living water. A virgin-heifer unused by man, suggestive of purity and innocence, is likewise taken to the spot, and its neck is broken. The assembled priests then come near as the appointed judges of Yahweh, and before them and over the slaughtered heifer the elders wash their hands with water, and proclaim their innocence, saying "Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Yahweh, unto Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto Thy people of Israel's charge, and the blood shall be forgiven them" (Deut. 21:46).

What was the purpose of this rite? What did it signify and teach?

Firstly, it emphasised the responsibility that rested upon the whole nation to avenge blood shed in such a way. The mention of "Thy people of Israel" in such a context illustrates that. The Law viewed murder with far greater gravity than is the case today. It provided no opportunity for evading the death penalty. Man was created to manifest the glory of his Creator, and the murder of a life robbed God of His due in that regard. Therefore the taking of life was not considered lightly as it is today.

Secondly, the offering did not cover over the crime in the sense of forgiving it. In fact, the heifer was in no sense a sacrifice. It was killed by breaking its neck, not by shedding its blood, and pouring it out. Yet it obviously related to the victim, whose death is presumed to be unjust and undeserved. The whole ceremony was a re-enactment of the crime. The lonely valley suggested the secrecy of the murder; the death of the heifer pointed to the violence suffered by the murdered party. And the form of killing taught that though the murderer was then unknown, the crime was not forgotten or forgiven. The form of death of the heifer obviously linked it in meaning with the unredeemed firstling of an ass which had to be killed in like manner (Exod. 13:13). Therefore, it did not expiate or cover over the crime; instead it taught that the guilt of the crime remained *unredeemed*. Therefore the responsibility remained with the elders to discover the murderer, and execute the punishment demanded by the Law. In washing their hands over the heifer with the running water of the stream, the elders

proclaimed their innocence of the crime or knowledge of the criminal, and this was accepted.

Finally, the rite was prophetic. Though there is no known incident recorded in Scripture in which the rite was enacted, it obviously does foreshadow Christ's death. This should be considered from two viewpoints. Firstly, his death was necessary for the redemption of mankind, and therefore it was in accordance with "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God". But, at the same time, it was an act of wickedness on the part of Jewry's leaders (Acts 2:23), who are denounced as the "betrayers and murderers" of the Just One (Acts 7:52).

But as a murder it was hidden away from men (Matt. 28:12-14). Even Judas admitted that "innocent blood" had been betrayed (Matt. 27:4), and Pilate washed his hands before the assembled accusers saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person" (Matt. 27:24). But they cried, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27:25).

In that terrible exclamation they accepted responsibility for the death of the Lord, on the basis that he had been legitimately executed on a charge of blasphemy. Figuratively they "washed their hands" of responsibility for putting an innocent person to death. Nevertheless, the accusation of murder was laid at the feet of the elders of Jerusalem by the Apostles (see Acts 2:23; 3:13-17; 4:10; 5:30; 7:52; 13:28 etc.). The leaders of Jerusalem recognised the seriousness of the charge laid against them. "Ye intend to bring this man's blood upon us", they declared (Acts 5:28).

Because they refused to accept the Lord as a sin-offering, and continue to do so to this day, he remains to them as the heifer representing the victim whose violent death is unredeemed. By their own confession, both nation and city were guilty of the crime, and were given over to death, as predicted by the Lord (Luke 21:24). A new nation will arise that will acknowledge its sin in relation to the Lord, and to it and to Jerusalem there will be opened up a fountain for the cleansing of "sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1). The murder that currently remains unsolved will then be revealed for what it is, and so provide the basis for the future redemption of Israel. This requires that the nation acknowledge the gravity of the crime committed against the Lord at his first advent, as well as the justice of the punishment administered in giving it over to political death. On the basis of that acknowledgment, a sacrifice will be provided to provide for the redemption of the nation. Meanwhile, as the slain heifer only publically dramatised the crime without providing a means of redemption, so the disbelief of Israel in recognising the significance of the nation's guilt of murder, remains a barrier to the carrying of it away.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Marriage With Captive Women — vv. 10-14

Since marriage with Canaanitish women is specifically prohibited unless, like Rahab, they fully endorse the Israelitish covenant (Ch. 7:3), the "beautiful women" which are the subject of these verses, must relate to those of more distant parts. Even though captive women comprise part of the booty of war, such female slaves are to be treated with respect. If an Israelite desires one for marriage, he must request that she first formally break with heathenism by changing her external appearance. Time must be granted her to mourn her relations, and to adjust to her new surroundings. As with other sections of the Law, this is not only designed for guidance in proper living, but is also prophetic of Yahweh's purpose as exemplified in the things relating to Christ Jesus.

VERSE 10

"When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies" — The warfare referred to was that against cities "very far off from thee" (see Deut. 20:15). The instructions of that section of the Law not only expressed principles to be observed by Israel then, but were prophetic of the proclamation of the truth as a fight of faith on the part of those in Christ during Gentile times. They, like Israel of old, "preach peace to those afar off". What is required on such occasions is now figuratively set forth in the instructions given to Israel.

"And Yahweh thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive" — The strategy to be observed in such warfare is expressed in Deut. 20:10-14. The instructions related to cities "afar off", and not to the Canaanitish cities, for which no provision is made for captives.

VERSE 11

"And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her" — The Israelite, having been granted such a woman as part of the booty of war, finds her attractive to him, and desires to marry her. Likewise, in preaching the Gospel, there are some in the world who appeal more than others, arousing the desire to bring them into captivity to Christ, as part of his bride.

"That thou wouldst have her to thy wife" — Marriage with Canaanites was prohibited (Deut. 7:3), so that the hypothesis must relate to women of other nations.

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VERSE 12

"Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house, and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails" — Everything that the captive woman was to do under the circumstances was designed to make her unattractive to the flesh! The appeal, therefore, was to other qualities than mere external beauty, even that of character. So it is when one is brought into captivity to the Truth. Mere external appeal is set aside for the proper development of the "hidden man of the heart" (1 Pet. 3:3-5). However the things required of the woman had a religious significance. The shaving of the head was required for the purification and re-induction of a leper into Israel (Lev. 14:8; Num. 8:7). In regard to the captive woman it doubtless related to the same principles. But it also restricted her personal glory (1 Cor. 11:15), "dishonouring her head" (1 Cor. 11:5). Her "head" was her Gentile father whose authority, as a captive woman about to marry, she no longer acknowledged. The shaving of her head, therefore, indicated a change of allegiance from that of her previous pagan associations to those of Israel. Such a change was openly manifested by her personal appearance. She also had to "pare", or dress, her nails. She was not to permit her nails to grow long as was the custom then, as well as now. Figuratively this could express the restriction of her activities, inasmuch as the hand is the organ of action. All these changes in the personal appearance of this captive woman were indicative of her inward change brought about by the successful warfare of the Israelite who now desired her as his bride.

VERSE 13

"And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her" — The "raiment of her captivity" refers to the raiment that she was wearing when taken captive. She had to have a change of clothing, replacing her Gentile garb for the distinctive Israelitish garments all were commanded to wear (see Deut. 22:12). This was to include the fringe of blue designed to remind the wearer of his or her obligation to obey the laws of Yahweh (Num. 15:38). This requirement of the captive woman typified that required of converts today. Having been taken captive by the Gospel, and desired by Christ to form part of his Bride, there is need for a change of raiment effected by "putting him on" in bap-

tism (Gal. 3:26-28). True Israelites were noted for their distinctive dress, and commanded to avoid Gentile customs (Zeph. 1:8). Even in externals, those who are Christ's reveal their separateness from the world (see 1 Cor. 11:6), a reflection of a change within (Eph. 4:22).

"And shall remain in thine house" — She is transferred to the Israelite house of her captors. Those who embrace Christ do likewise. See Eph. 2:19-22; Heb. 3:4-6.

"And bewail her father and her mother" — She mourns her parents from whom she has been separated forever. It is a feature of those who accept Christ, that they separate from the world, and learn to mourn whilst they "forget their own people, and their father's house" (Psa. 45:10; See Luke 14:26-27; Eph. 5:31).

"A full month" — This was the normal period of mourning (Num. 20:29; Deut. 34:8). A month was a notable epoch in the Hebrew calendar. Special sacrifices were offered at the beginnings of months (Num. 28:11-15), foreshadowing a new beginning; in present circumstances, a new life in Christ.

"And after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife" — The Hebrew for "husband" is *ba'al*, signifying *Lord*, and implying her subjection to him (Eph. 5:22). The Bride of Christ is made up of those of both sexes, all of whom should be in subjection to their Lord.

VERSE 14

"And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will" — "Whether she will" literally is *according to her desire*. Her desire doubtless would be to return to her native home as Naomi invited her daughters-in-law to do (Ruth 1:12-17). The antitype is significant. Believers are espoused to Christ as "chaste virgins" (2 Cor. 11:2), but if, at the Judgment Seat he find no pleasure in any such, he will dismiss them from his presence.

"But thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her" — The Apostasy has attempted to "make merchandise" of those who belong to Christ (2 Pet. 2:3). The term "make merchandise" in the verse before us is from a Hebrew word *'amar* signifying *to heap*, and figuratively *to chastise* as though piling on blows, and therefore *to oppress*.

The RV renders it "thou shalt not deal with her *as a slave*", or tyrannise her. See Exod. 21:7-11.

To summarise. The Law revealed that there is a way to liberty through love: liberty from the shackles of paganism, sin, and servitude to the wonderful privilege of spiritual marriage. It foreshadowed the liberty found in Christ Jesus (Gal. 5:1). Through the warfare of faith, Christ takes captive a "beautiful woman" whom he desires to make his own through marriage. She must, however, change her ways to conform to the will of the Father. Moreover, he reserves the liberty to drive her away if through misdemeanour he subsequently finds no delight in her. It is her responsibility to go out of her way to make herself attractive to him. That duty devolves upon all who hope to form part of the multitudinous Bride of Christ.

The Right of the Firstborn — vv. 15-17

If a man have two sons by different wives, he must not give the right of firstborn to a younger son merely because he is the offspring of a greater loved mother. This law shows it was possible for an Israelite to pass the blessing of the firstborn on to a younger son if circumstances warranted it, and many cases of this being done are recorded in Scripture. This law, however, limited the exercise of this privilege.

VERSE 15

"If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated and if the firstborn son be her's that was hated" — In this context, the word "hated" signifies a secondary affection as in Gen. 29:31,33; Mal. 1:3; and particularly Luke 14:26. To "hate his wife, children and his own life" is a Hebraism expressing that his first and overwhelming love is for Christ; everything else is subordinate to that. In the verse before us, the reference to two wives does not necessarily denote polygamy, as one wife may have died and he remarried.

VERSE 16

"Then it shall be, when he maketh his son to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn" — It was possible under the Law, to elevate a younger son into the position of firstborn

with all the privileges attached thereto. There were three avenues of privilege: priestly status, authority, and a double portion of inheritance. Whilst Scripture provides many examples of younger sons being granted the privilege of firstborn, the Law also legislated against exercising the right of appointment on the mere whim of the father as noted in this place. The right of the firstborn was only set aside by gross misconduct on the part of the real firstborn, or incompetency on his part to exercise it. Reuben was the firstborn of Jacob, but because of gross misconduct he was deposed from his position (see Gen. 49:4). By virtue of his birth, he was called the "beginning of Jacob's strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power" or inheritance, priesthood and authority. But because of his vile conduct he was set aside and the privilege of inheritance was granted Joseph (who had two tribes in Israel — Ephraim and Manasseh — instead of the one tribe attributed to all the other sons), the priesthood was vested in Levi, and the authority and rulership to Judah. Accordingly, the statement is made in 1 Chron. 5:1 "now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph) the sons of Israel; and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright".

This has an important doctrinal connotation inasmuch as the Lord Jesus Christ is declared to be "the firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1:15); and because of this, it is claimed by some, such as the self-styled Jehovah's Witnesses that he pre-existed. But that is not so. God, in Psalm 89:27 declares: "I will make him My firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth". If the Lord were already firstborn, the statement should be couched in the present tense: "He is My firstborn". The use of the future tense shows that this is a status then yet to be conferred upon the Lord. Scripture reveals that God had two sons: Adam (Luke 3:38) and Jesus. Adam was the firstborn, but because of misconduct, he was deposed, and his status conferred upon the Lord Jesus who is given the title of "the last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45). As appointed firstborn, the priesthood, rulership, and double portion of inheritance ("a name above every name" — Phil. 2:9-10) has been granted him. Moreover, those truly "in him" are described as "the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb"

(Rev. 14:4); and to them likewise will be granted the privileges of the firstborn: priesthood, rulership and a double portion of inheritance: the Kingdom and Divine nature. Therefore, there is an antitypical significance in the verse before us. Yahweh has two multitudinous sons: Israel after the spirit and Israel after the flesh to be yet revealed in the earth (Isa. 66:8). As with Adam and Christ, so with Israel after the flesh and spirit. Though the former appeared first, the latter will succeed to the status of true firstborn, to assume the supremacy over the former.

VERSE 17

"But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn" — Reuben, whose name signifies, *See, a son!* was the firstborn "son of the hated" (Gen. 29:31), and would have been granted all its privileges, but his conduct was such as to show he was unworthy of them; and so they were dispersed among the other sons of Jacob. The literal firstborn cannot claim its privileges unless his conduct is such as to illustrate that he deserves them. In this, as in other matters, "the flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63).

"By giving him a double portion of all that he hath" — This benefit was illustrated among the tribes inasmuch as Joseph, elevated to the status of firstborn instead of Reuben (1 Chron. 5:1-2), had two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, instead of one tribe as all the other brothers. As a further illustration of this, Manasseh, the older of the two sons, had grants of two land portions for his tribe, on the east and west of the Jordan; for half the tribe of Manasseh elected to remain on the eastern side of the river. However, as Jacob showed when blessing the two sons of Joseph (Gen. 48:10-20), Ephraim was ultimately granted the ascendancy, so this younger son of Jacob is described by Yahweh as the "firstborn" (Jer. 31:9). It should also be noted, that whereas a double portion of inheritance is granted the legal firstborn, if such proves disobedient, he will receive a double portion of punishment (Isa. 40:2; 61:7). Every God-given privilege granted the sons of men incurs added responsibility, for "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48).

"For he is the beginning of his strength" — This is the phrase by which Jacob described the status of Reuben his firstborn (Gen. 49:3. See also Psa. 105:36). In simi-

lar manner, Christ is "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14).

"The right of the firstborn is his" — As is noted above, this right could be lost through behaviour unbecoming the position, or could even be sold by one despising its value (Gen. 25:31,33). Believers in Christ have been elevated to the status of firstborns in him, the Firstborn (Rev. 14:4); but they, too, can lose the benefits attached thereto by disobedience or by depositing it for worldly advantages (see Heb. 12:15-17). Notice, that in context with the reference to Esau selling his birthright for "one morsel of meat", the writer to the Hebrews describes the Ecclesia as "an ecclesia of firstborns" (Heb. 12:23 — Diaglott).

Respect Due To Parents — vv. 18-21

An obligation rests upon Israelitish or believing children to honour their parents. This is the "first commandment with promise" (Eph. 6:2) because performance of it guarantees them long possession of the Land. Therefore, stubborn or rebellious children who refuse to honour their parents, or fail to respond to family discipline, must be delivered up to the elders in the gate, who may, for particularly incorrigible children, impose the death penalty, to be carried out by the men of the city. Seeing that a promise is attached to the command to honour parents, to ignore cases where this is not done is to imperil the nation. Hence the severity of the punishment. The nation, as God's son, experienced such punishment because of its stubbornness (Psa. 78:8), and similar punishment awaits those who in these times manifest the same rebelliousness (Prov. 30:11-12).

VERSE 18

"If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son" — The word "stubborn" in the Hebrew denotes one who turns away, particularly in moral issues, and so proves reactory.

"Which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother" — To honour one's parents is a specific command of Yahweh. As the fifth commandment (Exod. 20:12), it is expressive of grace. The promise of long continuance in the land is attached to the obedience of this command, for disciplined family life is the basis of sound national (or ecclesial) existence. This command, and the reward attached to obedience of it, placed matters spiritual in proper perspective, for parents

occupy positions in a family comparable to those of Yahweh, the heavenly Father in His family, and the Covenant of Grace described as the "mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26). Proper respect and regard should be paid to one's parents as indicative of what is due to the Father and His Covenant that binds believers to Him. Therefore the Law treated with great concern any stubbornness or rebelliousness in family life; for the welfare of the whole nation depended upon proper relations between the various members of it. Accordingly, parental discipline is commanded by the Law (Exod. 20:12; 21:15,17; Lev. 19:3; 21:9), was endorsed by the people in acknowledging its blessings and cursings (Deut. 27:16); its lack is the subject of specific warning to parents (Prov. 20:20); and became the ground of Israel's rejection (Ezek. 22:7). See the advice of Prov. 1:8; 6:20-21 etc.

"And that when they have chastised him" — It was, and still is, the responsibility of parents to chastise their disobedient children (Deut. 8:5; Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:17). Abraham was commended for his firm and wise guidance of his children (Gen. 18:19), and his example will be followed by those who desire to walk in his steps. However, fleshly psychology disagrees with the Scriptural method, and the world legislates against the rights of parents to physically discipline their children. But the world is not a happier place for children because of this; and those who fear God rather than men (Acts 4:19; 5:29) will exercise greater thought and love for their children, by chastening them when necessary (Heb. 12:5-7,11). It is an apostolic command to parents in the truth that they bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). The word nurture is *paideia*, and signifies the training of a child by addition of physical chastisement when necessary. The R.V. renders the word as *chastening*, in accordance with the Greek. Modern child psychology has no place for the Scriptural advice, but its heritage is an upsurge of juvenile delinquency as predicted by Paul (2 Tim. 3:2). Firmness and warmth are parental qualities that will find an effective response in children. They will induce the respect that is due to parents, and at the same time will reveal the measure of love that will draw out the affectionate obedience of children. When consistency in demands made on them is blended with reason and considerate love a healthy response will gen-

erally result. The wise parent will not ignore chastisement where it is necessary, and in this verse the Law requires it of parents towards children who are stubborn and rebellious.

"Will not hearken unto them" — The word signifies to hearken so as to obey. It should be noted that Israel, Yahweh's national son, was similarly warned and disciplined by the Father, and when it refused to respond was treated exactly as advocated in this Law. That will also be the fate of those in Christ who act in a similar manner.

VERSE 19

"Then shall his father, and his mother lay hold on him" — Having instructed, warned and chastised the stubborn son, more severe punishment is advocated. Note that this is to be a joint action, both parents co-operating for the sake of their offspring. Such co-operation is vital in the domestic sphere. Where divided counsels exist problems will increase. But where the affectionate, loving feminine qualities of the mother join with the masculine discipline expected of the father, and both support and endorse the action of the other, the greatest good can be anticipated. In the case described in this verse, every such appeal and every form of discipline have failed, and the son remains incorrigible. Now they must "lay hold on him". This implies a physical dragging of the disobedient son before the authorities: an action that brings shame to the parents (Prov. 19:26). They do so knowing that whilst the case will be properly examined to make certain that there has not been any undue provocation on the part of the parents (Eph. 6:4), the Law will rigorously uphold their demands on him, and the punishment they have administered. In that way, the Law endorsed the solemn responsibilities of parents to "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of Yahweh" (Eph. 6:4). As children are the "heritage of Yahweh" (Psa. 127:3), that responsibility rests upon parents.

"And bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of the place" — The son having failed to respond to the teaching and discipline of his parents, and by his stubborn and rebellious attitude, revealed his contempt for Yahweh's Law, his parents have no recourse but to allow its provisions to take their course. He is taken before the elders of the city, and

then conducted to the gate where public business was conducted. This action was designed as a deterrent to other children who may be disposed to follow the example of the rebel.

VERSE 20

"And they shall say unto the elders of the city. This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice, he is a glutton, and a drunkard" — The Hebrew word rendered "glutton" denotes one who squanders or wastes his substance. This son, therefore, is equivalent to the prodigal son of Christ's parable (Luke 15:11-32). In the latter's case, the father was ready to take him back when he returned in a repentant and chastened attitude of mind. That, of course, is a parental privilege. Nevertheless, it is significant, that in the age to come, respect for Yahweh's Law and Doctrine will be such that the parents of offenders will themselves execute the severe punishment to be administered (Zech. 13:3). Obviously, before the rebellious son would be brought before the elders on such a serious charge, the love of parents for their children would ensure that long and patient attempts would have been made to reform him. The stern treatment of the Law, however, is in stark contrast to the liberty and licence permitted in this age of unwise tolerance.

VERSE 21

"And all the men of the city shall stone him with stones, that he die" — This communal execution signifies that the whole city endorsed the punishment, and the Law that demanded respect for parents; witnessing that they believed it should be maintained.

"So shalt thou put away evil from you" — The respect due to parents and to Yahweh was to be endorsed by the whole city which, by so doing concurred in the requirements of the Law. See Deut. 13:5,10-11.

"And all Israel shall hear, and fear" — The purpose of the Law was to restrain evil; and this it obviously would do in spite of modern psychology that claims otherwise. Such punishment is a deterrent. Those who argue otherwise, argue against God, and challenge the truth that the Lord "knoweth all men, and needeth not that any should testify of man; for he knoweth what is in man" (John 2:24-25). Hearing of the punishment meted out to the son who

dishonoured his parents by failing to heed their counsel, the companions of the rebel will learn to restrain their licentious conduct, both in regard to their parents as also to the Father in heaven.

Public Execution of Criminals — vv. 22-23

The disgrace that an execution invariably causes is increased by the exposure of the bodies of criminals. It is a public declaration that the Law has been broken, and the one guilty is accursed of God. However, the bodies have to be taken down by nightfall. An important doctrinal principle is set forth by this requirement.

VERSE 22

“And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou shalt hang him on a tree” — The bodies of executed criminals are to be publicly exhibited by hanging on a tree as a testimony that such are worthy of death. See Gen. 40:19; Num. 25:4. The words of this verse are referred to in Acts 5:30 as applying to the Lord Jesus Christ.

VERSE 23

“His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day” — See Josh. 8:29; 10:26-27; John 19:31. The purpose of this Law would appear to be figurative and doctrinal. The public suspension of a dead human body on the gallows represented the utmost of ruin, abhorrence and disgrace to the one concerned. The body was removed by nightfall teaching that whereas the blessings of the life promised the obedient will be eternal or endless, the curse of condemnation is terminable. It is good therefore, for the dead body to be buried out of sight, which figuratively also takes place at baptism. Whilst it remains in sight it emphasises the prevalence of sin and death. In the beginning man was made “in the image and likeness of God”, that is, with the potential to manifest Divine characteristics. A criminal, given over to death, is a denial of the divine purpose in that regard. Therefore, the body was removed before nightfall, before corruption would take over. In these regards, the dead body of a criminal hanging from the tree foreshadowed the work of Christ on the stake (Gal. 3:13). He is specifically described as having been “hanged on a tree” (Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29), aligning his death with the ordinance of the Law before us. As the body had to be taken

down before night time, so the type was fulfilled in his case. His body was removed towards the close of day. Figuratively, night came when the Lord ascended into heaven (John 9:4-5). Meanwhile, in his death and burial he fulfilled the chronological requirements of the type.

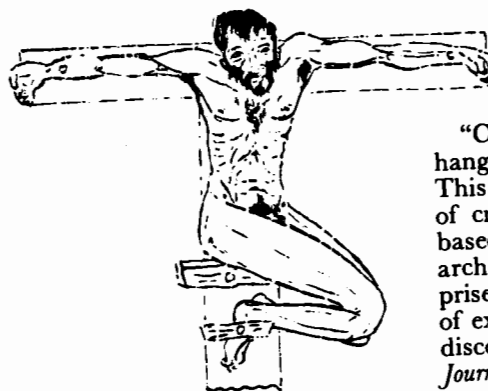
“*(For he that is hanged is accursed of God)*” — These words in parenthesis have particular application to the death of Christ. In Mosaic times, a criminal was stoned, and then hung from a tree (or a stake) to publicly exhibit the punishment due to such a sin (Gen. 40:19; Num. 25:4). The Hebrew of this statement reads more significantly: “he that is hanged is the curse of God”. It was because the curse of God rested on those suspended from a tree, or a cross in death, that the Jewish leaders were anxious that the Lord should die in that way, and hence called upon Pilate to order his execution by crucifixion. This was not a Jewish form of death, so they had to seek the help of Rome. The Lord suspended from the cross exhibited that which was cursed of God, and therefore, to the Jewish mind, as well as to the Apostles, was proof positive that Jesus was not the Messiah — for would God allow His curse to rest upon His anointed? Therefore, even the Apostles refused to believe that he had risen from the dead. The two going to Emmaus whom the resurrected Lord accosted declared: “We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel” (Luke 24:21). This statement is couched in the past tense. They no longer believed that he were the Redeemer. It was not merely the death of the Lord that brought them to that conclusion, for they were not ignorant of the power of God to give life to a dead man (John 11:43-44), but the form of his death. Fervently believing God, they recognised that His curse rested on one who was suspended dead on a tree, and so refused to believe in his Messiahship or resurrection.

With the incontestible evidence of the Lord's resurrection, however, they could doubt no longer (Rom. 1:3), and were left with the problem of how to reconcile the verse before us with the facts of his Messiahship, death and resurrection. They realised that his “manner of death” (John 12:33) was according to the “predetermined counsel of God” (Acts 2:23), and enquired as to how the curse of God rested on him.

What, then, was cursed or brought into contempt of God, (Gal. 3:13)? Was it the man Christ Jesus: his righteous, sinless

character? By no means! The resurrection of the Lord witnessed to that, for, as Peter declared: “it was not possible that he should be holden of death” (Acts 2:24). What then was cursed? Exactly that which is described according to the Hebrew of Deut. 21: “he that is hanged is the cursed of God”. That which was hanged and placarded before believers as cursed of God (Gal. 3:1) was sin's flesh. This was cursed of God, brought into contempt by Him, shown to be worthy of death, for it is the source of all transgression (John 8:44). The curse of God rested upon it as the result of sin in Eden, and brought humanity under the power of death when “by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin” (Rom. 5:12). But with the imposition of the Mosaic Law, a further curse was imposed on man, for it revealed sin for what it is and brought all mankind under its curse. It revealed that God's standard of righteousness was beyond the ability of sin's flesh unaided to reveal it in perfection. Mankind is therefore under a double curse: the curse of mortality as the result of original sin; and also the curse of the Law because he is a transgressor of it. What is responsible for sin? The answer is “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16). These all come “from within” (Mark 7:15; Rom. 7:17-18; Gal. 5:17). They are found “in the flesh”, part of its make-up, and the constitution of the world is based on fleshly lusts. But, adds John, “they are not of the Father”. They were aggravated by sin in the beginning, and now dominates the *kosmos*.

But in Christ they were conquered. Does that mean that it is possible for flesh to render perfect obedience? The curse of



God resting upon the dead flesh of a perfect man shows that it does not. Christ was strengthened to overcome by his conception of the Father (Psa. 80:17; John 1:14; 2 Cor. 5:19-21). He was born with the inherent potential to conquer the flesh, and energised by the spirit-word, co-operated with the Father to bring this about, proclaiming: “Not my will but Thine be done”. Granted an advantage beyond that of other humans (for the Father in mercy desired to help His fallen creation), more was required of him than of any other (Luke 12:48). Complete, perfect obedience was necessary to ensure his resurrection, for he had nobody to intercede for him should he fail. He did not fail but rendered perfect obedience. How? By God's strength: “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh”, God did, by “sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). His form of death demonstrated that the flesh is a sinner, and that his righteous character came from recognising this and seeking the Divine help. Flesh must be condemned as such, and put to death if one would please God. Recognising this, and seeking forgiveness for sins committed in the name of Christ Jesus, the curse of the Law is removed. Accordingly, reasoned Paul: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13). Such a provision was necessary to provide for personal redemption.

“That thy land be not defiled, which Yahweh thy God giveth thee for an inheritance” — See Lev. 18:24-25; Num. 35:34.

“Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree” (Gal. 3:13). This sketch depicting the method of crucifixion 2000 years ago is based upon evidence unearthed by archaeologists in 1968. This comprised the first material evidence of execution by such means ever discovered. — *Israel Exploration Journal*

ATTITUDE TOWARDS CIVIL RESPONSIBILITIES

Chapters 22,23,24,25

In this section, Moses expounds the civil responsibilities upon which Israelitish society, and the individual lives of those who are members of Yahweh's Theocracy, are founded. This Divine order must be recognised and respected in all its particulars. Chapter 22 legislates regarding personal issues in such a society. Chapter 23 continues by regulating entry into, and conduct within, such a community. Chapter 24 moves on to consider marriage and other personal relationships. Chapter 25 completes the section by providing guidance for situations when individuals might find themselves subject to the decisions and mercy of others. Though legislating for Israel so long ago, and having particular regard for the state of the nation in the Land of Promise, the principles expressed above have application also to modern conditions. The world today suffers because it has ignored the divine wisdom expressed in these chapters for guidance of acceptable conduct between one another.

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO LAWS CONCERNING INDIVIDUAL RELATIONSHIPS IN GOD'S THEOCRACY

As Yahweh's holy nation, Israel is to be governed by His laws, which will give them a unique character as a people, within the world of Gentilism. This chapter legislates for the following: Consideration for the Property of others (vv. 1-4); The Sexes to be clearly distinguished by dress (v. 5); Care to be given to the natural fauna (vv. 6-7); Building construction to provide protection for others (v. 8); Yahweh's distinction in nature to be respected (vv. 9-11); Israelites to be distinguished by dress (v. 12); Protective care to be afforded the unloved bride (vv. 13-19); Adultery punishable with death (vv. 20-24); Rapists to be stoned (vv. 23-24); Fornicators to be suppressed (vv. 25-27); Incest strictly forbidden (v. 30).

The legislation of this Chapter relates to failings that are increasingly plaguing the modern world. It is interesting,

therefore, to compare its requirements with the attitude of current society; for it relates to areas of deep concern. In an age of ruthless indifference to the wellbeing and consideration of others, it is refreshing to consider the Law's demands requiring the observance of mutual assistance as here laid down (vv. 1-4). In an environment that is exploiting natural resources with terrifying thoroughness and flouting long established distinctions, it speaks of the Divine order in nature which can be ignored only at humanity's peril (vv. 5-12). In a social order which increasingly condones the exploitation of human beings as pawns in the game of sex, it emphasises the Divine order among men, and requires recognition of the sanctity of marriage (vv. 13-20). People are not simply bodies to be played with. In an era of anarchy that is intent upon throwing off all restraint, it sets forth the basis of an orderly world. That basis is not law itself; but respect for law. To defy law, as modern society does, is to court both licence and anarchy. Divine law cannot be broken without hurt to those who do so. Yahweh's purpose will prevail. If the world persists in throwing itself against His principles, it will destroy itself. It is rapidly nearing that state, so that only the return of the Lord will save it (Rev. 11:18).

Consideration For the Property of Others — vv. 1-4

As associates in a Theocracy, Israelites are called upon to show careful consideration for the welfare of fellow Israelites. This includes care for their lost property. If they find it, they are to take steps to restore it without being requested to do so, even at the expense of their own convenience. In these requirements, the Law inculcates the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would others should do unto you.

VERSE 1

"Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them" — There are important principles to be observed in this law. It implies the possibility of an Israelite seeing his brother's animal going astray, and "hiding himself", or neglecting to do anything about it. The law warned against this. In doing so, it demanded a measure of faith. For who would know if an Israelite hid himself? And to whom would he be accountable? There is only One who would

be cognisant of such a failing, and Who would be in a position to punish it: Yahweh. Secondly, the Law is demanding a manifestation of Love. It lays down the responsibility of true Israelites to help their brethren without being solicited to do so. And whilst this law relates to a brother-Israelite here, in Exod. 23:4 it demands that the same consideration be shown to such even though he be accounted as one's "enemy". So the Law anticipated Christ's teaching to "love your enemy" (Matt. 5:44). It demonstrated that the old covenant was concerned with inward attitudes as well as outward actions. Thirdly, we may well ask the question posed by Paul: "Doth God take care for oxen?" And ponder his answer, "For our sakes, no doubt, this is written" (1 Cor. 9:9). There was a greater significance in the Law than mere considerate care of animals. Oxen and sheep are used figuratively to denote believers, as well as literally for animals. In that regard, the words of Prov. 27:23 are appropriate: "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks,

and look well to thy herds". Oxen and sheep represent individual members of a community, under the care of its leaders. If the leaders of an adjoining community observe one of another ecclesia going astray, it is his responsibility, before Yahweh, to spontaneously attempt to restore him, as the Israelite was commanded to do in regard to his brother's straying animals. He must not "hide himself", a phrase that means to withhold help. For the figurative application of this Law consider the following: Ezek. 34:4,16; Matt. 10:6; 15:24; 18:12,13; Luke 15:4-6; John 10:1,11-16; James 5:19-20; 1 Pet. 2:25.

"Thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother" — Such considerate action on the part of Israelites would have the effect of uniting the nation together in warm fellowship, and therefore is an excellent rule of life for any community. Who can resist the effect of an unsolicited kindness extended in that fashion! And particularly if done by one we have considered, or treated as an enemy. On the other hand, consider the warning issued to those who ignore the welfare of their brethren — Prov. 24:11-12; Isa. 58:7; Luke 10:31-37.

VERSE 2

"And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again" — One might be disposed to care for the lost property of a close relation or friend, but this law required that it be done for a comparative stranger. In that way, the golden rule of conduct epitomised by Christ (Matt. 7:12), was also inculcated by the Law. See how the principle of this law was extended by Christ, and should be observed by his followers (Luke 6:33-36). To retain a straying animal is elsewhere accounted as theft, and punished with a fine of one fifth over its value if denied on oath (Lev. 6:1-5).

VERSE 3

"In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost thing of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thyself" — To "hide thyself" has been rendered "withhold your help".

VERSE 4

"Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again" — Such wayside help must be extended to every Israelite, even one who may be accounted an enemy. See Exod. 23:5, and note Christ's teaching on the service of love: Matt. 5:44; Luke 10:29-37; Rom. 12:20; 15:1; Gal. 6:1-2.

The Sexes To Be Clearly Distinguished in Apparel — v. 5.

The wearing of a garment peculiar to the other sex is forbidden as blurring the distinction between the sexes established by God. Today it is becoming customary for each sex to imitate the other. This has resulted in a decline of relationships between them often leading to gross immorality. Yahweh has clearly defined the functions and positions of each sex, and those who are concerned with pleasing Him will act accordingly.

VERSE 5

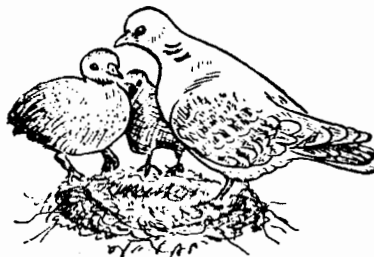
"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto Yahweh thy God" — For the sexes to imitate one another is to confuse the functions and positions of each, and so tend to destroy their individual roles which have been Divinely laid down. See 1 Cor. 11:4-15. Defiance of this law destroys the femininity of women, and the masculinity of men, and can lead to gross familiarity. In this verse, it is described as "an abomination" to Yahweh. The word signifies something that is offensive as causing a stink. Both male and female in the Lord have honourable positions which should not be encroached on by either. Brother Roberts once wrote: "Man is for strength, judgment and achievement; woman is for grace, sympathy and ministrations. Between them they form a beautiful unit: 'heirs together of the grace of life'".

Observe how modern is this ancient Law of Moses. Here it legislates against the use of unisex dress, that is clothing designed to camouflage or obscure the differences of sex, a trend which is becoming popular in the modern world. It is an outrage on decency and nature for men or women to seek to erase the distinction of their own sex and imitate each other. It fosters softness and effeminacy in men

and boldness and impudence in women. It encourages levity and hypocrisy in both, and opens the door to many evils which are abominable to God and a disgrace to humanity. The principle applies not only to clothing but to anything relating to that which distinguishes one sex from another. A Jewish comment in the *Soncino Pentateuch* declares: "Rites in Syrian heathenism included the exchange of garments by the sexes and led to gross immorality". Some may imagine that the use of unisex clothing, or the exchange of garments, are harmless forms of fun. Yahweh looks upon these things as abominable, as trying to hide the difference He made in the sexes in the beginning. Those who show concern for Him will take heed to this and avoid even "the very appearance of evil".

Consideration: Even For Birds — vv. 6-7

Care must be taken that the species of creation are not endangered by selfish thoughtlessness. To do so is to threaten some with extinction with the possibility of destroying the balance of nature established by a wise Creator. In modern times, hundreds of species of birds and animals have disappeared through man's rapacity and selfish indifference, with the result that



in many instances the balance of nature has been seriously disaffected. How wise are Yahweh's laws in all their requirements!

VERSE 6

"If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young" — Yahweh's eyes are upon all His creation (Luke 12:6), and whilst He has permitted the use of birds and animals for food, the wasteful destruction of His creation is of deep concern to Him. To take the dam (mother) with the young is to take shameful advantage of the natural instincts of the mother to protect her de-

fenceless chicks. See Gen. 32:11; Prov. 12:10; Matt. 23:37. Further, such careless indifference to natural fauna could lead to extinction in the family of the birds with consequent upset of the balance of nature. Moreover, as He has legislated for the care of birds, Israelites should recognise that they to Him are "worth much more" than the sparrows (Luke 12:7).

VERSE 7

"But thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days" — By observing this law, due consideration is shown for the preservation of the species, a principle that should be observed in normal relationships. The latter section of this verse, links the consideration shown for birds, with the honour that should be paid to parents, for the blessing is similar in both cases: dwelling long in the land (Exod. 20:12). Observance of Yahweh's laws, therefore, has "promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). Certainly Israel would be blessed by the observance of laws that preserved the natural fauna and flora in the Land. See Deut. 4:1; Prov. 22:4. Israelites were taught to watch nature, and to benefit from the lessons it reveals. The modern world of large cities, selfish indifference to the laws of nature, and the reckless squandering of its resources has largely hidden the lessons of life from our notice. Among other things it has wantonly destroyed much of bird life. The value of the law of this verse is commented upon by G. S. Gansdale in *Animals of Bible Lands* as he makes reference to the wasteful and wanton wholesale trappings of birds:

"This practice is still common in many countries around the Mediterranean and it largely accounts for the lack of singing birds in Italy. During the spring migration — and probably at other times too — small children wander into roadside restaurants in the Lebanon and Jordan selling strings of freshly-plucked sparrows, larks, finches etc., to be grilled and eaten on the spot. Present-day Israel is in great contrast, for few of these birds are harmed, whether resident or on migration. Such ruthless killing was discouraged when the Hebrews occupied Canaan, as witness the humane and sensible law of Deut. 22:6 that forbids the taking of both the adult birds and the nestlings or eggs; the latter could be used, while the parent birds were left to breed again. The need

for such reasonable conservation of wild life is still unrecognized in many parts of the world, where old and young are shot indiscriminately without regard for the future".

Consideration For the Welfare of Others

— v. 8



The greatest care for the wellbeing and lives of others is to be of common concern, even in building requirements.

VERSE 8

"When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence" — In the Near East houses were built with flat roofs so that the inhabitants and their guests might enjoy the balmy air of an evening. This, however, presented a danger in that one unused to the home might fall from the elevation if protection against such an eventuality were not provided. Hence a railing or a parapet is required. The *New International Version* renders "battlement" as *parapet*. Human life is not to be unnecessarily exposed to danger. In this, as in other ways, each one is his brother's keeper (Ct. Gen. 4:9). How much more in those things relating to eternal life (Matt. 18:6-7; Acts 20:26-27). We need to anticipate problems and guard against them.

Distinctions In Nature To Be Respected

— vv. 9-11

The distinction of species is God-designed (Gen. 1:11), and must not be confused. Israel is commanded to observe this need for separateness in minor things in order to impress the necessity for being so in other, more important matters.

VERSE 9

"Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seed; lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard be defiled" — to break this law would not be conducive to the best crops, for one plant would need to fight the other to survive. Moreover with the harvest ripening at different times, the work of the harvestman would become more difficult. So the Law taught by nature that separateness is best in producing a proper spiritual harvest for Yahweh (see Lev. 19:19. Cp. Matt. 6:24; 9:16). For "fruit of thy seed", the Hebrew has *fulness of the seed* emphasising that better results may be expected through observation of this law, in both natural and spiritual realms.

VERSE 10

"Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together" — These two animals are of different sizes and motions, and to yoke them together would cause pain and discomfort, and would interfere with the efficiency of the labour. See Amos 3:3; 2 Cor. 6:14. The symbol of yoking is used to describe marriage. Whilst it is wrong to marry out of the Truth, it is also important to select a partner within the Truth who can co-operate in the aspirations and ambitions of life; and particularly so in regard to the work of the Truth. To do otherwise is to lay the foundation for unnecessary friction and serious trouble. The best results of marriage, or in any other field of endeavour, come when there is complete co-operation in the home.

VERSE 11

"Thou shalt not wear a garment of diverse sorts, as of woollen and linen together" — The Hebrew has it: "a garment made of two kinds of stuff". The Hebrew *sa'ainez* is used only here, and in the parallel passage of Lev. 19:19, where it is defined as "mingled of linen and woollen". The LXX has *kibdolos* (spurious) in the text. The reference is to cloth woven from yarn of two different materials. Hence, many synthetic cloths of today would be barred from use under the law. Moreover, humanity would be better off without synthetic garments. How much healthier it would be for men to be busily employed in the open air raising sheep to obtain the wool for garments; or sowing cotton crops for linen, than it is for women to be employed in vast factories as today, manufacturing synthetic cloth that is designed

enhanced as a result, and we can the more readily thank our God for placing in our hands such a wonderful revelation of His purpose as *The Bible!*

What has interested us greatly has been the manner in which the laws laid down for Israel in fact provide a blueprint for the correction of problems that faces mankind today. Take Deuteronomy 22 for example. Every law listed in that remarkable chapters has been flouted by the modern world. In consequence it suffers from the very problems the laws therein stated were designed to correct. And the implementation of those laws will form part of the way in which changes will be wrought in the world in the Age to come. Life will then be based upon rural principles such as Israel observed, or was called upon to observe, when the nation occupied the Land of Promise. So as this section of the Law, is studied, do not look upon it as something archaic and "done away in Christ" as it is often incorrectly, and even contemptuously disposed of. These principles will form part of the administration of the Kingdom when the Law shall go forth from Zion for the education and guidance of all mankind (Isa. 2:2-4). The glorified saints, under Christ will supervise the observance of its ordinances, and mankind will appreciate the benefits of a divinely-controlled administration that will demand a comprehension of spiritual principles whilst not neglecting material needs.

Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately for us — see Rom. 11:12) the Law was never properly administered in the past. It became an ideal in Israel, but the reality fell far short of this. For, as a matter of fact, most of the principles set forth by Moses were never properly observed. After the death of Joshua, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes", and the Law was relaxed or forgotten. During that period, the Ark was taken captive by the Philistines, and returned to Kirjath-jearim until the Temple was built by Solomon, so that for some 500 years, the Ark and the Tabernacle were separated from each other. This meant that the worship of Yahweh could not be conducted as required by the Law, and such important festivals as the Day of Atonement, could not be properly celebrated. These matters are

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The Christadelphian Expositor

A Verse by Verse Commentary Upon the Scriptures



Editorial

Dear Reader,

BIND YOUR COPIES

The Christadelphian Expositor is produced as a part-publication which can be linked together, and bound to make a complete book. That is why each number, even at the conclusion of a Volume, might stop at the end of a verse, or even half way through a verse! Some find this strange, and some amusing; but those who go to the trouble of keeping their copies to bind into a complete volume covering the Book of the Bible treated with, find they provide a valuable exposition in depth of the Book expounded. We were recently shown a complete set of the books from Genesis to Numbers bound in individual volumes, and were very impressed, and

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

to supercede the natural and better products of wool and linen. God's laws have a utilitarian value as well as being of spiritual significance. Of course, the main principle behind this law is that the two materials, being completely dissimilar, should not be used in conjunction with each other. They are not appropriate. One is for summer use, and the other for winter. The principle, as worked out in moral issues, is that things that differ should not be blended. The principle of separateness should be constantly maintained. Truth and error cannot mix without causing defilement. See Rom. 8:6-8; 1 Cor. 10:21. And particularly, Phil. 1:9-10, "that ye may distinguish between things that differ" (see *The Diaglott*).

Israelites To Wear Distinguishing Dress — v. 12

Israelitish garments are to be discriminatory being finished off with a fringe or tassels on the four borders of the outer garment as a sign that the wearer is a member of the covenant nation, and acknowledges submission to Yahweh's laws.

VERSE 12

"Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture" — This requirement of dress should be considered in the light of Num. 15:38 which refers to the fringe of blue required on the outer garments of Israelites. The purpose, as there expressed, is to remind the wearers of their heavenly origin and responsibilities, so that their walk would be within the limits of the principles laid down by His Law. The word "fringes" in the verse before us is from a different Hebrew word — *gedilim* from *gadal*, to *twist*, and hence *tassels*. The same word is rendered *wreaths* in 1 Kings 7:17, where it is used to describe the festoons or wreathen work placed on the capitals of the Temple columns. There seems a link, therefore, between the tassels on the garments of Israelites and the decorations or wreathen work on the capitals of the Temple. The latter anticipated the *stephan*, or crown of *The Apocalypse* (Rev. 4:4), pointing to the victory of faith. The tassels, therefore, were not merely for decoration, but to remind Israelites of the crown of glory that awaits them in the Age to come if they walk in the ways of Yahweh. They provided a constant incentive to that end, and were publicly worn so as to be obvious to all. Evidently the outer

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garment worn by Hebrews then was divided at the lower part in front and back so as to form four corners or wings, to each of which a tassel was attached. How significant. The four-cornered garment drew attention to the Hope of Israel, for the nation was divided into four parts, and the tassels or wreaths attached to those corners reminded true Israelites of the hope constantly set before them (see Acts 26:7).

In Num. 15:38, the word "fringe" is *tsiytsith*, and described a fringe, border, or hem, placed around the four corners of the garment. Jewish tradition claims that it was made of blue and white threads. In any case, the border of blue, and the tassels joining the four corners of the garment together, showed that the wearer was of the covenant nation. It is significant, that the sick woman who was reluctant to personally approach Christ but who had faith in his power to cure, took hold of the "hem" of his garments (Matt. 9:20). Her faith cured her. Again, it is significant, that in the Age to come, the Gentiles shall take hold of "the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. 8:23). The reference is to the hem or tassels. This dress of the Israelites distinguished them from that of the Gentiles, and thereby comprised a public witness to their status and responsibilities. Their external appearance, as well as their way of life, proclaimed them to be separate from all others. Hence the condemnation of Zephaniah upon "all such as are clothed with strange apparel" (Zeph. 1:8). The clothing of Israelites was a token of the holiness, the separateness, to which they were called. Of course there is no virtue in merely wearing the tassels, but only in revealing those characteristics they were designed to recall. Hypocritically, the Pharisees, in order to justify themselves before men, "made wide the borders of their garments" (Matt. 23:5). Today the Jews do not attach a hem of blue or distinctive tassels to their attire, but at certain times, to demonstrate their orthodoxy, they do wear the tallith, which imitates this law. It is said that Jews discontinued wearing the fringed garment by the thirteenth century A.D. Hitler compelled the Jews to wear a distinguishing badge: but it was yellow in colour, not blue.

"Wherewith thou coverest thyself" — The distinctive Israelitish garments point forward to the Christ-clothing of believ-

ers. They "put on Christ" in baptism (Gal. 3:26-28), and are expected to keep their garments clean (Rev. 3:4; 16:15). Paul exhorted: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14).



The Tallit Prayer Shaw. Fringes were attached to four sides of the shawl in imitation of the requirement of the Law. Originally the word meant "gown" or "cloak". It was a rectangular mantle that looked like a blanket and was worn by men in ancient times. At the four corners of it tassels were attached in fulfilment of the Biblical commandment. Some believe it was similar to the blanket still worn by Bedouins for protection against the weather.

Consideration For An Unloved Bride — vv. 13-19

If a man marry for merely sensual reasons, and so quickly tires of his wife, and to free himself of her, alleges premarital relations on her part, the case shall be brought to trial, and justice shall be exacted.

VERSE 13

"If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her" — This verse implies that he married only for lust, and once that was satisfied only distaste remained. See 2 Sam. 13:15 for a case in point.

VERSE 14

"And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid" — The R.V. renders the first part of this verse: "lay shameful things to her charge".

VERSE 15

"Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate" — These tokens were the bloodstained bed linen of the wedding night, which were retained by the bride's parents, and could be produced as evidence if required. It is claimed that this is still a custom followed by some Arab tribes. Virginity was highly regarded in ancient Israel, as representing the pure condition of the nation in its relations with Yahweh (cp. Isa. 54:5). Paul taught that believers were espoused unto one husband "as a chaste virgin unto Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2). The tokens of this virginity (contrast James 4:4) must be carefully preserved.

VERSE 16

"And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her" — This statement of the father constitutes a counter-charge against the inconsiderate husband.

VERSE 17

"And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city" — It is claimed that in Egypt, Syria and Israel it was customary for parents to claim the soiled bed linen as evidence of their daughter's virginity. Purity in a bride was greatly treasured in those days. Purity in the Bride of Christ will be sought for by him at his return. In that regard, James accused the brethren to whom he wrote of being adulteresses (the feminine gender is used in the Greek) be-

cause of their friendship with the world (James 4:4). Christ has great love for his own, but declared that he "hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans" (Rev. 2:6,15). The teaching of the Nicolaitans constituted the seed of error by which the virgin community became pregnant, leading to the adulterous condition described in Rev. 13:1; 17:5. He warned the Ecclesiastical harbouring these errorists that their lampstands would be removed unless they dealt with the impurity in their midst. They failed to do so, and the Ecclesia merged into the church. On the other hand, Christ will publicly acknowledge and applaud the virginity of his true followers (Rev. 14:4).

VERSE 18

"And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him" — The Hebrew word rendered "chastise" signifies to do so *with blows*, and therefore to flog the man.

VERSE 19

"And they shall amerse him" — The word "amerse" signifies *to fine*.

"In an hundred shekels of silver" — This is twice as much as the fine for raping an unbetrothed virgin (vv. 28-29). The action of this married man in scandalising his wife untruthfully is accounted as more reprehensible than rape.

"And give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days" — The Hebrew is emphatic: *and to him shall she (continue to) be to wife*. It is according to justice that he should not be free of his obligations to her, for the motive of his slander had been to get rid of her. No future case against her advanced by him would be considered.

VERSE 20

"But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel" — In view of this law it was important for the parents of a bride to retain proof of her virginity.

VERSE 21

"Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house" — She is not dealt with at the city gate, but is taken to the home of her father. This was because she had disgraced his house by her

wilful and adulterous conduct. But he, too, must share in the disgrace, for it is the duty of parents to overlook their children so that they be pure from offence.

"And the men of the city shall stone her with stones that she die" — This penalty seems extreme, but it was deemed by Yahweh important that the purity of the marriage bond be maintained. It also constituted a warning to the nation at large to maintain its virginity before Yahweh. She was espoused to Him (Isa. 54:5); but, unfortunately, she proved to be unfaithful and indulged in spiritual harlotry and was severely punished (Jer. 3:1-2; Ezek. 16:30-43).

"Because she hath wrought folly in Israel" — This expression is first used in Scripture in describing the action of Dinah at Shechem (Gen. 34:7). The Hebrew *neyalah* signifies "not weakness of reason, but a root incapacity to discern moral and religious relations leading to repudiation in practise of the claims they impose". So declares one Hebraist. Condoning of adultery lowers the standard of morality in the Land and sets a precedence that others may follow.

"To play the whore in her father's house" — This blatant form of immorality would bring dishonour on the name of her father, and was considered particularly reprehensible on that account. The description of her action in the Law had application to Israel as a nation, because it was guilty of such faithlessness (Jer. 3:2). Note that James describes friendship with the world as adultery in the sight of God.

"So shalt thou put evil away from you" — The Hebrew is literally *to burn away*; and is found also in vv. 22,24. In Gen. 38:24, wherein is described Jacob's condemnation of Tamar whom he suspected of adultery, the verb is from another Hebrew word, *saraph*. This was the penalty of the wife of a priest guilty of such conduct (Lev. 21:9).

Death Penalty For Adulterers — vv. 22

Adultery is punishable with death.

VERSE 22

"If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman" — This confirms the law of Lev. 20:10. It also warned Israel of the treatment it could expect by acting the part of an adulteress (cp. James 4:4), of which sin Jeremiah ac-

cused the nation (Jer. 3:2-3). In Christ, however, forgiveness can be found (John 8:4-11). But note Paul's comment (Heb. 13:4).

"So shalt thou put away evil from Israel" — See note v. 21.

Death Penalty For Seduction In A City — vv. 23-24

Seduction in a city is treated as adultery, if the woman, whether betrothed or married did not vigorously resist. The penalty is death for both parties.

VERSE 23

"If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her" — A betrothed woman is one whose marriage has been arranged, and therefore one who today would be called "engaged to be married". Under the Law such were treated as tantamount to being married (see Deut. 20:7; Joel 1:8; Matt. 1:20).

VERSE 24

"Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of the city" — The gate of the city was the most public place where judgments were delivered and penalties executed.

"And ye shall stone them with stones that they die" — This describes a public execution in which the representatives of the city participate. The accusers are directed to cast the first stones.

"The damsel, because she cried not, being in the city" — This implies that the woman has offered no proper resistance, shown by her failure to call for help which, in the city, would be available.

"And the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife" — The word "humbled" in its Hebrew form implies to eye, heed, pay attention to another with the object of physically and unlawfully taking her. See its use in a good sense in Deut. 8:3; 21:14.

"So thou shalt put away evil from among you" — This was done by representatives of all the nation participating in the condemnation and execution of the party concerned. On the other hand, to wink at such evils, as the flesh might prefer to do, would be to lower standards within the nation, and establish precedent in condoning wickedness with disastrous national results.

Death Sentence For Rapists In The Field — vv. 25-27

A rapist is to be put to death; but the woman in the case, if proved innocent, is to be exonerated.

VERSE 25

"But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: the man only that lay with her shall die" — To "force her" in the Hebrew signifies to take violent hold of her against her will, as in 2 Sam. 13:14.

VERSE 26

"But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death; for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter" — The woman was exonerated from blame because she was the innocent victim of the rapist.

VERSE 27

"For he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her" — The woman in such a case was not only innocent, but did her best to resist the unwelcome approaches of the rapist.

Punishment For Fornication — vv. 28-29

The Law discriminates between adultery and fornication. The former relates to illicit relations with a married person; the latter relates to intimate relations with an unmarried or unattached person.

VERSE 28

"If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found" — A betrothed virgin is one who has entered into an arrangement to be married, though, in fact, the marriage has not yet taken place. Though that be the case, she is not considered free to act as she may like, she must honor the solemnity of her undertaking. The Ecclesia, today, enjoys the status of a betrothal virgin unto Christ (see 2 Cor. 11:2), as, previously the nation of Israel was to Yahweh. For a virgin to betray her undertaking to her proposed husband is equivalent to Israel betraying the covenant entered into with Yahweh, or the members of an Ecclesia their vows with Christ.

VERSE 29

"Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels

of silver" — This sum of money was the dowry required for marriage. Fifty is the number of grace; whilst silver is the metal of redemption.

"And she shall be his wife" — That is, if her father agrees to this; otherwise he must pay additional dowry according as it is laid on him (see Exod. 22:16-17).

"Because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days" — Under the circumstances of the marriage he forfeits his right to put her away on the charge of moral uncleanness before marriage. See vv. 13-21. This is the only reason for divorce recognised by the Law (Deut. 24:1-2).

Incest Strictly Forbidden — v. 30

The strict law in this list of sexual offences is a prohibition of taking a step-mother to wife.

VERSE 30

"A man shall not take his father's wife, nor discover his father's skirt" — The last clause of this verse is based upon the custom of the times. For a man to spread his skirt over a woman constituted a symbolic act of acceptance of her as a wife (see Ruth 3:9; Ezek. 16:8). Therefore the *New International Version* renders the verse: "A man is not to marry his father's wife; he must not dishonour his father's bed". See also Lev. 18:8; 20:11. Note the condemnation of Reuben by Jacob because of his wickedness (Gen. 49:4). Adonijah was put to death for seeking Abishag (1 Kings 2:13-15). In the case of Adonijah, his father was dead, and Abishag was comparatively young in years; but the principle of the law remained the same. A similar sin precipitated the crisis in the Corinthian Ecclesia (1 Cor. 5:1,13).

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

REQUIRED CONDUCT OF THE COVENANT PEOPLE

This Chapter continues regulations for Israel as the Covenant people. It is divided into two parts: Israel in association with other nations (vv. 1-18); and Israelites in association with each other (vv. 19-25). Instructions related to this second part, flow on into the next chapter. The first section excludes certain people from the congregation of Yahweh, thereby emphasising the holiness of the nation apart from all others. The specific regulations are but applications of the underlying principle that Yahweh seeks perfection of His people. As His people, Israel is required to be a holy nation, and certain types are to be excluded from the congregation. Its holiness is particularly to be emphasised in war. Therefore, when the army is on the march, special care must be observed to keep the camp clean, for the warfare engaged in is a holy war. Care is to be exercised in sanitary arrangements because Yahweh's presence in the camp must be recognised; and anything unclean will not be appropriate. Israel's uniqueness as a nation in contrast with other nations is illustrated by its treatment of runaway slaves (vv. 15-16),

and the banning of sacred prostitution (vv. 17-18). The final section (vv. 19-25) legislates for the Covenant people in association with each other, and outlines the relationships and responsibilities of neighbours as such. The exacting of usury from those in need is prohibited (vv. 19-20); vows are to be scrupulously performed (vv. 21-23); the property-rights of others are to be respected, and whilst hunger may be satisfied when passing through the field of another, greed is to be avoided (vv. 24-25). The actions of one to another are to be governed by brotherly love.

Who May Or May Not Enter The Congregation — vv. 1-8

These regulations underline the principle that Yahweh requires His people to aim at, namely perfection (Deut. 18:13; Matt. 5:48). Israel as the Kingdom of God (Exod. 19:6), is Yahweh's representative among the nations. They must be able to observe in Israel a nation unique. Bodily blemishes will disqualify a person from serving as priest (Lev. 21:16-24), which types the perfection to be aimed at by all. Nevertheless, eunuchs are not excluded from religious privileges. They can "take hold of Yahweh's covenant", keep the sabbath, choose the things pleasing to Him, and so constitute part of spiritual Israel, though excluded from that which is external and national. They can do this in hope that they will officiate in the Temple of the Age to come, as honoured, immortal priests (Isa. 56:4-5). Though the Law excludes those with physical blemishes acting as priests, it did not prevent them enjoying the common benefits of the Kingdom civil society, or any essential religious advantage of worship. The Law saw in blemishes symbols of moral deficiencies that will exclude from the Kingdom of the future.

VERSE 1

"He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off" — The employment of eunuchs in places of honour was common, and therefore the operation was sometimes done at the request of parents for religious purposes, or to secure a high position of state for their son (Lev. 21:17-21; Isa. 39:7). Incidentally, the Hebrew *dakkah* signifies "crushed", not wounded; and there is no word in the Hebrew for stones. The mutilation was performed by the two methods here specified: crushing or excision. Such a

practice however, negates the divine purpose which required man to "replenish the earth" (Gen. 1:28). In the spiritual realm, there is need to be fruitful in Yahweh's service (see Gal. 5:22-23; 2 Cor. 6:13). And this is the typical lesson set forth in the prohibition of this verse.

"Shall not enter into the congregation of Yahweh" — What constituted the "congregation of Yahweh"? The word *qahal* is the equivalent of the Greek *ecclesia*, and signifies a congregation called out for a special purpose. The congregation in Israel comprised the eldership of the nation representative of it as a whole. Though eunuchs could form part of the nation, they were excluded from its exclusive rulership body, or eldership. In the Covenant of Grace, such exclusion does not apply, as the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch by Philip revealed (Acts 8:27,28).

Eunuchs were excluded from the representative body of Israel, because it was constituted "a kingdom of priests and an holy nation" (Exod. 19:6). Its representatives had to be as close to perfection as possible, and therefore without blemish (Lev. 21:16-24). However, eunuchs were not excluded from the right of worship. They could keep the sabbath, take hold of the covenant, and render a pleasing service unto Yahweh as spiritual Israel. See Isaiah's commendation of those eunuchs who, in spite of the limitations imposed by this verse, worshipped Yahweh in a manner pleasing to Him. They will be granted eternal life, together with honoured positions as immortal priests, in the Temple of the Age to come (Isa. 56:15).

VERSE 2

"A bastard should not enter into the congregation of Yahweh" — The Hebrew *mamzare* is from a root signifying to alienate, and defines a mongrel (i.e. born of an

Israelitish father and a heathen mother, or of a harlot). In the light of that description, Jephthah was one (Jud. 11:1-2). However, the word in the O.T. occurs only here and in Zech. 9:6. The *New International Version* renders the phrase "no one born of a forbidden marriage" shall enter. Why should this be so, seeing the fault did not lie with the one so born? Is God unjust? By no means. An important spiritual lesson is taught that would exclude all such from the congregation or inner counsel of Israel. A true son is one who reflects the father's characteristics. Isaac is called Abraham's "only son" though he had other sons, because he was the only one who reproduced the faithful characteristics of the patriarch (Gen. 22:2). Israel as Yahweh's firstborn son (Exod. 4:22) was expected to manifest the qualities of the Father, and when it did not do so, it was nationally described as "the sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore" (Isa. 57:3). Christ told the Jews of his day that they were "of their father the devil" (John 8:44). They were highly indignant at the description and denied that they were "born of fornication" (v. 41). The verse before us, therefore, has important spiritual implications. These are summed up by Paul to the Hebrews when he declared that if any did not experience the chastening of Yahweh "then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Heb. 12:8). For every true son of God will be disciplined and chastened by Him as necessary for his spiritual development.

"Even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of Yahweh" — In its figurative application, ten signifies completeness without stating any definite period of time. Therefore, it can signify forever, or for the completion of a specific period of time. It seems to be applied in that way in this verse, and particularly in regard to the appointment of the form of monarchy God intended for the nation from its beginning. At the same time, it solves a puzzling problem in a very interesting manner. The problem concerns the appointment of Saul as king. When Israel approached Samuel with the request that a king be appointed, the prophet was appalled, but on Yahweh's advice did what the people requested. He was directed to Saul of the tribe of Benjamin whom he anointed as king on the request of the people. But why was Samuel so concerned? The Law provided for the appointment of a king (Deut. 17:14-20), the blessing of Jacob had stated that the

King would be of Judah (Gen. 49:10), and Samuel's mother, Hannah, had anticipated the appointment of the Messiah as King in her song of praise, at the birth of her son (1 Sam. 2:10). Samuel must have been cognisant of these Scriptures; and knew that the Divinely appointed king must come from Judah. Why then was Saul appointed? The answer is that the time was not ripe for the King out of Judah to be appointed. Why? Because of the restriction of the verse before us. Pharez, the son of Judah, and predecessor of David was the product of an unlawful marriage, the amazing circumstances of which are recorded in Genesis 38. In fact, he was the son of an incestuous union of Judah with the neglected Tamar. In spite of that irregularity, however, the promise of royal dignity was given to the children of Judah by the aged Jacob (Gen. 49:10). Now the Law intervenes and legislates that the seed of such a marriage must not enter the congregation (i.e. the inner council, or eldership) of Israel until the tenth generation. How many generations lapsed between Pharez and David? Exactly ten according to the Divine computation. These are enumerated in the important little book of Ruth where David is listed as the tenth generation from Judah (Ruth 4:18-22), and again in Matthew where the genealogy likewise provides the same number (Matt. 1:1-6).

VERSE 3

"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of Yahweh; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of Yahweh for ever" — Ammon and Moab were sons of Lot by incestuous unions with his two daughters; their descendants revealed their opposition to Israel by refusing them any help, and hiring Balaam to curse the people of God (v. 4). That is an Ammonite or Moabite characteristic, as Nehemiah recalled (Neh. 13:1-2). Apparently they gave their support to the Babylonians in the destruction of the Temple at the time of Zedekiah, and also forced their way into it (Lam. 1:10). What are we to make of this command, however, in view of the fact that Ruth the Moabitess was incorporated into the nation? The answer is that though accepted into the nation by accepting the terms of the Covenant, she did not "enter the congregation" or the inner circle of its representatives. It is true, of course, that the expression of this verse is in the masculine

gender and therefore does not specifically exclude females. But no Ammonite or Moabite, either male or female, would be accepted as proselytes unless they entirely gave up their national heritage and fully embraced the Israelitish hope. There is not much difference between an Ammonite, a Moabite or an Australian — and all should be excluded from the Ecclesia! It is only by discarding our Australian nationality (and ways!) and embracing the hope of Israel that one can properly experience fellowship with the covenant nation (Eph. 2:12). So it was in the Theocracy of the past. The words “for ever” are *al owlam*, and are rendered by many, including Dr. Young as “to the age”. In the Millennium there will be those of all nations who will be incorporated in the congregation or ruling aristocracy of the future (Rev. 5:9-10; 20:6).

VERSE 4

“Because they met yon not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt” — The Moabites demanded payment of Israel, but even then were not satisfied as the next part of the verse shows. Ancient Moab occupied the territory of modern Jordan, where the fleeing Israelites during Gog’s invasion, will receive a measure of help (Isa. 16:3-4). They will then be offered the bread and water that was denied them when they left Egypt (Isa. 21:13-15). “Bread and water” as expressed in such a context as this verse does not refer strictly to those commodities, but is typical of general sustenance (see 1 Sam. 25:11). Christ commends those who show such kindness to the “least” of his own (Matt. 10:42; 25:37).

“And because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee” — See the notes on Num. 22:5,6; 2 Pet. 2:15, and the comment of Bro. Thomas in *Eureka* vol. 1, pp. 288-304. This statement identifies Balaam as a false prophet of Babylon. Pethor is identified as Pitru mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions. It is about 18 miles (26km) south of Carchemish on the western side of the Euphrates. Hence Balaam travelled some 400 miles, nearly 600 kms, to curse the people of God. To hire a false prophet for such a purpose is considered as particularly obnoxious and reprehensible conduct in the eyes of Yahweh.

VERSE 5

“Nevertheless Yahweh thy God would

not hearken unto Balaam” — The Hebrew *shama* signifies more than merely to hear; it signifies to hear with intelligence and intent to perform. Yahweh “heard” Balaam speak, but did not agree to his request.

“But Yahweh thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because Yahweh thy God loved thee” — See Num. 23:11; Neh. 13:2. Micah advanced this incident as an outstanding example of God’s goodness, and claims that Israel did not suitably respond to, or repay the divine love (see Mic. 6:5). And Paul sums up the matter by stating: “What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31).

VERSE 6

“Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever” — Complete separateness from Moab is required of Israel. The word “Moab” signifies *Pertaining to a Father*, the father being the flesh (John 8:44). True Israelites need to maintain strict separateness from such, as Ezra expressed in his prayer (Ezra 9:11-12). True sonship is predicated upon such a separation from the flesh (2 Cor. 6:17). “Peace” implies *fellowship*; “prosperity” relates to their *good*. Israelites are instructed to avoid the first and ignore the second. There is little real good that Israelites can do for those governed by the flesh. Works of “charity” and similar activities are of very minor value; the main “good” derived from such actions is to give the donor a sense of personal self-satisfaction in the belief that a duty has been performed, whilst imparting very little real benefit to the recipient. The greatest good that a true Israelite (see Gal. 6:16) can do for “Moabites”, is to educate them in the Truth, so inducing them, like Ruth, to abandon their previous affiliations, and identify themselves with Israel. When this is done, those who may be considered as being of Moab can leave their previous walk, and become incorporated into the Israelitish constitution of things. Ruth’s action in so doing established a precedent for others to follow. Ruth the Moabitess became Ruth the Israelitess by identification.

VERSE 7

“Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother” — Though the Edomites manifested hostility towards Israel by refusing the people passage though

their land (Num. 20:18-21), Israelites were ever to bear in mind their relationship to Edom. Jacob and Esau, the progenitors of Israel and Edom, were twins, and therefore an Israelite in abhorring an Edomite merely because of his birth would stand in judgment on the family of which he was a member. In manifesting antagonism towards Israel, Edom broke the “brotherly covenant” (Obad. 10,12). The strong ties of brotherhood should ever be borne in mind. At the same time, Israel was warned to avoid the ways and characteristics of this brother-nation; as those in Christ should do also in regard to those whom they have left in the world to serve Yahweh.

“Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou was a stranger in his land” — The Egyptians provided shelter to Israel in time of need (Gen. 45:17), and because of the kindness they then showed, Israel was given this command. See also Exod. 23:9; Lev. 19:34. God’s people should never forget a kindness extended to them, but be ever prepared to respond. See Matt. 10:42.

VERSE 8

“The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of Yahweh in their third generation” — God promised Abram that He would bless those who bless him. And that forms the basis of the teaching of this verse. An example of the manner in which it could be fulfilled is provided in the genealogy of Jehudi (Jew) who was the third generation from Cushi (Egyptian). See Jer. 36:14. Three, in numerical typography is the number of resurrection (life first appeared above the ground on the third day). In that regard a true Jew is one who has risen from the waters of baptism (Rom. 3:29-30), and is a constituent of the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16; Eph. 2:12-13). Figuratively he has left Egypt for Israel on the third day, the day of his resurrection.

Impurity To Be Excluded In Time of War — vv. 9-14

Special attention is to be given to the army when on the march. As it is fighting Yahweh’s battles it must be ceremonially clean in order to effectively co-operate with God. Israelites must never go into battle without a prayer (Num. 10:9), and in order to ensure the greatest co-operation from God they must remain clean in every regard. Yahweh walks in the midst of the

camp to deliver it, and therefore the necessities of nature, which remind one of flesh-weaknesses, must be satisfied outside the precincts of the encampment.

VERSE 9

“When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing” — The *NIV* renders this: “from everything impure”. This means thoughts as well as actions. A “wicked thing” is anything that contravenes the divine law. Special care must be observed in times of warfare to ensure that conduct is consistent with the purpose of the battle. Otherwise, Yahweh may turn against His people (see 2 Chron. 13:12; 32:8). Additional concern must be given because there is a tendency under the stress and passion of warfare to forget the Law, and to excuse such on the grounds of expediency. The conduct of the Israelitish army must be above reproach, reflecting to the credit of its Commander-in-chief, Yahweh; otherwise its conduct will bring discredit on Him. The methods of conducting war are very carefully laid down (Ch. 7:17-26; 13:15-18. See Josh. 7). Israelitish warriors fought in the name of Yahweh, and therefore engaged in a battle of faith. Accordingly, the principles here set down, have application today. When employed in proclaiming the Word, or defending the Truth, disciples of the Lord are engaged upon a fight of faith, and should concentrate upon the contest before them excluding from their thoughts and actions anything defiling. A careful review of one’s own failings, and an attempt to correct them is a very worthwhile exercise before going into such a battle. It will ensure the co-operation of God.

VERSE 10

“If there be among yon any man, that is not clean by reason of uncleanness that chanceth him by night” — See Lev. 15:16 for an explanation of this law. The *NIV* renders the statement: “because of a nocturnal emission”. This is most likely to occur as the result of unclean thoughts which should be avoided. Such emissions constitute a weakness of the flesh, something that occurs involuntarily unknown to others, for it “chanceth by night”, and which is an embarrassment to the party concerned.

“Then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp” — There must be an open repudiation of

hidden weaknesses and sins. The purpose of this is expressed in *Lev. 20:7*: "Be ye holy for I Yahweh thy God am holy". The most circumspect holiness must be maintained whilst engaged in Yahweh's warfare. And it is little use hiding the weakness or sin; for it can be as easily revealed by God as was the hidden sin of Achan! "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (*Heb. 4:13*). All impurities of the flesh had to be excluded from the Israelite camp so that Yahweh may lead an army that is ceremonially clean (*v. 14*). The things listed in this law relate to the pollutions of the flesh. It taught by symbol what the Lord taught by doctrine, that sin is from within (see *Mark 7:21-23*).

VERSE 11

"But it shall be, when evening cometh on" — This pointed to the imminence of a new day (which in Israelitish reckoning commenced with the evening — *Gen. 1:5*), anticipating the time when "the sun of righteousness will arise", and a new day of a thousand years will commence (*Mal. 4:2*; *2 Pet. 3:8*).

"He shall wash himself with water" — This washing foreshadowed the washing of the Word, which can cleanse a disciple from the natural weaknesses of the flesh (see *John 15:3*; *Eph. 5:26-27*).

"And when the sun is down, he shall come into the camp again" — The new day heralded a new beginning, pointing forward to the Millennium (*2 Sam. 23:4*).

VERSE 12

"Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad" — Careful sanitary arrangements were to be made by the army on the march; the purpose, however, was ethical, teaching the need of moral cleanliness before Yahweh.

VERSE 13

"And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon" — A paddle is a spade, or something to dig with. This was to form an essential part of Israelitish military equipment, constantly reminding the warrior of the weakness of his mortality. The *New International Version* renders this: "As part of your equipment have something to dig with". In addition to weapons of offence and defence, the Israelitish soldier had to carry with him the means of maintaining the holiness of the camp. In the

wartare of faith, when the Gospel is either proclaimed or defended, there is need always to maintain the holiness of the Ecclesia.

"And it shall be, when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee" — Such excrement typifies the motions of sin (*Rom. 7:5*), that "come from within out of the heart of man" (*Mark 7:21-23*).

VERSE 14

"For Yahweh thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp to deliver thee" — Yahweh manifested through the Elohim (His angels) marched with the host of Israel (see *Deut. 20:1,4,13*; *21:10*; *Josh. 5:14-15*; *2 Sam. 5:24*; *32:7-8*). It was He Who drove out the Canaanites from the land (*2 Chron. 20:7*), and Whose might is far beyond that of fleshly munitions of war (*Psa. 20:7*). He is capable of defending His warriors from all harm. And, as indicated above, these principles apply as much to the warfare of faith today as they did to Israel then. Those labouring in God's service need ever to bear in mind the reality of His presence. The ability of Yahweh to deliver was sometimes even recognised and respected by the enemy. For example, when the wicked sons of Eli brought the Ark into the battle-field, and the Israelites responded with a mighty shout, fear moved the Philistines and they lamented: "God is come into the camp" (*1 Sam. 4:7*). That same help is available today if sought in the proper manner (*Heb. 13:5-6*).

"And to give up thine enemies before thee" — See *Deut. 7:2,23*.

"Therefore shall thy camp be holy" — The word "holy" is from a root signifying *to be clean*, and hence to be separated into a condition fit for Divine use. If an Ecclesia engages upon a special effort for the defence or proclamation of the Gospel, its members need first to bring themselves into a state of separated cleanliness to Yahweh so as to make themselves fit for His use.

"That He see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee" — The term "unclean thing" is from the same root as is rendered "some uncleanness" in *Ch. 24:1*. It would be incongruous for the camp of the holy God to be polluted by that which defiles. Therefore it had to be kept scrupulously clean; otherwise Yahweh would turn from it. Accordingly, in preparation for Ecclesial efforts, it is more im-

portant to look inwardly, and to cleanse the camp of anything that defiles, than to attack the enemy. Let first priority be given to that; let it be thoroughly done, and the helping hand of Yahweh will bless the efforts that are performed in His Name.

Help to be Given An Escaped Slave — *vv. 15-16*

An escaped slave from a foreign nation is to be granted assylum from Israel.

VERSE 15

"Thou shalt not deliver unto his master" — From *v. 16* it is obvious that the "master" refers to a foreigner, for the personal pronoun *thou* relates to Israel as a nation. The slave is one who has escaped from the oppressive demands of a pagan lord, and has sought help in Israel.

"The servant which is escaped from his master unto thee" — The servant, or slave, has escaped from the intolerable bondage to which he has been subjected by his foreign overlord. In a slave escaping and seeking refuge in the Land of Israel, was figured the state of Israel itself. Once slaves in Egypt, the people escaped therefrom, and sought the help of another master, even Yahweh. Now, in gratitude for the help thus received, Israelites are instructed to extend help to others similarly placed.

VERSE 16

"He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best" — The slave escaped from pagan domination is to be afforded great liberty and care; recalling the treatment that Israel received as an escaped slave from Egypt. His state dramatised the condition of those who are slaves to sin fleeing for refuge to Christ (*Rom. 6:17-19*).

"Thou shalt not oppress him" — The Israelites were to recall how they were oppressed by the Egyptians, and the grand liberty and loving care they received from Yahweh when they escaped therefrom. In memory of such an experience, they are to render to the slave similar consideration. See *Exod. 22:21*; *Zech. 7:9-10*.

Prostitution Prohibited — *vv. 17-18*

Prostitution was encouraged by the prevailing Canaanitish paganism. Male and female prostitutes attended the pagan Temples in readiness for the debasing libidinous rites of the evil worship engaged upon therein.

VERSE 17

"There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel" — In this place, the word "whore" is a rendition of the Hebrew *Qedeshah*, from a root signifying *to be separate*. This was the title given to female prostitutes attendant at the pagan temple. It is not the general word used for "whore" which is *zanah*. Canaanitish worship was degradingly immoral; prostitutes waited upon the worshippers to join them in rites that were completely abandoned.

"Nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel" — The word "sodomite" is *godesh* in Hebrew, the masculine form of *Qedeshah* above, and signifying the same. The pagan Temples indulged in all forms of immorality and perversion, even homosexuality; and male prostitutes were on hand for that purpose.

VERSE 18

"Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore" — Here the word is *zanah*, from a root word signifying *to be well fed and wanton*. Many of the public prostitutes dedicated to their gods a part of their earnings; but such proceeds must not be accepted by Israelitish priests. In Scripture, harlotry is aligned with false worship, and Yahweh did not want His worship tainted with such. Any gift given unto Him must be of earnings that are legitimate. The instructions of this verse relate to money in payment for a vow; but Yahweh wants no part of the earnings of activities that He does not approve.

"Or the price of a dog" — Dog is used derogatively for those who despise Yahweh's laws, including Gentiles. (See *1 Sam. 17:43*; *24:14*; *Psa. 22:16*; *Matt. 7:6*; *15:26*; *Phil. 3:2*; *2 Pet. 2:22*). In this place, Dr. Strong gives the meaning of "dog" as a male prostitute. Such are abominable to Yahweh. An Israelite, perhaps, may imagine that the gains obtained by such perversion are legitimised if portion is given to Yahweh, but that is not the case. Yahweh is not dependent upon our material possessions, and repudiates gifts that are the part-proceeds of activities He abhors. See *Rev. 22:15*.

"Into the house of Yahweh thy God for any vow; for even both these are abomination unto Yahweh thy God" — Such persons may attempt to justify their impure professions by giving portion of their earnings to Yahweh, but He outlaws such practices, and desires nothing of their pro-

ceeds. Today, standards of morality have been so lowered that, in many parts, prostitution and homosexuality are legalised. The world is drifting further and further from God, but the incidence of AIDS and other diseases that result from promiscuity show that those who indulge in such perversion "receive in themselves that recompense of their error which is meet" (Rom. 1:27).

Usury Prescribed — vv. 19-20

The law of usury relates to loans for the relief of poverty in dire need. In such cases, interest could be charged a foreigner, but not an Israelite. The prohibition does not relate to the loan of money for business or

building purposes. In the rural society which formed the basis of Israel's national existence, the principle of modern banking had not been established, though it was in N.T. times (Luke 19:23). Borrowing was for the purpose of relieving dire need. Yahweh has special regard for the poor, and in this judgment, prohibited the rich from taking advantage of such. When a poor man has to borrow (most likely taking an advance on his wage, or crop, to obtain food) there is to be no interest charged.

VERSE 19

"Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon

TYPICAL FORESHADOWING OF THE FIGHT OF FAITH

The instructions to Israel regarding the need of keeping the camp holy when in a state of war, can be applied to the activities of an Ecclesia when engaged upon the proclamation or defence of the Gospel. There is need for personal preparation for the work, in addition to the obvious need of sharpening the sword of the Spirit word (Eph. 6:17). Additional care in guarding against personal transgression is required (v. 9); personal introspection on the part of every warrior should take place, and anything that is mentally or morally defiling should be corrected and cleansed (vv. 10-11). Special attention must be given to maintaining the cleanliness of the camp (or Ecclesia) when engaged in warfare; finally, there should be a conscious recognition of the living presence of Yahweh in the midst of the army (or Ecclesia), so clear to the mind of each member as to instill a fear to offend. When such personal preparation is made by every member, the success of the warfare (or special effort by an Ecclesia) is assured. This teaches that before a preaching effort is engaged in by an Ecclesia, it first should prepare within, carefully assessing where correction should be made, and taking steps to cleanse that which is defiling.

Moreover, as the Israelitish warrior had to carry a "paddle" with him, regard should be taken by the Ecclesia during a campaign, of the natural tendency of the flesh to defile, so that when this does manifest itself the means are at hand for it to be covered over or forgiven (Psa. 32:1-2).

Finally, there should be constant recognition that the warfare will be successful only by each warrior closely following the directions and commandments of the Commander-in-Chief who is present though perhaps not visible in an Ecclesia (Rev. 2:1). When a campaign is conducted according to those rules, it is bound to be a success.

usury" — The word "usury" is from the Hebrew *neshar*, "interest", from a root *nashar*, "to bite" or "strike" with a sting as a serpent. The word is rendered *bite* in Ecc. 10:8,11; Jer. 8:17; Amos 9:3 etc. The word does not of itself signify excessive interest as in modern usage, but merely an unspecified increase. When an Israelite was in want, he had to be liberally and cheerfully relieved; and God guaranteed the increase (see Prov. 19:17). The same law exists in Christ (Matt. 5:42; Luke 6:30-38). See how this law was abused (Neh. 5:7).

VERSE 20

"Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury" — See note Deut. 15:3.

"But unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that Yahweh, thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it" — When Yahweh's law is strictly observed He will see to the increase. See Prov. 19:17; Deut. 12:7; Luke 14:14; 1 Cor. 15:58.

Vows To Be Fulfilled — vv. 21-23

It is expected of an Israelite that he loyally keep covenant with his neighbour; how much more so with his God. Further details concerning payment of vows are given in Lev. 27; Num. 30.

VERSE 21

"When thou shalt vow a vow unto Yahweh thy God" — Out of gratitude for blessings received, a person might vow to do or give something to God over and above normal requirements. God is well pleased with such gestures. See Num. 30:2; Psa. 66:13-14; 76:11; 116:18.

"Thou shalt not slack to pay it" — In the full flush of a benefit received, an Israelite might vow to do or give something to God; but as time passes, and the effect of the benefit fades, he may have second thoughts. God will not tolerate such action. See Prov. 20:25; Ecc. 5:4-5. Christ made a vow to his disciples that he would drink the wine of his covenant anew with them in the Kingdom, and will pay his vows in the presence of all the people (Psa. 22:25). No less is expected of his brethren in regard to the vows they may make. So the exhortation is to be careful in what we boast of ourselves to do.

"For Yahweh thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee" — A vow once made is equally as

binding as any law of God. Useless saying later, that it was a mistake. Yahweh may be testing us. Better not to vow than to vow and omit to keep it. Best of all, however, is to recognise the goodness of God, and in gratitude extend to Him a little more than is normally required in sacrifice and worship.

VERSE 22

"But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee" — One does not have to vow, though it is good to do so if conscious of blessings received. In vowing, however, consider the ability to pay before promise is made. This relates not only to God, but what one may promise to do for, or give to others.

VERSE 23

"That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform" — The vow once made becomes a law that must be kept. See Prov. 20:25. The tongue is an "unruly member", and tends to boast of great things (James 3:5,8). Let the heart, or mind govern and restrain the tongue, else it may not go well with us.

"Even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto Yahweh thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth" — See examples of this in Exod. 35:29; John 10:17-18.

Liberty Must Not Become Licence — vv. 24-25

When passing through the fields of others it is permitted to assuage the pangs of hunger by partaking of grapes or corn, but liberty must not presume into licence. A sojourner must not take unfair advantage of this permission.

VERSE 24

"When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure" — The word "pleasure" is *nepesh*, or "soul", and is literally rendered "according to thy soul" (see Deut. 12:20; 14:26). As the soul relates to the body, the idea is that the Israelite can satisfy his appetite by partaking of the grapes.

"But thou shalt not put any in thy vessel" — None must be taken away; an Israelite must not take advantage of the goodness of Yahweh in permitting this liberty. It is granted because "the earth is Yahweh's and the fulness thereof" (1 Cor. 10:26), and the harvest received by the

landowner is evidence of His generosity. But whilst hunger may be satisfied, greed is to be avoided, and the traveller must not take undue advantage of any liberty granted him.

VERSE 25

"When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour then thou mayest

pluck the ears with thine hand" — See Matt. 12:1; Mark 2:23. The Pharisees violated both the spirit and the letter of this law when they accused the disciples of breaking the Sabbath.

"But thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn" — See note on v. 24.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

RIGHTS OF WIVES, THE NEEDY, AND THE HELPLESS

This chapter continues to regularise the conduct of Israelites towards one another when in the Land. As Chapter 23:1-18 regulates the Covenant people in association with other nations; Deut. 23:19-25:24 regulates the conduct of the Covenant People in association with each other. Deuteronomy 23:19-25 instructs the form of conduct to be manifested towards one's neighbours; and the present chapter continues the same theme. It has particular reference to wives (vv. 1-5), the needy (vv. 6-18), and the helpless (vv. 19-22). In these avenues, the Law regulates and limits the actions of individuals towards others; mutual consideration being the principle that must govern their ways.

Divorce To Be Carefully Regulated
— vv. 1-4

This is not a law instituting divorce. No O.T. law encourages divorce but the very opposite (Mal. 2:14-16). This is a law restricting the practice of divorce which is considered as an evil (Matt. 19:8). It demands that divorce cannot be entered into upon the mere whim of a husband. It gives the woman certain rights, and is designed to prevent a husband, who under God's Law, alone had the right of divorce, from exercising it hastily. Only one reason is given as adequate for divorce, and even that is hedged about with restrictions.

VERSE 1

"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her" — The first regulation demanded that there

should be a serious cause for divorce; it must not be governed by a mere whim of the flesh. The term "some uncleanness" signifies conduct inappropriate on the part of a wife, as the expression is used in Ch. 23:14. It could mean adultery, for though that sin was punishable by death if openly practised (Deut. 22:20-21), in the case of a married woman it could be difficult to prove (cp. John 8:4). Even if obvious to the husband, he might, like Joseph, decide "to put her away privately" (Matt. 1:19). Or it could mean that the husband has discovered that his wife was not a virgin when she married him; perhaps through such a circumstance as is recorded in Ch. 22:25-27. The quandary of Joseph in his relationship with Mary the mother of the Lord is relevant. She was "betrothed" to him, and in that sense he was "her husband" (Matt. 1:19). But though he is described as such, they had not yet

come together. Being "a just man", and shocked by what appeared to him as evidence of misconduct on her part, he saw this as a proper cause for divorce. Divorce for any other reason is treated as contravening the order of nature and of God. And through the provision of this law is often aligned with the Lord's comment as recorded in Matt. 5:31-32, a careful consideration will show that this is not the case. The Lord declared: "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement" (Matt. 5:31). Who said that? Not Moses, as the verse before us reveals. Moses gives one reason only for divorce, whereas the saying quoted by the Lord makes it open for any cause. It was what the Rabbins were teaching on the basis of Moses' words, but it was a perversion of them. Some were declaring that it was legitimate to divorce for any cause; even the most trivial reason. Moses allowed but one cause for it: evidence of unfaithfulness on the part of the bride.

"Then let him write her a bill of divorcement" — The Hebrew for "bill" is *sepher*, and is used elsewhere for anymissive (2 Sam. 11:14) or legal deed (Jer. 32:11). The bill of divorcement, therefore, was a written form of dismissal comprising a separation; for under certain circumstances there were possibilities of a reconciliation (see v. 4). There are two words rendered "divorce" in Scripture. The word here is *keriythuwth*, "a cutting off" derived from *karath* frequently rendered "to make or cut a covenant". The other word is *garash*, "to drive out" which would appear to be the more absolute of the two words. The latter word is used in such places as Lev. 21:7,14; 22:13; Num. 30:9. It will be noted in those places that priests were not to marry a woman divorced in that manner. As saints are called to form the antitypical Melchizedek priesthood, the same restriction must apply to them.

"And give it in her hand, and send her out of his house" — To legalise the action of the husband, he must give this bill of divorcement in the hand of his wife, and dismiss her from his home. Therefore, his responsibility in the matter is not weakened by the Law. In fact, its limitations and requirements were more exacting and difficult than were the methods in vogue during the ministry of the Lord, when marriage vows could be broken as easily as they can today. Then, all that a man had to

do was to write out a bill of divorcement and give it into the hand of his wife "for any cause" (Matt. 19:3). Here the action of divorce was only legalised when the husband "hath found some uncleanness", some unseemliness in his wife. Otherwise the marriage was binding. Secondly, he had to produce the Bill which gave him time to reflect as to whether his course of action was sound. Thirdly, he had to personally deliver it into her hand, bringing him face to face with her in her distress, giving opportunity for compassion to overcome the "hardness of heart" that had overtaken him. Finally, he had to solemnly dismiss her from his home. Each step was designed to delay and stop the proceedings. A just and compassionate man would recognise his own failings, his own dependence on the mercy and forgiveness of God, and perhaps reverse his decision. Even under those circumstances, it would appear from v. 4, that the way remained open for reconciliation.

VERSE 2

"And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife" — This rendition does not express the intent of the Hebrew as other translations clearly show. But one thing is clear in the verse before us: only the man had the right of dismissal. That was because he stood in relation to his wife, as Yahweh does to His wife (Isa. 54:5; 1 Cor. 11:3). Throughout Scripture, the marriage contract is seen as typical of the Covenants of Yahweh. Once a person accepts that covenant, he or she becomes part of the multitudinous bride, and there is no way in which the one concerned can escape the responsibilities that this involves. The only One who can dismiss is God. A person guilty of unseemliness before Yahweh may be driven from "the house" (Ecclesia); but having entered into a contract of marriage such a one cannot legitimately become "another man's wife". What, then, are we to make of the statement of this verse? Notice, firstly, that the title *wife* is in italics. That signifies that there is no comparable word in the Hebrew. It leaves the statement: "she may go and be another man's". Secondly, there is no word for *may* in the Hebrew. Hence the statement is not expressing God's permission for her to go in to another man. It signifies what she might herself do, as motivated by the flesh. Other renderings give: "if after she leaves his house she be-

comes another man's". Her action in so doing would endorse her husband's opinion of her. It is an act of decline in her conduct. In the spiritual realm, it is like an Ecclesial member being disfellowshipped for wrong conduct, and joining an apostate church. But is not her status as a legitimate "wife" implied by the use of the title "her husband" in the next verse? We shall see.

VERSE 3

"And if the latter husband hate her and send her out of his house" — Why should he "hate" her? Because he is tired of her in similar manner as Amnon "hated" Tamar after he had satisfied his lust on her (2 Sam. 13:15). But "hate" is never given as a legitimate ground for divorce, only *uncleanliness*. The Hebrew of this verse implies that the action of the woman does not constitute a regular marriage. The word "husband" is *ish* in the Hebrew, a word that is most frequently rendered merely as *man*. The same word is also frequently rendered *husband*, but it is highly significant that the context of this verse, when referring to the "first husband" uses a different word *ba'al*. Hence the law, in this place, seems to clearly distinguish between the relative status of the two men in the woman's life: one is merely *ish*, the man of her choice; the other is *ba'al* her lord and husband.

"And write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it into her hand, and sendeth her out of his house" — The Law is not legislating as to what should be done. It is merely stating what the man in question might do to legalise his status. He imitates the action of the true husband as though that endorses his status. But by describing the union as a "defilement" of the woman, the Law expressed its disapproval of the action she took in going in unto the man. The bill of divorcement given by him would prevent the woman exercising any right such as she might otherwise exert.

"Or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife" — Here, again, the Hebrew word for "husband" is not *ba'al* as in v. 1; but *ish* as in v. 2. Moreover, the Hebrew for "wife" is *ishshah* which is frequently rendered "woman" quite apart from any marriage ties. It does not, of itself, signify "wife". It is the feminine form of *ish*. With the death of the man, however, it may be thought that the woman could return to her rightful husband. That is prohibited, as the next clause shows.

VERSE 4

"Her former husband, which sent her

away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled" — This statement makes it clear that her proper husband could have taken her back, if she had not become "defiled" by her second "marriage". From this it is apparent that the action taken as described in v. 1 was not intended to be absolute but tentative. There could have been reconciliation, and that is what the wife in question should have sought. In that case, the action of the husband would have been disciplinary in intent, designed to express his disapproval of her state. But now it is not permitted for him to take her back. Why? Because she is "defiled". What does the term mean? It signifies an adulterous union (see Gen. 34:2; Lev. 18:20; Num. 5:13-14,20). However, cohabitation between a legitimately married couple is never so described. Quite contrary. Children are "a heritage of Yahweh" (Psa. 127). And when marriage is legitimate, it is described as "honourable, and the bed undefiled" (Heb. 13:4). It is obvious, therefore, that the second marriage was not legitimate in the sight of God, whatever it may have been in the sight of man through "the hardness of their hearts". This makes the teaching of the Law similar to that of Christ, who declared that "whosoever marieth her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Matt. 5:32; 19:9).

"For that is abomination before Yahweh" — Promiscuity in marriage is that which is abominable. Abomination from the Hebrew *towebah* signifies that which is disgusting; horrible.

"And thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which Yahweh thy God giveth thee for an inheritance" — This general summary shows how important is the subject of marriage in the sight of God. The marriage vow is similar to the covenant vow by which a believer becomes united with Yahweh. Under certain circumstances, some matter of "uncleaness" may be found in such by which they may be expelled from the "house" or Ecclesia of God; but by reformation of the person, and forgiveness on the part of the Husband who is also Lord, such a one may be taken back into the "house". But what if, having been sent away or disfellowshipped, such seek consolation with another form of worship or religion? There is no hope for reconciliation in such a case: the former Husband, the Lord, will not accept such back into fellowship.

MOSES AND DIVORCE (Deuteronomy 24:1-4)

To summarise this difficult and much misunderstood passage: Moses dealt with divorce as he did with slavery and polygamy. The licence of heathen nations had so largely corrupted the chosen people that marriages were contracted and dissolved with the most reckless indifference. Husbands felt no moral obligation to retain their wives a moment longer than they pleased; and in the exercise of an arbitrary caprice, if the least offence was given, they dismissed them, even by word of mouth, without any preliminary warning or form of release.

The Lawgiver completely altered the character of divorce by a series of enactments, putting a stop to precipitate action, and largely restricting the grounds upon which it was permissible.

In the first place, he checked the recklessness with which the obligation was too often broken, by allowing the separation of husband and wife only by a duly prepared and legally attested document. It entailed trouble, difficulty and delay, for, at a time when the art of writing was little practised, no one could draw it up but the Scribes, and time was required for the purpose.

Further, the application for the bill brought the parties before a duly constituted authority, a priest or magistrate, who examined the alleged grounds of quarrel or dissatisfaction, and not infrequently, according to Jewish records, set them aside as frivolous and trivial, and could exercise his influence in effecting a reconciliation. If the separation took place, and she lived with another man, her intercourse with him was pronounced adulterous, and it was a barrier to the restoration of conjugal rights with the husband who had put her away.

The most important step taken by Moses was an absolute restriction of divorce to cases of "uncleaness". The Hebrew expression is "the nakedness or shame of a thing". This relates exclusively to some sexual matter. To get around that Law, the Talmud reveals that the Jews were driven to the extreme of changing this requirement. In violation of the first principles of grammatical construction, they separated two words which are necessarily linked together, "the shame of a thing", and rendered it as indicating two unconnected causes, namely "shame or a thing". Hence the question put to the Lord: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" (Matt. 19:3).

It is important to recognise that Deut. 24:1-4 is not a law instituting divorce, or prescribing the procedure, though it includes this as part of the special case which it states. It is a law for a particular purpose, the prohibition of a man's re-marriage to a wife whom he has divorced and who, meantime, has co-habited with another man. Her association in that way with others is treated as "defiling". The Law, therefore, was quite contrary to modern practice today.

Newlyweds Exempt From War Service — v. 5

A man who is betrothed to a wife is exempt from war (Ch. 20:7), and in conformity with that principle, newlyweds are exempt for twelve months.

VERSE 5

“When a man hath taken a wife, he shall not go out to war” — See notes Ch. 20:7.

“Neither shall he be charged with any business” — By “business” is meant public duties such as would take him away from his bride.

“But he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken” — The *NIV* more appropriately renders “cheer up” as *bring happiness* to the wife he has married. The relaxing joy of such a time is commended as a blessing, to be retained in mind and action ever afterwards. See Prov. 5:18; Ecc. 9:9. As a type, this anticipates the joy that will be experienced by Christ’s multitudinous Bride at “the marriage of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:7). However, Christ returns not only as a bridegroom, but as a “strong man”, to destroy the forces of darkness and illuminate the world with his glory (Psa. 19:5). In that regard, he will prove to be a “man of war” (Exod. 15:2-3), for “in righteousness, he shall judge and make war” (Rev. 19:11). But first “judgment must begin at the house of God” (1 Pet. 4:17) with the object of “perfecting the bride” (Eph. 5:25-27), after which, the saints in glory will assist in “executing vengeance upon the nations, and punishments upon the people” (Psa. 149:7), and so fulfilling “the judgments written”. To fit the type before us, there must be a period of time answering to the honeymoon, a stay of war service and official duties on the part of the Bridegroom in order to bring happiness to his wife. This anticipated the time of rejoicing at the marriage of the Lamb visualised in *The Apocalypse* (Rev. 19:7-8): a time of great blessing and relaxed happiness. What a joy it will be when, clothed upon with immortality, saints will meet those of like precious faith and also be introduced to heroes of the past like Noah, Abraham, Moses, the Apostles, and, greatest of all, “the king of his glory” (Isa. 33:17). In *Eureka* Vol. 3 p. 389 Bro. Thomas writes:

“The birth of David’s son was celebrated by the acclamation of a multitude of the heavenly host praising the Deity, and saying, ‘Glory to the Deity in the highest,

over the earth peace, and good will towards men’. Glorious, however, as this announcement was, the listeners to it were only a few simple shepherds; but in the approaching musical festival on Mount Zion, the performers will be not less than 144,000, immortals; who, like the Imperial President of the Festival, were once dead, but then are living for the æons; while the listening and delighted audience, marshaled and convened by the King of glory, themselves illustrious and immortal, number ‘ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands’ (ch. 5:11). How gratified they will be in beholding the Royal Child, whose birth they celebrated over eighteen centuries before, enthroned by the Eternal Power, according to the words of Gabriel, in his father David’s seat; and instead of a vile clamor for his crucifixion, in the very place where he was condemned and put to death, songs of thanksgiving and praise, ascending in immortal strains to the Deity, from the innumerable multitude of the redeemed”.

Millstones Not To Be Taken As Pledges — v. 6

Here follow a series of laws legislating on behalf of the needy. Consideration must ever be shown towards such on the part of those who are in need of God’s help.

VERSE 6

“No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh a man’s life to pledge” — A mill for grinding grain had both upper and lower stones. To take one or the other would render the grinder ineffective, and as it was daily needed by the owner to provide the necessities of life this must not be done. A creditor must not take either stone, for otherwise he would render useless, that which is essential to life. The small family handmill ground sufficient grain for a day’s consumption (see its use in preparing manna — Num. 11:8). How incongruous it would be for an Israelite to pray: “Give us this day our daily bread” if a fellow-Israelite had rendered ineffectual the means of preparing it! As manna represented the bread of life, the handmill represented the preparation of the Word of life for absorption. Nothing must be permitted to render that ineffectual!

Manstealing Prohibited — v. 7

The severest penalty is provided for the

sin of kidnapping. This also has important figurative signification.

VERSE 7

“If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him” — Kidnapping is a heinous crime bringing untold anxiety and agony of mind to the relatives of those so treated. It has earned the opprobrious condemnation of humanitarian feelings in every age. But there is a form of wickedness that is just as reprehensible, but which is not considered as such: and that is the guilt of robbing the Word of its power, or “making merchandise” of those who have embraced the Truth, and so holding people “into captivity” to sin and death. That is a crime of which Rome is guilty, and into the arena of which any believer can unconsciously trespass. See the warning of 2 Pet. 2:3; Rev. 18:13. No thieves will be granted entrance into the Kingdom (Mal. 3:8-9; Rev. 21:8); and such are those who rob Yahweh of His due.

“Then that thief shall die” — See Exod. 21:16. That also will be the fate of those who rob the doctrines of God of their real power.

“And thou shalt put evil away from among you” — See note Ch. 13:5. The verb “put away” is from the Hebrew *ba’ar*, “to kindle or burn”, and therefore denotes to purge by burning. That, today, would be equivalent to “putting away” or dis-fellowshipping one guilty or robbing the Word of its power (see 1 Cor. 5:7,13; 1 Tim. 1:20). To do so where such transgression is apparent, is a responsibility resting upon Ecclesias; and where it is evaded the consequences are fraught with peril, for defiling influences are easily transmittable.

Law of Leprosy To Be Enforced — vv. 8-9

Every case of leprosy recorded in Scripture is shown to be an act of God as a punishment or illustration of sin. Leprosy represents sin in action, and is treated in Scripture as a living death. Figuratively it illustrates one who is “dead whilst he lives”, “dead in trespasses and sins”.

VERSE 8

“Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do” — For these re-

quirements see Lev. 13 & 14. The tendency might well be to treat with compassion the pitiable state of the leper, and, so out of sympathy, fail to carry out the strict and minute inscriptions of the Law. Such a mistaken pity would destroy the powerful lessons designed to be conveyed by the imposition of the plague. “The plague” or *smiting* by leprosy implies that it was imposed by Yahweh as a punishment for sin. The leper, therefore, suffered the consequences of his own folly, and the lesson had to be brought home to all. The prominence given to the condition of the leper dramatised the frightful result of sin, and could well warn others to avoid the same course of action, lest they suffer the same punishment. Sin must be revealed for what it is before the sinner can benefit from the forgiveness which can be freely obtained through repentance. However, a false sympathy shown towards such, coupled with the failure to carry out Yahweh’s requirements, could lead to the leper failing to recognise the cause of his suffering, and his responsibility to manifest remorse and repentance in regard thereto.

VERSE 9

“Remember” — Christ called upon the lepers he cured to observe the requirements of the Law when cleansing had taken place (Matt. 8:4; Luke 17:12-14). Note the exhortation of 1 Cor. 10:6,11).

“What Yahweh thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt” — See Num. 12:10-12. Yahweh excluded Miriam from the camp, thereby publicly proclaiming that leprosy (symbolising persistent and recurring sin) must be similarly excluded. If one so prominent and normally spiritual as Miriam be treated according to the strict requirements of Yahweh, lesser persons are not likely to be exempted.

Homes of Debtors To Be Respected — vv. 10-13

Consideration for the needy is to be constantly shown. The houses of such are not to be disturbed in order to claim a debt; there must be no invasion of an Israelite’s privacy. With his wife and family, his home constituted a small Ecclesia within the nation, and had to be kept immune from any contact with that which would unduly disturb it.

VERSE 10

“When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his home to fetch his pledge” — Whereas liberality towards those in need is consistently advocated (Deut. 15:8), creditors are permitted to demand a pledge for any debt incurred, because the obligation of debtors should be scrupulously met. However, if the pledge is an article in necessary daily use, the creditor should only take it of an evening when it is not needed. But he is strictly prohibited entering the home of the debtor to do so, and so embarrassing him before his family and neighbours.

VERSE 11

“Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee” — A debtor would not like his neighbour to see the creditor standing outside for long periods awaiting the pledge, and would be inclined, on his approach to the home to hasten out to give it up.

VERSE 12

“And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge” — The *New International Version* gives this a little clearer: “do not go to sleep with his pledge in your possession”. The “pledge” referred to is the garment of the next verse, indicating the extent of poverty and need experienced by debtors.

VERSE 13

“In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee” — If mercy and consideration are shown towards those in the creditor’s power, he will not only receive a reciprocal blessing, but in addition Yahweh will repay. See Prov. 14:31; 22:16; Luke 14:14; and contrast Mal. 3:5. There seems to be a reference to this verse on the part of Paul: “Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath” (Eph. 4:26). Sympathy and consideration towards others will bring mutual blessings.

“And it shall be righteousness unto thee before Yahweh thy God” — The action of the creditor in such circumstances will be blessed of God. This is the guaranteed fruit that will accrue from observing the golden rule of Christ (Matt. 7:12; cp. James 1:27; 2:13-23). Such acts of humble service and kindness to others are seen of

Yahweh, Who will heed and reward (see Psa. 18:25; Isa. 66:2).

Wages To Be Regularly Paid — vv. 14-15

In those pre-union days, employees were at the mercy of their employers. If the latter recall the principle expressed in Eph. 6:9 there will be found no problems of unjust treatment.

VERSE 14

“Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates” — In view of the principle that there is a Master in heaven, Who is over all, the application of this law should be automatic. But, as generally applies to the ordinances of the Law, there is also a figurative application to heed. Those who minister in the Gospel work are as hired servants, and should be treated with the consideration this verse suggests. See Prov. 14:31; 22:16; Luke 14:14; ct. Mal. 3:5; and for the support of Gospel workers, see Luke 10:7; Gal. 6:6.

VERSE 15

“At his day thou shalt give him his hire” — The servant should be paid at the duly specified time (Lev. 19:13). The figurative application anticipates the coming day when due payment will be made to those servants who faithfully labour for God.

“Neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it” — The Hebrew is more emphatic: “He lifteth his soul unto it” as in Psa. 25:1; 86:4. He is poor and desperately needs the money to provide the necessities of life. So his whole being looks forward in anticipation to the recompense of the reward: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled”, declared Christ (Matt. 5:6). There is a “set time” coming when payment will be meted out to all those who have “occupied till he come” (Luke 19:13). Meanwhile, let them hunger for that time, seeking no satisfaction to the soul until it is received. There is blessedness “for the poor” if they labour thus before God.

“Lest he cry against thee unto Yahweh, and it be sin unto thee” — See Deut. 15:9. We are assured that Yahweh will plead the cause of the poor and needy (Prov. 22:22,28; 23:10-11). James warns how terrible it is to “fall into the hands of the living God” by ignoring Yahweh. The destruction of A.D. 70 was payment in kind

by Yahweh on those who oppressed His people (James 5:4). This oppression was adjudged as “sin” against the nation which suffered greatly for its folly in ignoring God, crucifying Christ, and persecuting his saints (1 Pet. 3:12-15).

Sins of the Fathers Not To Rest on the Family — v. 16

Perfect justice is to rule throughout the Land, whilst personal individual responsibility is to be stressed.

VERSE 16

“The fathers shall not be put to death for the children” — Dr. Young renders “for” as *along with*. The death penalty was imposed only for very serious sins; and a father was not to be held responsible for the wickedness of his family if he has played his part in bring them up in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). There are examples in the Word of children of faithful parents not following the example set them (see 1 Sam. 8:1-3; 1 Kings 1:5-6; 2 Kings 21:1-3 etc.), but the condemnation meted out to the offspring has not involved the parents. The Law legislated in support of personal responsibility, and repudiated the principle of a substitutionary death, in which an innocent party suffers the penalty due to the guilty.

“Neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers” — See this law invoked in 2 Kings 14:6; 2 Chron. 25:4; Jer. 31:29-30; and its justice reasoned at length in Ezekiel 18. The Israelites contemporary with Ezekiel argued that they suffered as the consequence of their fathers’ sins, claiming that they were personally righteous. But Yahweh, through His prophet, clearly set out the facts of the matter, and showed that in His economy a person suffers as the consequence of his own waywardness.

“Every man shall be put to death for his own sin” — Complete justice must dominate all decisions at law.

Judgment On the Needy to be Just — vv. 17-18

A warning is given against perverting the judgment of those who have no collateral support. The judges are to bear in mind the time when the nation was in need and was mercifully helped by God.

VERSE 17

“Thou shalt not pervert the judgment”

— The appointed judges are to imitate Yahweh’s ways in extending help to those who lack help of others (see Deut. 10:18; Matt. 5:44-48). Indeed, a curse is pronounced against those who do otherwise (Deut. 27:19). They must remember that the nation, itself, was once in a helpless state, and was assisted by Yahweh (Exod. 22:21-22; Lev. 19:33-34). True religion is defined by James as manifesting consideration for others in time of need (James 1:26-27).

“Of the stranger” — A foreigner, unfamiliar with the protection of the Law, might well become a mark for unscrupulous treatment.

“Nor of the fatherless” — Yahweh has warned that He will avenge those who lack the protection of a father if they are unjustly treated (Exod. 22:22-24; Deut. 10:18; Psa. 68:5; 146:9).

“Nor take a widow’s raiment to pledge” — See vv. 6, 13. As a widow she lacks a husband’s support; but Yahweh has warned that He will undertake to protect her (Exod. 22:22-24).

VERSE 18

“But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and Yahweh Thy God redeemed thee from thence” — Israelites are called upon to remember with everlasting gratitude the work of redemption effected on their behalf by Yahweh. In Egypt they were slaves, fatherless, and without support; but they were avenged by Yahweh, and delivered therefrom. This fact needs to be constantly “remembered” by His people. In recalling it, and the personal help each one has received from Him, His people need to manifest the same Divine quality of compassion and help to others in times of need. The principle set down is that recorded by the Lord in Matt. 7:12: “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets”. Throughout Deuteronomy, the exhortation to *remember* is constantly advanced. See Deut. 5:15; 7:18; 8:2,18; 9:7,27; 15:15; 16:3,12; 24:9,18; 25:17. It is equally important for believers today to remember what Yahweh has done on their behalf, and extend the same compassion and goodness to others. See the exhortation of Paul in Eph. 2:11.

The Gleaning Of Fields To Be Left To The Poor — vv. 19-22

How much better is the provision of gleaning for the purposes of relieving poverty than the Gentile dole! It provides the means for every man to maintain his independence in labouring for his living (2 Thess. 3:10), and so keeps initiative and self-respect alive. For the land-owner, the law of gleaning provides a counteraction to selfishness, inducing a consideration of the poor and needy, and encouraging liberality. The Mosaic dispensation is based on respect of God and benevolence towards man. The blessings that man is called upon to acknowledge as being received from Yahweh, he is expected to pass on to his fellow man.

VERSE 19

“When thou cuttest down thy harvest in thy field and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it” — This is a repetition of the law contained in Lev. 19:9-10; 23:22. The experience of Ruth illustrates its purpose (See *The Story of Ruth*). However, the instructions concerning gleaning in the context of Leviticus 23 do not relate solely to the literal principle, but to the typical; that is, to the preaching of the Gospel. After the harvest was gathered in, the gleaning was left to the stranger and the needy. So it was with the message of salvation in Apostolic times. It was first offered to Israel and only afterwards to the rest of humanity (Rom. 1:16). Following the day of Pentecost, the gospel was preached to the nation as such, with considerable success. In fact, some 3000 converts were baptised on that very day. But the harvesting of Israel came to an end with the national rejection of the message, followed by the death of Stephen. In the persecution that was initiated following that crime (Acts 8:1), the ecclesia was scattered, with the result that the truth was proclaimed to the “poor” among Israel who were scattered abroad, and those Gentiles who were disposed to hearken thereunto (Acts 13:46-47). By that means the poor among Israel, and the strangers who were drawn to the hope of Israel, were able to glean in the Gospel-field after the harvest of Israel as a nation had been gathered in. The provision of gleaning, therefore, prophetically set forth the purpose of God in preaching. Today the Gospel continues to be preached among Gentiles, who are thus called to glean in the fields of Israel’s hope.

“It shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow” — Typi-



Gleaning in the fields. An illustration from the life of Ruth.

cally they represent the bereft in Israel and the Gentiles to whom the gospel was and is preached (see Ruth 2:16; James 2:5).

“That Yahweh thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hands” — This promise to Israel, will be experienced by ecclesias today, if they engage faithfully upon the work of the Truth in presenting the hope of Israel to the world about them. The exhortation of Paul is appropriate to the verse before us: “Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). Supporting passages

promising that Yahweh’s blessing will be experienced by those who compassionately consider others (and this includes Gospel-preaching), is found in Psa. 41:1-3; 112:9; Prov. 11:24-25; Isa. 32:8; Luke 6:35,38; 14:13-14; 2 Cor. 9:6-8; 1 John 3:17-19.

VERSE 20

“When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow” — From the olive was obtained the oil that illuminated the home, and also provided ointment for the benefit of the individual. For the poor, olive oil was an additional luxury, and to leave some for their gleaning implied that they were not to be entirely destitute, nor reduced to the absolute, bare necessities

of life.

VERSE 21

“When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterwards: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow” — The wine that could be made from the grapes thus gleaned, would provide the means for added joy in life for those who were otherwise destitute. See Lev. 19:10; Jud. 9:13.

VERSE 22

“And thou shalt rememberr that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing” — The Israelites were commanded to see in the stranger etc. a reflection of their condition when oppressed in Egypt, and should manifest Yahweh’s ways in relieving such. See notes on v. 19.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE**VARIOUS LAWS FOR THE OBSERVATION OF ISRAELITES WHEN IN THE LAND**

The present chapter is a continuation of the sub-section of Deuteronomy that commences from chapter 21. It regulates the extent of punishment to be imposed upon offenders (vv. 1-3); the consideration that should be shown servants and labourers (v. 4); the principles that should govern a Levirate marriage (vv. 5-10); the modesty that Israelites should exhibit in all circumstances (vv. 11-12); the rectitude and integrity in trade that should be observed (vv. 13-16); and the unremitting warfare that is to be conducted against Amalek (vv. 17-19). The chapter reminds Israelites that justice and equity are required of them by Yahweh and if maintained will bring upon the nation His blessings. On the other hand, those who are obstinate and refuse to observe His will, will suffer as a consequence. As man needs the blessings of Yahweh, obedience is to his material and spiritual benefit. However, a key word of the chapter is “abomination” which is a Divine reaction to rebellion (v. 16). As in all other parts of Deuteronomy, the ordinances set down are those which will provide for Israel blessing and happiness in the Land of

Promise. As such they have practical application for life at present, in that believers, like Israel of old, are on the eve of entering their Land of Promise.

Punishment Limited To Forty Stripes — vv. 1-3

Strict instructions are laid down for the administration of punishment. First, it must take place only after proper trial by authorised judges. Second, it must be administered in the presence of the judge. Third, it must be proportionate to the crime, and strokes must be limited to forty. In order to avoid breaching this command, it became traditional in Judaism for the maximum number of strokes to be restricted to thirty nine (see 2 Cor. 11:24).

VERSE 1

“If there be a controversy between men, and they come into judgment” — It is best to avoid controversy, unless the matter is of such serious concern as to demand some decision, in which case those involved should appear before those appointed to administer justice. See Deut. 17:6-9; 19:17-19; and cp. Matt. 7:1-2; Jhn. 7:24. In the age to come, there will be judges appointed to administer justice in controversial issues, and they will be set up in the precincts of the Temple (Ezek. 44:24; Psa. 122:5). They will comprise both mortals and immortals, the latter qualified to assist from their personal experience as mortals (see Heb. 5:1-2). Paul taught that saints will judge the world in the age to come (1 Cor. 6:2), and therefore should learn now how to discriminate and determine matters that come under their consideration.

“That the judges may judge them” — Any serious case of controversy must be presented before those who are competent to deal with it. The administration of justice must not be taken into the hands of any thus not authorized.

“Then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked” — To do otherwise is to run foul of Yahweh (Prov. 17:15), and “to fall into the hands of the living God” is a serious matter (Heb. 10:31). Scrupulous justice, therefore, is to be observed, this being a divine principle. See Psa. 82:1-4; Isa. 1:17,23; Mic. 3:1-2; Hab. 1:4,13; Mal. 3:18; Matt. 7:2; Jhn. 7:24.

VERSE 2

“And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten” — The judges must determine whether the accusation is sustained, and decide the extent of punishment to be administered. It is significant, that “the wicked man” after he has received his punishment is described “as thy brother” (v. 3). In other words, after the administration of punishment, the offender is to be received back into full fellowship with his accusers, or those he has wronged.

“That the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number” — This punishment is described elsewhere as scourging (Lev. 19:20). References to such beatings are found in Prov. 10:13; 19:29; 26:13. The accused, having been found guilty, is to be beaten publicly, in the presence of his accusers.

VERSE 3

“Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed” — According to Jewish comment, the stripes were given with a leather belt, but no reference to that is found in scripture. The Hebrew word is from a root signifying to sprall, hence to be four-sided, as when the arms and the legs are stretched out. In figurative numerics, forty is the number of probation and judgment. In addition, it is frequently associated with humiliation, affliction, punishment. Moses twice humbled himself forty days in prayer and fasting (Deut. 9:9,18); so also did Elijah (1 Kings 19:8); and Christ (Matt. 4:2). The old world had thrice forty years preaching to repent (Gen. 6:3); the Flood continued forty days and forty nights (Gen. 7:12); Moses twice humbled himself forty days in prayer and fasting (Deut. 9:8,18); forty days purification followed the birth of a boy and twice forty for that of a girl (Lev. 12:4-5); the spies were forty days spying the land (Num. 13:25); and the disobedient nation suffered forty years in the wilderness (Num. 14:33-34); Elijah was forty days at Horeb (1 Kings 19:8); Jonah preached impending disaster for forty days to the Ninevites (Jonah 3:4); Christ was forty

days fasting at the time of temptation (Matt. 4:2); he taught the Apostles for forty days after his resurrection (Acts 1:3-9), after forty years of preaching the Jewish state was destroyed in AD 70.

“Lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee” — The punishment was designed to reclaim the erring Israelite, but if it became too heavy, it might defeat the very purpose, and increase the rebellion of the guilty party. There is always need, in administering punishment, to consider the reclamation of the person so punished. See 2 Cor. 2:10-11. The use of the term “thy brother” in such a context is significant. It implies that once an erring Israelite has expiated his offence by submitting to the punishment inflicted, the past offence should be both forgiven and forgotten, and he be received back into the brotherhood of the nation. References to unjust beating are contained in Matt. 10:17; 1 Pet. 2:20,24. On the other hand, the Lord made reference to this form of punishment as typical of that to be administered at the judgment seat. See Luke 12:47-48.

The Working Ox Not To Be Muzzled — v. 4.

Animals are not to be set hard labour, and at the same time to be prevented from eating any of the food that is temptingly displayed before their eyes. They are to benefit from their own labour, as those who work in the service of Yahweh expect to do. Under the Law, animals participated in the Sabbath rest (Deut. 5:14), and from the produce of the fields in a Sabbatical year (Exod. 23:11); and now instructions are given for them to do so under normal circumstances of labour. Israelites in the service of Yahweh can expect to likewise benefit. In the typology of the Law, domesticated animals represented the Israel of God (Gen. 1:28; 9:9-10; Deut. 5:14-15; 1 Cor. 9:9).

VERSE 4

“Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn” — Kindness and consideration to labouring animals are to be shown by true Israelites (Prov. 12:10). Such animals are to be permitted to eat of the corn whilst employed for threshing the grain. However, in quoting this passage, Paul explained that Yahweh had in view the labourer who labours in His service. As He requires that Israelites show kindness and consideration to their labouring

animals, it is obvious that He will extend a like consideration to those who work in His service. Paul twice cites this passage. In 1 Cor. 9:9; and 1 Tim. 5:18. He asks the question, Does God care for oxen? He answers that the Law had consideration for animals only in a secondary sense; primarily Yahweh had in mind the labourer in His service, assuring such that they will be amply compensated for their consistent and faithful work. In that regard, such passes as 2 Tim. 2:6 and James 5:7 are relevant. We can be assured that Yahweh will look after those who unselfishly labour for His Truth.

Levirate Marriages To Be Encouraged — vv. 5-10

The term “Levirate” marriage is frequently identified with the term Levi; but it is not related thereto. It comes from the Latin “Levir” signifying a husband’s brother. The Law takes heed of circumstances when a husband dies and leaves his wife childless. The family name is in danger of ceasing. To prevent this, the brother of the deceased husband is expected to take his sister-in-law to wife. The manner in which this is to be done relates to the Law of a Levirate Marriage.

VERSE 5

“If brethren dwell together, and one of them die” — The expression does not necessarily mean dwelling in the same home, but in the same community.

“And have no child” — The Hebrew word, *ben*, strictly signifies a son. But in view of the Law that provided that an inheritance could continue through a daughter (Num. 27:4-11), the expression doubtless relates to an offspring of either sex.

“The wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband’s brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband’s brother unto her” — Reference to this Law is found in Ruth 1:12-13; Matt. 22:24; Mark 12:19; Luke 20:28. This is called a *Levirate* marriage from the Latin *Levir* signifying “a husband’s brother”.

VERSE 6

“And it shall be that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel” — The intention was that a family name in Israel should remain for all time, for the nation constituted the Kingdom of God on earth. For a name to

be blotted out, therefore, was to have one's part in the Kingdom removed. See the expression used in Psa. 9:5; 109:13.

VERSE 7

"And if the man like not to take his brother's wife" — This was the case with the near kinsman of Chilion, the husband of Ruth (see Ruth 4:9-10). It was probably due to her Moabitish nationality. The term "brother's wife" is a Hebraism denoting a near kinsman's wife.

"Then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother" — The word *shem*, here rendered *name*, also denotes a family, and not merely a reputation. For example, the use of the term in regard to Boaz (see Ruth 4:14), does not relate to his reputation which was already "famous" in Bethlehem, but to his family which was in danger of dying out. See notes at that place. So it is, when Simeon declared: "God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His *name*"; the term can denote a family as well as Divine characteristics. Of course, a true family will manifest the characteristics of its father, and so the term can do duty for both.

The Levirate marriage was designed to preserve the family name and inheritance. The first was God-given; the second was God's heritage (Psa. 127:3), and the medium of His redemption (Gen. 3:15; 22:18; 1 Tim. 2:15). Therefore, in the case of a childless marriage, there was a danger that the family go out of existence, and so every means were devised to preserve it. The normal prohibition as to intermarriage was waived (Lev. 18:16), in order that a seed might be preserved through whom the family name and inheritance can be maintained. The obligation on the surviving next of kin (see margin) was onerous, and might even be one he would prefer to avoid. But it was undertaken as a duty of affection for the memory of the deceased; as well as an acknowledgement of the purpose of Yahweh. It was not one that could be enforced by law, for the surviving next of Kin could refuse to perform, as in the case of the nameless redeemer of the Book of Ruth (Ruth 4:6). That the practice continued down to the time of the Lord is apparent by the question asked by the Sadducees (Matt. 22:24). However, like so many other enactments of the

Mosaic Law, it was also a prophecy of Yahweh's purpose, as is illustrated in the case of Ruth and Boaz. Yahweh proclaimed Himself as Israel's Redeemer, that is, Next of Kin, and when He saw that there was no man to save, extended Himself in the form of a Levirate marriage, to provide a seed through whom the family Name and Inheritance could be sustained, even the Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. 59:16-21).

VERSE 8

"Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him" — The elders are instructed to call the next of kin before them and urge upon him the need to fulfil the duty of a redeemer for his brother's family.

"And if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her" — This describes the action of the nameless redeemer, or next of kin, in his rejection of marriage to Ruth. See notes Ruth 4:6.

VERSE 9

"Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot" — As one figuratively occupied land by walking upon it (see Gen. 13:17; Josh. 10:24; Psa. 60:8; 108:9), this action symbolically represented that the survivor not only repudiated his duty, but was not worthy to stand in his brother's place (Ruth 4:7). To walk barefooted was considered a disgrace; and the rejection of his duty by the next of kin was treated as a disgrace (Isa. 20:2,4).

"And spit in his face" — This action expressed contempt and repudiation. The Hebrew idiom, according to the *Soncino* Jewish commentary, does not strictly signify to spit in the face of the man, but *before* his face, on the ground. In any case, it was an action of contempt and disgrace (Num. 12:14; Job 30:10; Isa. 50:6).

"And shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house" — Such a man was considered as lacking in the basic requirements of the brotherly covenant (Amos 1:9; Obad. 10-12) which requires that family ties should be of such strength as to cause one to disadvantage himself to assist another member of the family. The Law treated the family as a vital organisation of national life, to be preserved at all costs, so that extreme methods were adopted to maintain and strengthen it (see Gen. 16:2; 30:3; Ruth 4:11). So cooperation should

be a family characteristic with the people of God, particularly in view of His future purpose. Yahweh has provided a Seed through whom the future of His family and its inheritance is assured (Isa. 59:16-21).

VERSE 10

"And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed" — Such a one would be permanently disgraced as having failed to keep the brotherly covenant. The taking off of the shoe of the man by the woman was an act of indignity to him; it amounted to a declaration that he was not worthy to stand in his brother's place, and was scornfully rejected by the woman herself. The disgrace became perpetuated in the family he may father through another wife.

Women to Preserve Decency Towards Men in All Circumstances — vv. 11-12

The woman who, even to help her husband, acts indecently towards one of the opposite sex, shall have her hand cut off.

VERSE 11

"When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets" — In the most extenuating circumstances, such immodesty is condemned; in this case, even though it was done to deliver the husband from harm. It taught the principle that it is wrong "to do evil that good might come" (Rom. 3:8). The word "secrets" is from the Hebrew *mabush*, from a root signifying to be ashamed, so as to hide. Young renders the word as *shameful things*; or those things that can cause shame. There is no lust of man more potent of evil than the uncontrolled gratification of the sexual urge, and wise is the person who learns to discipline and control it. This is best done by the power of the mind, and the development of habits of probity. The more the flesh is gratified, the more powerful becomes the urge to continue doing so.

VERSE 12

"Then thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not pity her" — The covenant sign of circumcision was cut into the sexual organ of Israelitish men. It taught the need of cutting off, or denying the flesh. As a sign it was hidden away, and therefore

represented the "circumcision of the heart" (Rom. 2:29). Circumcision results in hardening the nerves, and so lessening the sexual urge without entirely destroying it. It taught the principle that the flesh needs to be curbed. To make a vow based upon the rite of circumcision, as did Abraham's servant (see Gen. 24:2), was to declare that every attempt will be made to fulfil it even at the expense of gratification of the flesh. The woman, in the circumstances is described as taking advantage of the man where the covenant sign was found. She, in turn, was subjected to a "cutting off" or circumcision of the hand, that being the offending members in the crime.

Integrity In Trade Demanded — vv. 13-16

Israelites are to be scrupulously fair in trading, and are prohibited from having various weights, the greater for measuring purchases, and the smaller for sales.

VERSE 13

"Thou shalt not have in thy bag" — That contained in the bag is not openly obvious to others, but remains hidden. It is not only weights that can be concealed from view, but also aspects of the doctrines of the Truth. To have hidden reservations in regard to these is similar to having secretly hidden varying weights for differing circumstances. See Lev. 19:35-36; Prov. 11:1; 16:11; 20:10.

"Divers weights, a great and small" — The reference is to weights for measuring. The "divers weights" include one for the buyer and one for the seller (Amos 8:5). The Hebrew is literally "an ephah and an ephah". The Ephah was the basic measure in Israel, and the use of this expression signifies that both weights are suppose to measure the same. The "divers weights" therefore were for the purpose of dishonest trade. A royal standard was set (2 Sam. 14:26), but this could be ignored by unscrupulous traders.

VERSE 15

"But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have" — As Yahweh is just and fair in all His ways, and in His dealings with flesh, His children are required to manifest the same family characteristic in their transactions one with the other.

"That thy days may be lengthened in the land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee" — See Deut. 4:40; 5:16,33; 6:18;

11:9; 17:20. Manifesting justice to all will be productive of blessings to one's self. A reputation for reliability will be created. Integrity in such fundamental matters must necessarily promote social happiness and mutual respect, and so contribute greatly to prolonging the life of a nation. It will provide a basis for national unity; whereas a kingdom divided against itself shall fall (Matt. 12:25).

VERSE 16

"For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto Yahweh thy God" — See Prov. 11:1; 16:11; 20:10,23; Amos 8:5-7; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 21:17. Integrity in such matters will be enforced in the Millennium (Ezek. 45:10-11), and should be manifested today by those who desire to reign therein. On the other hand, covetousness, which breeds dishonesty, is likened to idolatry (Col. 3:5). Such is represented as a stench in the nostrils of Yahweh, for "abomination" is derived from a Hebrew root denoting to *stink*.

Unremitting Hostility To Be Shown Amalek — vv. 17-19

The sufferings of Israelites at the hands of the Amalekites are to be ever borne in mind. They attacked the feeble, and the stragglers in Israel as the nation made its way through the wilderness to Sinai (Exod. 17:18; 1 Sam. 15:2). No nation that fears Yahweh would do this, but the Amalekites did so. Accordingly, Yahweh declared unremitting warfare on them (Exod. 17:16), and through the prophecies of Balaam predicted their ultimate destruction (Num. 24:20). Israel, as His people, are to view the Amalekites with the same hostility. Symbolically they represent the flesh in political manifestation.

VERSE 17

"Remember" — The attack of Amalek was one of many things Israel was called upon to recall (Exod. 17:8-16; See also Deut. 24:9,18,22). The Israel of God is likewise exhorted to "remember" its former state (Eph. 2:11-13). It is valuable to do this and to bear in mind goodness of Yahweh in calling Gentiles out of their previous darkness by the power of His Gospel (Rom. 1:16; 11:22).

"What Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt" — Amalek, then described as the "first of the nations" (Num. 24:20), was

ruled by a King by the name of Agag, or Gog as it is rendered in the *Septuagint* (Num. 24:7). Amalek was a descendant of Esau (Edom) and represented the flesh in political manifestation, therefore typing Gog of the latter days. The "Israel of God", as constituting the Kingdom of God in embryo form is separated from, and antagonistic to, the Kingdom of Men (Dan. 4:17; Acts 15:14), and wages a war of doctrines against it (2 Cor. 10:4). This, however, will develop into physical antagonism at the return of Christ, to the ultimate destruction of the antitypical Amalek of the latter days (see Psa. 149:6-9).

VERSE 18

"How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary" — Amalek smote and destroyed the weakest of the Israelites: the stragglers and the feeble. It was done when the nation was weary, and found it difficult to complete their aid. Those who are "weak in faith" are a mark for antitypical Amalek, or the world, and therefore there needs to be constant warfare against the flesh. Let those who are in control take heed of the feeble, particularly in times when they themselves are faint and weary, and can be taken off guard; for otherwise they will succumb. The Israel of God (Gal. 6:16) need to remember that Yahweh has declared warfare against Amalek, and therefore they can have no part nor lot with the political aspirations of the world about them. Those who make themselves "friends of the world" automatically become at "enmity with God" (James 4:4). That is why Christadelphians are conscientious objectors. The Amalek of Moses' day prefigured the Gentile world of today. Let Ecclesias review the state of their army, and taking heed of the feeble, strengthen them to "fight the fight of faith", so equipping them to resist the "fiery darts of the wicked".

"He feared not God" — The flesh never does fear God (Psa. 36:1; Prov. 16:6; Rom. 3:18), and therefore certainly will not fear men. The Gentile world (Amalek) of today has no fear of God before its eyes, and therefore strengthens itself in its sin.

VERSE 19

"Therefore it shall be, when Yahweh

thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it" — Saul was directed to the work of overthrowing Amalek (1 Sam. 15:2,3), and because he failed to carry out his commission, he lost the Kingdom. So will all those who follow his example. Against Amalek (typing the flesh politically manifested) there must be shown by true Israelites, a belligerent antagonism: they have no part or lot in the present systems of men. At the coming of Christ "the remembrance of Amalek" will be "blotted out". These "remembrances" are the monuments to the glory of the flesh seen in the world and its cities today. They will be overthrown, and replaced by those memorials (such as the Temple etc. See Mal. 1:11) to be introduced by Christ. Because Yahweh had declared war against Amalek, Saul, as His political representative on earth, was ordered to attack Amalek. At first he attempted to carry out these instructions (1 Sam. 14:48), but failed to do so completely (1

Sam. 15:9). David waged war against the Amalekites, even whilst a refugee from Saul (1 Sam. 27:8). He suffered from their secretive attack on Ziklag, but subsequently avenged himself on them (1 Sam. 30:1-7). However, they were not completely extirpated: remnants of them remained (1 Chron. 4:43). In the days of Esther, Haman the Agagite revealed a typical Amalekite hostility towards the Jewish people (Est. 3:1); but was destroyed on the gallows he had prepared for his enemy (Est. 7:10; 9:7-10). A characteristic of the nation was its bitter antisemitism; and for that it were not forgiven. In that sense, there are modern Amalekites, though they are not known as such. They are the Edomites of the prophets; and their influence and authority are doomed to utter extinction at the coming of the Lord (Psa. 83:7-17). The *Book of Esther* shows that Amalek typed the flesh in ruthless and merciless political belligerency against the Israel of God, and the way of righteousness: the political diabolos that will be destroyed when the Seed of the Woman appears to crush the head of his enemy.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

ON THE PRESENTATION OF TITHES

This Chapter concludes the Second Discourse in Deuteronomy by instructing the manner in which the firstfruits and tithes are to be offered once the Israelites are in the land. In doing so, it presents Yahweh as the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Entering the Land was equivalent to entering the Kingdom; and the Mosaic Code provided for amendments when that was done (e.g. see Lev. 23:39), even as there will be amendments to the same code (Mal. 4:4) to be introduced at the second coming of the Lord, as outlined in Ezekiel's Temple prophecy.

Confession of Dependence on Yahweh To Be Made When Presenting The Firstfruits — vv. 1-11

After the Israelites have entered the land, they are, in season, to take of the first of the fruits of the earth, and carry it in a basket unto the Sanctuary. They are to stand before the priest, and recite the liturgy re-

corded in these verses. During the wilderness wanderings, no firstfruits were offered inasmuch as no sowing or reaping was done in the desert.

VERSE 1

"And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which Yahweh thy God

giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein — The fact that the Land was the possession of Yahweh, and occupation was granted Israel only as a tenant at will, is constantly asserted throughout Deuteronomy (Deut. 2:29; 4:1,20,40; 5:16; 9:6; 17:14 etc). The Land is His, and He can determine the terms of its occupancy. Moreover, the abundance of its fruits is a blessing from Him. His name, as expressed in this verse, *Yahweh thy Elohim, or Yahweh Elohim of Israel*, represents Him as selecting Israel as the channel of the manifestation of His goodness through the Elohim: the angels then, and the glorified saints in the future. The title is used 299 times in Deuteronomy. It expresses a personal and exclusive relationship between Yahweh and Israel, here illustrated as the Giver of every good gift (James 1:17). The ritual Israelites were ordered to observe emphasised this. Every Israelite had to individually avow that the inheritance he received was from Yahweh, and not because of personal merit. The liturgy therefore proclaimed the doctrine of Grace and Gratitude; and the offering made in return became one of reason (cp. Rom. 12:1). For in presenting his basket of firstfruits, the worshipper pledged his life and service to Yahweh.

VERSE 2

“That thou shalt take the first of all the fruits of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that Yahweh thy God giveth thee” — Religion must be given practical expression; a giving as well as a receiving, not limited to mere words. See Exod. 23:19; 34:26; Psa. 100:1-2; Prov. 3:9; Phil. 4:4. The Israelites were not commanded to bring the first of every kind of fruit, but those listed in Deut. 8:8 as being particularly “of the land”. These had been promised the priests (Num. 18:12-13; Deut. 18:4). This requirement taught the Israelites that they were expected to sacrifice at personal expense in their worship of Yahweh. David refused to offer anything to Yahweh that cost him nothing (2 Sam. 24:24), and Solomon urged the need of worshippers “honouring Yahweh” with their substance, and the firstfruits of their increase (Prov. 3:9). That is the principle expressed in the Law now before us.

“And shalt put it in a basket” — Reference to this is found in v. 4, and in Deut. 28:5,17, where it is linked with the gathering in of the harvest. The “basket” was

evidently the normal utensil for such a purpose.

“And shalt go unto the place which Yahweh thy God shall choose to place His name there” — See note Deut. 12:5. There were several such places set aside for Divine worship until Zion was finally chosen. First Shiloh, then Nob, then Gibeon, and finally Jerusalem.

VERSE 3

“And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days” — The succession of priests that presided over the things of Yahweh prefigured the Lord Jesus Christ who is today High Priest over the house of God (Heb. 7:26; 10:21). Paul exhorted: “Through him, then, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving praise to His name” (Heb. 13:15). The “fruit of our lips” must not be limited to vocal praise, however, but should reflect the fullness of our “spiritual sacrifices that through Jesus Christ are acceptable to God” (1 Pet. 2:5). The “fruit of our lips” can express the vows that we must perform.

“And say unto him, I profess this day unto Yahweh thy God, that I am come unto the country which Yahweh sware unto our father for to give us” — This confession acknowledged Yahweh’s goodness in granting the Israelites an inheritance, and by implication, contrasted their happy state with the rejection of the previous generation that failed to enter the Land. They failed through lack of faith (Heb. 3:19), but the new generation, and succeeding ones, in presenting the firstfruits with this liturgy gave expression to the vindication of their faith. Let those who are Christ’s likewise give expression to their appreciation of Yahweh, in being called to figurative Mt. Zion (Heb. 12:22), though, for the moment, they still wander in the wilderness of Gentilism.

VERSE 4

“And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of Yahweh thy God” — The altar represented Yahweh in sacrificial manifestation, and therefore pointed forward to the Lord through whom believers offer their sacrifices unto Yahweh (Heb. 13:10). They, too, have firstfruits to offer (see Rom. 8:23; 11:16; 16:5; 1 Cor. 15:20,23; 16:2; James 1:18; Rev. 14:4). There will be firstfruits offered in the Temple of the Age to come (Ezek. 44:30; 48:14).

VERSE 5

“And thou shalt speak and say before Yahweh thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father” — This second requirement (vv. 5-9) gives recognition to Yahweh’s providence in calling out a people for His name, and bringing them into the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world (Acts 15:14). Israel represented that Ecclesia, inasmuch as Yahweh had taken the people out of Egypt, that He *might bring them in* (Deut. 6:21-23). The reference to “my father” is to Jacob. He is called a “Syrian” or Aramaean, because he spent many years there serving Laban (Gen. 29:31), and his mother was from Aram-nahanim, or Mesopotamia (Gen. 24:10; see Hos. 12:13). Before Jacob, however, Abram had been called out of Mesopotamia, or Syria, and Rebekah had been likewise. Abram was called a Hebrew (*Crosser over*) only after he had crossed over the River, and came into the Promised Land. Jacob became an Aramaean when he crossed back. The word rendered “ready to perish” *abad* signifies *to wander*. The phrase, therefore, can be rendered, as it is in the *Interlinear Hebrew Bible*: “a wandering Aramaean . . .” The RV mg, has *wandering or lost*, and both ideas are related in the case of Jacob. The liturgy expresses his hopeless condition until he was finally led by Yahweh into the Promised Land.

“And he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few” — The wandering of Jacob brought him to Egypt, with his few descendants, numbering only seventy persons (Gen. 46:1,27). Jacob’s wandering typed those of the people of Israel among the Gentiles, whom Yahweh has promised to restore “the second time” (Isa. 11:11).

“And became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous” — See Exod. 1:7,9; Psa. 105:23-24. The past history of Israel, and the might of Yahweh’s arm in delivering the people were dramatically recalled by this liturgy.

VERSE 6

“And the Egyptians evil intreated us, and laid upon us hard bondage” — See Exod. 1:11,14.

VERSE 7

“And when we cried unto Yahweh God of our fathers, Yahweh heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our

labour, and our oppression” — See Exod. 1:11,14; 3:9; Num. 20:16; Psa. 116:1-4; Jer. 33:2-3; Eph. 3:20-21; James 4:8.

VERSE 8

“And Yahweh brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand” — Israel “brought out” of Egypt constituted the Ecclesia in the wilderness (Deut. 6:21-23; Isa. 63:12; Acts 7: 38). Yahweh sent His angel to deliver the people, this constituting His mighty hand (Num. 20:16). Note that this is the first of five (the number of grace) means used by Yahweh to deliver Israel. The Hebrew *yad chazaqah* signifies a hand strong to smite, and so irresistible in power. Egypt felt the full power of that hand’s blow in the plagues that were poured upon its land and people.

“And with an outstretched arm” — An arm is stretched out to ward off an enemy, and so signifies the symbol of defence. This was the second means used: Yahweh effectively defended His people.

“And with great terribleness” — The third method used was terror: the result of the last plague when all the firstborn throughout the land died.

“And with signs” — The Hebrew *othoth* conveys the idea of “tokens” expressive of the nearness of Yahweh to deliver or punish. The people were made conscious of His nearness and reality.

“And with wonders” — The fifth method used is from a Hebrew word *mophetim*, and implies the persuasive effect of miracles.

VERSE 9

“And He hath brought us into this land, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey” — See v. 15, and notes at Deut. 8:7-9; 11:11-12. The Promised Land is described as “a good land”. The firstfruits of the Land were tokens of its fertility and bounty.

VERSE 10

“And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which Thou, O Yahweh, hath given me” — Israelites were called upon to recognise Yahweh as the “Giver of every good and perfect gift”, the token of which, in the firstfruits of the land, the Israelite had brought with him to the Sanctuary (Deut. 6:10-11). As a contrast to this recognition of Yahweh’s provision, see the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:15-23).

“And thou shalt set it before Yahweh thy God, and worship before Yahweh thy God” — In presenting it formally to the priest as Yahweh’s representative upon earth, the worshipper did it before God. The Name, *Yahweh thy Elohim* expresses a personal and exclusive relationship between Yahweh and Israel as shown by the use of the pronoun *thy*, in this verse emphasised as the Giver of good. This was proclaimed by the ritual recited by the worshipper as he brought the firstfruits to the Sanctuary. Every Israelite householder was required to individually avow that the inheritance was from Yahweh and not merely through personal labour or merit. He therefore recited the doctrine of Grace and Gratitude. In presenting his basket of firstfruits, the worshipper pledged to give his life in service to Yahweh.

VERSE 11

“And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which Yahweh thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house” — The Israelite was not only to worship Yahweh, but to acknowledge the practical blessings he had received; and the great benefits that had accrued to him through the Divine beneficence. This is always a good and salutary exercise providing a basis for more fervent expressions of thanksgiving.

“Thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you” — The reciting of the ritual was followed by a sacred feast, in which the Levite and the Stranger were invited to share: the Levite because he represented Yahweh as well as providing an ideal of separation and dedication to which every Israelite was called; the Stranger, a foreigner, to whom was given no inheritance, because his state recalled the previous condition of the Israelites when he was “a stranger” in Egypt (1 Pet. 2:11).

Liturgical Confession When Presenting The Tithes of the Third Year — vv. 12-15

On the occasion of presenting the tithes, a special service is to be made. The tithe here referred to is to be taken up at the end of each third year, as prescribed, and is to be shared with the poor and needy. This is quite distinct from the Levitical tithe prescribed in Lev. 27:30-33; Num. 18:21-32. As this tithe will complete the series of tithes which Israelites have to offer it is appropriate that in presenting it a solemn declaration is to be made by the giver, to the effect that he has properly and conscientiously discharged all the obligations of the Law in

this respect. In Numbers, the firstfruits are allotted to the priests, and the tithes are allotted entirely to the Levites (Num. 18:21-32). That is not the case in Deuteronomy as is shown by the instructions of this Chapter. The additional tithes and distribution thereof was doubtless an amendment of the Law in view of the changed conditions in Canaan. In the wilderness, only cattle tithes would be available, as Num. 18:27,30 implies, for there were no sowing of seed or reaping of crops. But in the land “flowing with milk and honey”, the land of plenty, field produce would be available in abundance, and there would be more than enough. In this overflow the poor and the stranger could share with the worshipper.

VERSE 12

“When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year which is the year of tithing” — No sowing or reaping was done during the sabbatical or seventh year. The “year of tithing”, therefore, would be the third and sixth years, or each third year.

“And hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates and be filled” — Those listed were those within the community that had no land inheritance or protection (see Deut. 14:28). Whereas in the first and second years the tithes were used for the Levites and sacred feasts (Deut. 14:22-27), in the third day were given to the Levites and the poor (Deut. 14:28-29). This, it is suggested, was a second tithe. When this was done, the worshipper would appear before Yahweh at the Sanctuary (Deut. 14:23; 15:20), and declare that he had obeyed the divine commandments.

VERSE 13

“Then thou shalt say before Yahweh thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which Thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed Thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them” — In stating that he had not transgressed the Law, the worshipper would mean that if he had done so, he had made the proper restitution as demanded by it. Some have suggested there were three tithes: 1. A tax of a tenth of all edible vegetable products collected by the ministry for its own sup-

port (Num. 18:21-24). 2. A second tithe of the same products together with the cattle tithe (Lev. 27:32), which furnished a feast for the owner and guests at Jerusalem (Deut. 14:22-27). 3. The poor tithe set aside for charitable purposes (Deut. 14:28; 26:12). Josephus claims that there were three tithes (see *Jos. Tob. 1,7,8*). Maimonides claims that in the 3rd and 6th years, a second tithe was shared between the Levites and the poor, and that there were only two tithes. See the Summary on Tithes on p. 173. See Psa. 119:141,153, 170.

VERSE 14

“I have not eaten thereof in my mourning” — The worshipper declared that he had avoided polluting his tithe in three specific ways. *The first* of these is eating of it when in mourning, which, as a member of the priestly nation, would render him ceremonially unclean (Lev. 21:1,11; Hos. 9:4).

“Neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use” — Rotherham renders this *second* particular: “Neither have I removed therefrom when unclean”. It would be unlawful to touch that which was hallowed if a person were ceremonially unclean.

“Nor given ought thereof for the dead” — This is the *third* particular, and seems to prohibit the tithe being given as a contribution to a mourning feast (Jer. 16:7; Hos. 9:4).

“But I have hearkened to the voice of Yahweh my God, and have done according to all that Thou has commanded me” — The worshipper claims that care had been taken to conform to the requirements of the Law.

VERSE 15

“Look down from Thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Thy people Israel” — See Psa. 115:12-15. This was a recognition that all goodness comes from Yahweh, and that the nation of Israel is the channel of such blessings. Cp. Num. 6:23-27.

“And the land which Thou hast given us, as Thou swarest unto our fathers” — This was a further recognition that they were only tenants at will in the land given them by Yahweh; and also an acknowledgement that the oath of Yahweh can be relied upon (Heb. 6:13-18).

“A land that floweth with milk and honey” — The tithes were a token of the

fertility of the land (cp. v. 9), and that its fruitfulness is a vindication of the promise of Exod. 3:8.

The liturgy not only recognised the goodness of Yahweh, but the basis of the granting of goodness: identification with Israel; the performance of the oath made to the fathers; fulfilment of the prophetic promise.

Moses’ Solemn Admonition To Observe All The Laws and Statutes — vv. 16-19

These verses conclude the Second Discourse of Deuteronomy in which the Sinaitic Covenant is restated and re-endorsed. This second discourse commences from Ch. 4:44 to the conclusion of the Chapter before us. Since there was only one Covenant of Law (that confirmed at Sinai — Exod. 24:7), this expresses the covenant renewal, together with any amendments necessary in view of entering the Land. The end of the main legal section of Deuteronomy is concluded by an exhortation by Moses calling upon the loyal obedience of the people.

VERSE 16

“This day Yahweh thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments” — The statutes are laws clearly stated; the judgments are the penalties attached to the non-compliance of them. The definition “this day” reveals that *The Book of Deuteronomy* was delivered as a speech on the one day (See Deut. 1:1). It constituted the renewal of the Covenant made at Sinai to the new generation of Israelites. Scripture knows of only two Covenants: that of Law and that of Grace.

“Thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul” — The word “keep” is *shamar* signifying to *hedge about, to guard* so as to keep. An Israelite could do this by constantly bearing in mind the enactments of the Law through pondering its teaching (see Psa. 119:11,18,27,26,33 etc.). See this exhortation reiterated throughout Deuteronomy (Ch. 6:17; 8:2; 13:4), and repeated in the N.T. (John 14:15; 1 John 2:3; 5:2-3). To “keep” Yahweh’s commandments in that way is to ever have them in mind, so as to be motivated with the desire to obey or “do” them.

VERSE 17

“Thou hast avouched Yahweh this day to be thy God” — The new generation

that day had re-endorsed the Covenant embraced by their fathers on behalf of their descendants and the nation as a whole at Sinai (Deut. 5:2-3); in consequence of which the members thereof subsequently submitted to the rite of circumcision (Josh. 5:3-7). The word "avouched" signifies *caused to acknowledge*. The Berkeley Verson renders the statement: "Today you have openly accepted the Word of Yahweh that He is thy God". The people had proclaimed their intention of faithfully worshipping Him, by re-endorsing the Covenant.

"**And to walk in His ways**" — The Covenant required that they manifest in action the characteristics of Yahweh in His goodness and severity (Exod. 34:6-7).

"**And to keep His statutes**" — The word *choqqim* is from a root signifying *to engrave*. In this context, therefore, it relates to laws engraved in and by the Word. They have particular in relationship to moral issues as well as to the rites of religious ceremonies.

"**And His commandments**" — These were clearly set out in the Law.

"**And His judgments**" — The word *mishpatim* signifies the verdicts established by case laws. These must be carried out. For example, if the verdict of the Law is death by stoning, that must be implemented.

"**And to hearken unto his voice**" — See Ch. 13:18; 15:5.

VERSE 18

"**And Yahweh hath avouched thee this day to be His peculiar people, as He hath promised thee**" — See note Exod. 19:5;

Deut. 7:6; 14:2. Similar words are directed to Christ's people — Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9.

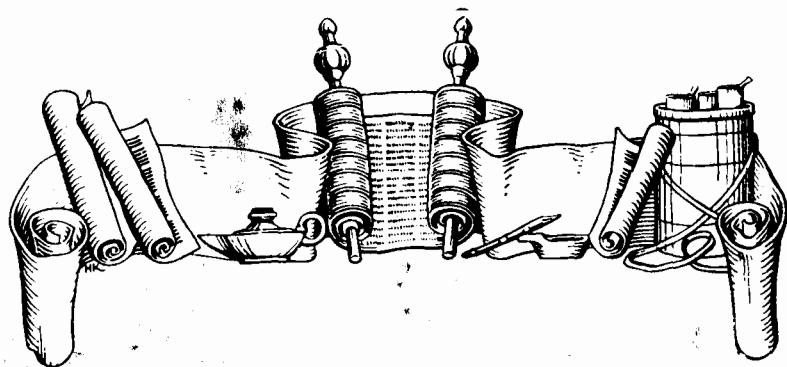
"**And that thou shouldest keep all His commandments**" — See note v. 16. The purpose of the Law is the development of God-manifestation in the nation. See Deut. 4:6-8; 28:9-10,58.

VERSE 19

"**And to make thee high above all nations which He hath made**" — In this statement Yahweh is revealed as the Maker of all nations, over which He has placed Israel. But the nation failed to attain unto the purpose He had in view because the people "would not hear" (Jer. 13:11). However, Yahweh's purpose will be fulfilled in the Age to come when Israel will be nationally redeemed (Jer. 33:9), and will be elevated to the "first dominion" above all nations (Mic. 4:8). This future status is conditional upon the people hearkening unto Yahweh (Deut. 28:1), a state to which the nation is yet to come (Deut. 30:1-6).

"**In praise, and in name, and in honour**" — This shall yet be manifested through the redeemed nation. All peoples will see this, and the glory then manifested through those means will provide them with the incentive to do likewise (Jer. 33:9).

"**And that thou mayest be an holy people unto Yahweh thy God, as He hath spoken**" — A holy nation is one separated for Divine use and destiny. The destiny of Israel is in the hands of Yahweh (Deut. 7:6; 28:9). Meanwhile those "in Christ" also have been separated for that same purpose (1 Pet. 2:9).



DEUTERONOMY:

DIVINE FAITHFULNESS

IN DISCIPLINING AND DELIVERING

Discourse Three:

WARNING —

THE SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY RESTING UPON THE NATION Ch. 27,28

Chapters 27 and 28 comprises the third section in the Book of Deuteronomy indicated by the new commencement: "And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people" (Ch. 27:1). Each of the suggested divisions in the book commences with a similar preamble (cp. Ch. 1:1; 4:44; 27:1; 29:1; 31:1). This third section outlines the Instructions for a solemn ceremony to be performed on entering the Promised Land; and it gives warning of the consequences to the people if they failed to keep the Covenant which they have accepted. Great privileges having been granted the people of Israel, great responsibilities rested upon them to fulfil their part of the agreement. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities", Yahweh warned the nation through Amos the prophet (Ch. 3:2). This section of Deuteronomy lists the cursings and blessings of the Law, and urges the need to seek the latter so as to enjoy the felicity of Yahweh in the Land which the nation is about to enter.

The section is divided into three parts:

- (1) A ceremony of remembrance in the Land (Ch. 27).
- (2) The blessings of the Law (Ch. 28:1-14).
- (3) The cursings of the Law (Ch. 28:15-68).

Inasmuch as Israel failed to keep its part of the Covenant (see Deut. 31:29-30), the predicted cursings of the Law became prophetic of the nation's experiences when the threatened punishments fell upon it. That prophetic picture continues on in the next section where there is predicted Israel's ultimate restoration and regeneration. In this section of Deuteronomy, therefore, the future of Israel is set out before the people in a wonderful prophetic pattern that has had detailed fulfilment throughout the history of the nation.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

THE CEREMONY OF REMEMBRANCE TO TAKE PLACE IN THE LAND

On entering the land the nation is to gather great stones, and whitening them with lime are to write thereon the words of the Law. In addition, an altar is to be erected upon Ebal the Mount of Cursing: a wonderful type of the purpose of Yahweh in Christ as expressed in the Gospel. The nation is to assemble at the place selected to hearken to and endorse the cursings and blessings of the Law. These principles set forth the terms of the impending reign of Yahweh in the Land. It shows that submission to His rule is the secret of success on the part of His people (vv. 1-8); that those who attempt to obey will enjoy His grace or favour (vv. 9-10); and that the responsibility of doing so rests upon each individual (vv. 11-26). To sum up these requirements: if Yahweh is Lord of the heart; He will be Lord of everything else! His influence will motivate action and establish a character fitted for eternity.

The Law To Be Reaffirmed At Shechem — vv. 1-4

Moses and the elders charge the people to keep the commandments. When the nation crosses the Jordan, the people are to select stones and, whitening them, write thereon a copy of the Law.

VERSE 1

"And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying" — In type, Moses and the elders represent Christ and the Apostles whose authoritative commands are designed to govern the Ecclesias generally.

"Keep all the commandments which I command you this day" — See note Deut. 26:16. See also Luke 11:28; John 15:14; 1 Thess. 4:1-2; Jam. 2:10.

VERSE 2

"And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee" — This statement implies that what is commanded shall be performed on the very

day on which they cross the Jordan (cp. 2 Sam. 19:20; Est. 9:1), and not merely at the general time of crossing. This is confirmed by v. 3 which indicates that the stones were to be set up after Israel had crossed the Jordan but before they entered upon their occupation of the land.

"That thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister" — The stones were to provide a permanent witness that the Divine Law was to be the law of the Land. They were to be whitened with lime; the word rendered "plaister" being from the Hebrew *siyd*, from a root signifying to boil, and so relating to lime which gives the appearance of boiling when slacked. See *Strong's Concordance*. The stones were whitened for the purpose of writing thereon.

VERSE 3

"And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over" — The writing was to be painted on the whitened stones, not engraved after the style of many Egyptian monuments. It is remarkable how much writing can be in-

cluded on a comparatively small surface. The Hammurabi code of laws, of some 233 paragraphs with a lengthy introduction and conclusion of some 8000 words is engraved upon one piece of diorite stone according to *Hastings Bible Dictionary*. Therefore, on twelve "great stones" it would be possible to write the whole of Deuteronomy at least. The instructions of Moses were carried out by Joshua (Josh. 8:32).

"That thou mayest go in unto the land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee" — Possession of the land is made conditional upon the writing and keeping of the Law.

"A land that floweth with milk and honey; as Yahweh God of thy fathers hath promised thee" — See note Exod. 3:8; Deut. 26:9.

VERSE 4

"Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaister them with plaister" — The peaks Ebal and Gerizim overshadowed the town of Shechem, the site in the land where Abram first heard the promise confirmed to him (Gen. 12:6-7). Shechem signifies *Burden-bearer*. It was a city of refuge, and therefore a type of Christ. Ebal is the Mount of Cursing and Gerizim the Mount of Blessing, pointing forward to the Blessings and Cursings in Christ. See notes on Deut. 11:26-32. The word Ebal signifies *bald and bare*. In contrast to Gerizim it is a bare mountain whose summit is higher than that of Gerizim.

An Altar of Stones To Be Erected on Ebal — vv. 5-8

After inscribing the stones, the Israelites are commanded to erect an altar for burnt and peace offerings on Mount Ebal, and then to eat and rejoice before Yahweh. The writing is to be done very plainly.

VERSE 5

"And there shalt thou build an altar unto Yahweh thy God, an altar of stones" — An altar represented Yahweh in sacrificial manifestation, a type of Christ, "our altar" (Heb. 13:10). As such, the site of its placing is significant. Through the Christ-altar there is found access to Shechem, the Burden-bearer and Place of refuge, with the promise of blessing or cursing according to obedience or otherwise. See 2 Cor. 2:16.

"Thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon it" — The stones were to be unhewn stones, representing human nature as shaped by Yahweh, and therefore pointing forward to Christ. Though he was of our nature, the character he exhibited was divine, fulfilling the type. An altar of sacrifice as representing Christ taught that it is only possible to manifest Yahweh in flesh by the sacrifice of it, and the giving of life (the blood) to God. The altar had to be erected according to the specifications of Exod. 20:25. To shape it with an iron tool was to pollute it (v. 25). To do so would be equivalent to providing for a Christ according to man's ideas and ideals; that is according to human principles and "shaping".

VERSE 6

"Thou shalt build the altar of Yahweh thy God of whole stones" — The term whole stones define unhewn stones, according to the requirement of Exod. 20:25. However, the word "whole" is from the Hebrew *shalomoth*, of *peaceful* stones, or stones bringing peace. The Hebrew word for peace, *Shalom*, is from a root signifying to be at one, or to make whole or complete. The Christ-altar provides the basis of peace for true Israelites. In preaching the Gospel to Cornelius, Peter declared: "The word that God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)" (Acts 10:36). Sacrifice on the altar, whether in Mosaic times on that which pointed forward to Christ, or on the Christ altar today, provides the means of peace with God (see Eph. 2:13-16). Hence the Apostles "preached peace to them which were far off, and to them which were nigh" (v. 17). In recent times it is claimed that archaeologists have discovered the ruins of an altar on Mt. Ebal.

The word *shalomoth* is in the feminine gender, most appropriate under the circumstances, for those stones represent the multitudinous Christ, or Bride.

"And thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto Yahweh thy God" — The instructions regarding a burnt offering are contained in Lev. 1, and find fulfilment in Christ (see Eph. 5:2). Under the Law, an animal without blemish was selected; it was put to death, carefully washed inside and out; dismembered, and its parts placed upon the altar in the order laid down, to be consumed by the fire of God. The offering represented the offerer who

thus proclaimed his intention of giving himself as a "living sacrifice" unto God (Rom. 12:1-2). This required that the old way of life be put to death, the body of flesh, both inside and outside, washed clean, and the various parts — eye, ear, hands etc, consumed by the fire of the spirit-word. Christ is not a substitutionary offering but a representative one: he illustrates the ideal which his followers should aim to emulate. At Shechem, with the blessings and cursings of the Law clearly written and loudly proclaimed, the Israelites were invited to give themselves as part of a living burnt offering unto Yahweh.

VERSE 7

"And thou shalt offer peace offerings" — A peace offering was a fellowship feast, with all the related parties united together in a common meal. Portion was burnt on the altar, representing Yahweh's part; portion was given to the priests, representing that which was due to the Mediator or Advocate, and portion was eaten by the people, through which they were joined with Yahweh and the officiating priests in a common fellowship feast. The basis of such a feast was acceptance of Yahweh's precepts. (See Lev. 3:7; 7:11-17; Acts 10:36; Rom. 5:1,10; Eph. 2:16-17; Heb. 13:20-21).

"And thou shalt eat there, and rejoice before Yahweh thy God" — Peace with God is the basis of true rejoicing. See Paul's exhortation (Phil. 3:3; 4:4).

VERSE 8

"And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly" — These were not the unhewn stones with which the altar was built, but the stones that had been selected on entering the Land, and had been whitened to take the writing. There is need for the Law of Yahweh always to be stated "very plainly" (See Hab. 2:2; Neh. 8:8; and cp. with 2 Cor. 3:3).

The Responsibility of Keeping the Law Stressed — vv. 9-10

The solemn responsibility resting on the people to keep the Law is stressed by Moses.

VERSE 9

"And Moses and the priests the Levites spake unto all Israel, saying" — The term "the priests the Levites" describes those Levites who were priests. All priests were Levites; but not all Levites were priests.

Only Levites of the family of Aaron were priests, and it was those who conveyed this message unto the people; that being their duty and privilege (Mal. 2:6-7).

"Take heed and hearken, O Israel" — The word "heed" is from the Hebrew *sakath*, and signifies "to be silent". That is, to observe quietly without interruption or contradiction. See a similar expression used by Habakkuk (Ch. 2:20).

"This day thou art become the people of Yahweh thy God" — See Ch. 26:18. The acceptance by that generation of Israelites of the Covenant of Sinai, and its entrance into the Land, testified that the nation was, in fact, the people of Yahweh. In similar manner, mere Ecclesial membership does not qualify a person as being "of the Name" (Acts 15:14). That fact awaits acceptance at the Judgment Seat of Christ, foreshadowed by entrance into the Land.

VERSE 10

"Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of Yahweh thy God, and do His commandments and His statutes, which I command thee this day" — See v. 1. There is required of Yahweh's true people a performance of those things He has set before them. The basic requirement of such is that they shall "love Yahweh their God with all their heart, soul, and might" (Deut. 6:5). A person who loves in that way will manifest his delight in Yahweh by doing those things that will please Him.

The Tribes Divided Between Gerizim and Ebal — vv. 11-13

Gerizim and Ebal are two mountains separated by a valley in which shelters Shechem. Deuteronomy 11:29 commands that Gerizim should be identified as the Mount of Blessing and Ebal as the Mount of Cursing. The tribes are now instructed that on entering the Land they are to make their way to this place and divide into two groups: six are to be associated with Gerizim and six with Ebal. The Blessings and Cursings of the Law are to be recited, and the people are to respond with loud Amens! endorsing the teaching of the Law.

VERSE 11

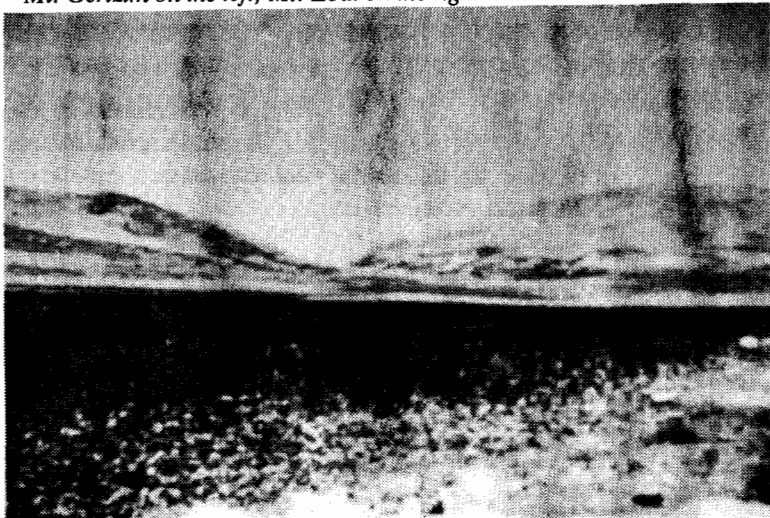
"And Moses charged the people the same day, saying" — These instructions continued on the same day as the contents of the book were recited to the people (see Deut. 1:1).

VERSE 12

“These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan” — In Josh. 8:33, the representatives of the tribes are described as standing “over against” the mountains referred to, but here as “upon” them. However, it is claimed that the particle *al*, here translated “upon” can also signify *by*. Evidently the representative took their place on the lower slopes of each Mountain. Gerizim is to the south of Shechem. The word signifies *Separations* or *Divisions* from the root *garaz* “to cut off”. It will be those who maintain their separateness from the world who will inherit the blessings promised. See note Deut. 11:29. The mount abounds with springs, trees and pleasant verdure. Ultimately the Samaritans built a temple there, and claimed that this was the place where God should be worshipped. It is a holy place to the Samaritans to this day.

“Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin” — These were sons of Leah and Rachel, whereas those on the Mount of Cursing included the sons of their handmaidens. In order, the names of these sons spell out the sentence: Those who *hear* (Simeon), and *unite* (Levi) in *praise* (Judah) will be *rewarded* (Issachar) by *increasing* (Joseph), the *Son of His right hand* (Benjamin).

Mt. Gerizim on the left, Mt. Ebal on the right with Shechem between.



VERSE 13

“And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse” — Ebal is to the north of the valley of Shechem, and is higher than Gerizim, as though as to teach that the curses shall overshadow the blessings. It is a barren and rocky mount, appropriate to the purpose for which it was to be used.

“Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali” — Two of these sons were Leah's including Reuben the firstborn, deposed because of his great sin; but the rest were sons of the handmaidens. The names of those associated with Ebal spell out the sentence: *See a son* (Reuben) with a *company* (Gad) of the *blessed* (Asher) *dwelling* (Zebulun) with the *Judge* (Dan), after *wrestling* (Naphtali) against sin.

The Curses Pronounced By Ebal — vv. 14-26

Tribal representatives are to be gathered at the lower slopes of the two mountains, from where the voices of the people would echo. The Levites are to pronounce the curses and the people are to resound with loud Amens! There are twelve curses pronounced answering to the twelve tribes of Israel. The blessings to be recited are not recorded here, but were proclaimed at the time (see Josh. 8:33-35).

VERSE 14

“And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice” — The chorus of loud voices would sound throughout the valley, and would be easily heard by the assembled representatives of the tribes.

VERSE 15

“Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto Yahweh, the work of the hands of the craftsman” — Such an action would break the first Commandments of the Covenant. Not only was such an action forbidden of the law, but would be an imitation of the ways of the Gentiles (Deut. 29:17; 1 Kings 11:5-7). This, to worshippers of the living God, would be the height of folly (Isa. 44:19). Image worship is described as “an abomination”. The expression is derived from a Hebrew term signifying “to stink”. As true worship is represented as being a savour in the nostrils of Yahweh, this form of religious activity is an affront to Him, so that figuratively He is represented as turning aside in disgust, as from a bad smell.

“And putteth it in a secret place” — This clause is significant inasmuch as all the twelve sins here listed are those normally hidden from human eyes. This is explicit in the statements of vv. 15, 24, and implicit in those of vv. 16, 17, 18, 25. It is obvious that whilst such offences might escape human eyes, and evade human justice they would be known of God, and therefore subject to His judgment. The tendency of human nature is to take care and avoid those sins that are open to human sight and subject to human condemnation, whilst at the same time, presuming on the mercy of Yahweh to overlook those hidden from man but open to His view. This clause emphasises this feature of human frailty. See Psa. 139:2-6; and the warning of Psa. 44:20-21; Jer. 23:24; Ezek. 8:12; 14:4; Heb. 4:13.

“And all the people shall answer and say, Amen” — To add *Amen!* to the pronounced curse, is to endorse the judgment of Yahweh, and give accent to the requirements laid down. The people, as representing the tribes, were to publicly proclaim this as denoting their endorsement of the terms of the Covenant, and the justice of Yahweh's wrath in the event of disobedience. Their public endorsement of the curse made obvious their responsibility to avoid the evil practices listed, as well as to encourage others to do likewise lest

the tribe and nation suffer. In their action, therefore, they “entered into a cure to walk in God's law” (cp. Neh. 10:29).

VERSE 16

“Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen” — To set light by one's parents is to completely ignore the requirements of the Law that demanded that they be honoured. See notes on Exod. 21:17; Lev. 20:9; Prov. 30:11,17; Matt. 15:4-6; Eph. 6:1-3. The parents of a family stood in relation to the children, where Yahweh and the Nation or Ecclesia stand in relation to the members thereof.

VERSE 17

“Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen” — See Deut. 19:14; Prov. 22:28; 23:10-11. To remove the landmark would be to reduce the owner's inheritance of land; a dishonest action that would be done secretly.

VERSE 18

“Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen” — To do what is here condemned is to take deceitful and heartless advantage of the weakness of the blind: a sin specifically condemned by the Law (Lev. 19:14). The term is also used typically for those who are inexperienced or are subject to a weakness that prevents them properly assessing a matter, and so are easily deceived by those who cunningly and unscrupulously seek to influence them (see Rom. 16:18; Matt. 15:14).

VERSE 19

“Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all say, Amen” — See notes Deut. 24:17. The stranger, fatherless and widow, having no natural protectors such as are provided by a Government, Husband or Father in Israel, Yahweh has promised to extend Himself to avenge all such (Deut. 10:18). He does so as King, Husband or Father to all such in need who turn to Him. True Israelites, experiencing the goodness of Yahweh, should extend similar consideration unto others. In that regard, they are called upon to recall their former state in Egypt (Deut. 24:17-18; Exod. 23:9). Care should be taken in recalling the goodness of Yahweh to us, lest we overlook the consideration that should

be shown to others (Prov. 31:5). There is a stern warning issued against those who do so (Mal. 3:5).

VERSE 20

“Cursed be he that lieth with his father’s wife; because he uncovereth his father’s skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen”

— See notes Deut. 22:30; Lev. 18:8; 1 Cor. 5:1.

VERSE 21

“Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen” — See note Lev. 18:23. Such bestiality was punishable with death (Lev. 20:15).

VERSE 22

“Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen” — See notes Lev. 18:9. Punishment was by excommunication (Lev. 20:17).

VERSE 23

“Cursed be he that lieth with his mother in law. And all the people shall say, Amen” — See note Lev. 18:17. The penalty was burning the body with fire. See note Lev. 20:14.

VERSE 24

“Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly. And all the people shall say, Amen” — If the smiter were discovered, the Avenger of Blood could exact the penalty of death (Deut. 19:11-12; Exod. 21:12). Death by stoning was the punishment for those guilty of murder (Lev. 24:17). As, originally, death was imposed as a punishment for sin, it is treated Scripturally as a negation of the living God’s purpose with man. Therefore to take life in unreasonable anger was considered a most heinous crime.

VERSE 25

“Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen” — To kill a person in cold blood for reward is worse than murder, and the assassin is to be put to death. His action is a complete repudiation of the character of Yahweh (Deut. 10:17-18. See Deut. 16:19; Exod. 23:7-8; Ezek. 22:12). Judas Iscariot was guilty of this; and his action was endorsed by the leaders of Israel. All were punished. See Matt. 26:15; 27:3-4; Acts 1:18.

VERSE 26

“Cursed be he that confirmeth not all

the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen” — The word “confirmeth” is from the Hebrew *quwm* and signifies to *accomplish*. Therefore more than verbal confirmation of the Law was required, even a performance of all commandments listed. Accordingly, in citing this passage, Jeremiah rendered it as “cursed be the man that *obeyeth* not the words of this covenant. . . .” (Jer. 11:3). This clause in the Law showed that the covenant, being based upon such a requirement, could not provide for life because of the sinfulness of flesh (Rom. 8:3). In illustrating this, Paul declared: “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). The Law cursed all mankind; both those under it and those not under it, for none kept it fully. Redemption, therefore depended upon a redeemer who could deliver mankind from its “curse” (Gal. 3:13). In Christ, the Covenant based on Law is replaced by that based on Grace, providing for the forgiveness of sins and the redemption of sinners. As the Law made obvious the fact of sin, and clearly showed that mankind could not rise above it, it became as “a schoolmaster” to bring the faithful to Christ (Gal. 3:24). In him believers, both Jew and Gentile, are delivered from the curse of the Law. In the light of this, the verse before us is a crucial one, emphasising the weakness of the Mosaic Covenant to provide a way to eternal life. However, in order to escape the logic of this teaching, and the imagined stigma on the Law, no printed Hebrew Bible includes the word *all* as does the A.V. Yet its presence is made necessary by the context, and Paul’s use of the verse; for in citing the passage in Gal. 3:10, he wrote: “It is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in *all* things which are written in the book of the law to do them”. Though the word “all”, as it appears in the verse before us, is not in the normal Hebrew text, according to Adam Clarke: “. . . it exists in 6 mss of Kennicott and De Rossi, in the Samaritan text, in several copies of the Targum, in the Septuagint, and in the quotation of the Apostle”. Whilst flesh cannot be justified “by the works of the Law” for “by the Law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:19-20; 10:5), in Christ, the believer is enabled by the forgiveness of sins to “establish” the authority and intent of the Law (Rom. 3:31). Hence Paul taught: “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Rom. 2:13). He commended those Gen-

tile believers who “show the work of the law written in their hearts” (vv. 14-15).

That should be the aim of all Christ’s disciples.

CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

THE BLESSINGS AND CURSINGS OF THE LAW IN THEIR OUTWORKING

In this chapter, the outworking of the blessings and cursings of the Law are described. They form a pattern of prophecy that has seen its fulfilment in the wide sweep of Israelitish history. The chapter, therefore, presents both warnings and predictions based upon the legal Covenant and the fruit of disobedience. It is significant that as Ebal (the Mount of Cursing) overtopped Gerizim (the Mount of Blessing), the blessings occupy only 14 verses, whilst the cursings are spread over 54 verses. Having pronounced the cursings, the righteousness and faithfulness of Yahweh demanded that He outpour them, as history has witnessed. However, equally is He obligated to bestow the promised blessings when the conditions described in v. 1 are carried out. This is confirmed in the subsequent chapters of Deuteronomy (see Deut. 30:1-3).

The Blessings of the Law — vv. 1-14

The conditions of blessing are first stated, and then the scope of it is described. Blessings are promised in the domestic sphere (vv. 3-6), in waging warfare (v. 7), in daily activity (v. 8), in international relationships (vv. 9-10), in national prosperity (vv. 11-12), and status (v. 13). The section concludes with an exhortation to seek such blessings. They should be considered in the light of the Levitical Covenant recorded in Leviticus 26. Most of the warnings and promises of the prophets are based upon the terms of this covenant. Thefulness of blessings promised will form the basis of life in the Kingdom under Messiah.

VERSE 1

“And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Yahweh thy God” — To hearken to the Voice of Yahweh is the first principle necessary to qualify for the promised blessings. His word in a written form was in the hands of His people, and they were

exhorted to hearken to it diligently. To acquire an intelligent understanding of its teaching requires meditative reading and study.

“To observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day” — The purpose of “hearkening” is not to be merely an academic exercise to increase abstract knowledge. It is designed to motivate the reader to “observe” and “do”, in a practical way, the things laid down therein. A student *observes* that to which he has already given ear, by thinking out the practical application of that which he has learned; and he *does* it by a performance of what the Word teaches. So, much care and thought must be given to the Word, if one is to experience the blessings promised therein.

“That Yahweh thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth” — When Yahweh’s Word is understood and applied, whether by an individual or a nation, the status of those so exercised is elevated in the eyes of others, (Deut. 26:15).

To know and obey His Word, is to manifest the Name of Yahweh. It is significant, therefore, that the promised elevated status of Israel is associated with "the Name" (Psa. 91:14; Jer. 22:16; Ezek. 36:23; Mic. 4:5-8). The manifestation of spiritual qualities elevates an individual or a nation above his or its contemporaries.

VERSE 2

"And all these blessings shall come on thee" — Young renders this as "from on high" that is, from God. The blessings will be directed from heaven, and will not be the result of chance, caprice or human ingenuity.

"And overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Yahweh thy God" — In this statement the blessings are personified as a hunter pursuing and overtaking the one to be blessed of Yahweh. Godliness (i.e. God manifestation) brings blessings in its train. See 1 Tim. 4:8, and contrast Zech. 1:6.

VERSE 3

"Blessed shalt thou be in the city" — The blessings will bring prosperity to the cities of the land. See Psa. 107:36-37; 127:1; 144:14. Cp. the future: Isa. 65:21-23; Zech. 2:4; 8:3-5; and contrast with Deut. 28:16.

"And blessed shalt thou be in the field" — The blessings of Yahweh will be manifested in good harvests. See Ruth 1:6; 2:4; Hab. 2:19; Mal. 3:10-11. And for the future, Amos 9:13-14.

VERSE 4

"Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body" — Children are a blessed heritage of Yahweh. See Psa. 107:38; 127:3-5; 128:3. And the future: Isa. 49:20. Contrast Deut. 28:18.

"And the fruit of thy ground" — See Prov. 10:22; 13:22.

"And the fruit of thy cattle, and increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep" — Contrast v. 18.

VERSE 5

"Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store" — The basket was used to gather in the harvest, and the store, or kneading trough (see mg.) symbolises to the use and pleasure of that gathered in. See Lev. 26:4-5, 10.

VERSE 6

"Blessed shalt thou be when thou com-

est in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out" — This verse describes the overshadowing care of Yahweh during days of activity from start to finish, from birth to death. See Deut. 31:2; Psa. 121:8.

VERSE 7

"Yahweh shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face" — In addition to the personal blessings described in vv. 3-6, Yahweh will overshadow larger enterprises such as war. Contrast the curses of vv. 20-26. See Lev. 26:7-9; 2 Sam. 22:33-41; Psa. 89:23; 1 Sam. 7:3-4, 10-11.

"They shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways" — They will attack as a united, single force; but shall be routed and flee in total disarray; seven being the number of completeness. Lev. 26:6.

VERSE 8

"Yahweh shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto" — See Lev. 25:21; Prov. 3:10.

"And He shall bless thee in the land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee" — As Yahweh's eyes are centred upon the Land, He is in a position to pour out blessings upon it. See Deut. 11:12-15; Hag. 2:19; Mal. 3:10-11; Matt. 6:26. Consider Luke 12:15-31.

VERSE 9

"Yahweh shall establish thee an holy people unto Himself" — He would fulfil the promise of Deut. 7:6; 26:18-19; 29:13; Exod. 19:5-6. The word "holy" denotes more than mere separation; it signifies separated for a purpose. As an "holy people", Israel would be completely separated unto Him, manifesting nationally the qualities of righteousness as are revealed by Him.

"As He hath sworn unto thee" — See Gen. 22:16; Deut. 7:8; 13:17; 29:12; Jer. 11:5; Heb. 6:13-18.

"If thou shalt keep the commandments of Yahweh thy God, and walk in His ways" — See notes Deut. 4:6-8; 26:16; 28:18. This demands constant thought upon, and application of the Word.

VERSE 10

"And all the people of the earth" — The word people is in the plural, *peoples*, and relates to other nations. See Mal. 3:12.

"Shall see that thou art called by the Name of Yahweh" — The relationship of Israel to Yahweh will be apparent by its national characteristics and actions. If these reflect to the honour of Yahweh's Name, it will be hallowed in the earth, and it will be obvious externally that as a nation, Israel is unique in its spiritual qualities. See Isa. 43:7; Jer. 13:11; Dan. 9:19. This will be the case with Israel in the Age to come. See Isa. 1:26; 62:12. Those "in Christ" have been separated as a people for the Name (Acts 15:14), and likewise should manifest its qualities to those outside (John 13:34-35). Rotherham renders the clause: "The Name of Yahweh hath been called upon thee", implying Divine ownership. Those "in Christ" having been incorporated into the Name, must acknowledge Yahweh as their Lord. See Psa. 87:5; 1 Pet. 2:9-11.

"And they shall be afraid of thee" — See Exod. 11:7; Deut. 4:6-8; 11:25. Gentiles would not understand them, and would fear the hidden resources of power that Israel would manifest. See Isa. 43:1-2; 54:17; For the future see Jer. 33:9.

VERSE 11

"And Yahweh shall make thee plenteous in goods" — See Deut. 30:9. The margin renders this "plenteous for good". In other words, the people will not only have the blessings of increase, but will also enjoy them (Prov. 10:22).

"In the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which Yahweh swore unto thy fathers to give thee" — The people will both see and enjoy the increase that shall accrue unto them. Their state will comprise a vast contrast to their conditions in the desert through which they had wandered for so long.

VERSE 12

"Yahweh shall open unto thee His good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand" — See Lev. 26:4; Deut. 11:14; Joel 2:23-24; Mal. 3:10. Their labours will not be in vain in Yahweh. See Deut. 14:29; 15:10; and cp. with 1 Cor. 15:58.

"And thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow" — This implies a prosperous export trade. See note Deut. 15:6; Contrast Deut. 28:44.

VERSE 13

"And Yahweh shall make thee the

head, and not the tail" — Israel is promised blessings in ruling over others. It will experience this in the Age to come. See Isa. 2:2-4; Mic. 4:8; Zech. 8:21-23; 14:12-16.

"And thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath" — Israel is promised that it will be elevated above all others, occupying a dominate position among the nations. It has not experienced this state since the days of David and Solomon. But it will in the future. See references above.

"If that thou bearken unto the commandments of Yahweh thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them" — All the blessings listed are conditional upon the important factor of obedience. See Deut. 4:6-9; 28:1; See the exhortation to those in Christ, Phil. 1:27.

VERSE 14

"And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them" — See Deut. 5:29; 11:28; 32:46-47; Prov. 4:26-27. It will be portion of the duty of the glorified saints in the Age to come, to ensure that the people under them do not swerve one way or the other from out of a straight course of righteous conduct. See Isa. 30:21.

The Curses of the Law — vv. 15-68

As Ebal overtopped Gerizim so greater attention is given to the curses than to the blessings, for Yahweh knew the former were inevitable (Deut. 31:29). Therefore, after the blessings come six groups of curses. The first (vv. 15-19) consists of the reversal of the blessings listed in vv. 3-6. Then follow three cycles of curses (vv. 20-26; 27-37; 38-48) on a contrasting pattern of the blessings of vv. 7-14. Israel would be blessed militarily, materially and spiritually if obedience is given to the Law; but it will be cursed in these same areas if the covenant is broken by disobedience. The most devastating of these curses — invasion and defeat by a foreign power — is taken up and expounded in a single curse (vv. 49-57). The chapter ends with a warning curse summarising all others (vv. 58-68), and prophetically describing what history reveals came to pass, in the troubles that fell upon Israel in the diaspora. Because Moses knew the people would disobey (Deut. 31:29) these curses take on the pattern of a prophecy. The nation experienced the very things warned in this chapter, and in the

same order as they are listed. In fact, when the succeeding chapters (Chps. 29,30) are studied in conjunction with the one before us, it will be seen that these warnings and curses comprise a prophecy that summarises the whole history of Israel: the promise of blessings when they settled in the land; to the dispersion of the tribes under Babylonian; their regathering under Zerubbabel and Joshua; their second dispersion by the Romans; and their ultimate restoration under Messiah. The prophetic aspect of these warning chapters should not be overlooked. Indeed, in these verses, Moses' language of terrible denunciation passes into the no less ominous language of terrible prediction.

VERSE 15

"But it shall come to pass, If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of Yahweh thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee" — Similar expressions are used for the curses listed as for the previous blessings. See note v. 2. However, the curses are stated more definitely as they "shall come upon thee". Moses had no false illusions concerning the misbehaviour of the people (see Deut. 31:29).

a. Agricultural, Domestic and Public Calamities Whilst In the Land — vv. 16-24

This first section describes cursings in the physical and material realms, whilst Israel is still in the land. Man and nature are both afflicted: man with disease and pestilence, and nature with plague and drought. The people will suffer civil dissension, irritations and frustrations. Note the progression: "he shall consume thee" (v. 21), "until thou perish" (v. 22), and "thou be destroyed" (v. 24), "removed into all the kingdoms of the earth" (v. 25). The first instalment of these curses form part of the records in the Books of Judges, Kings and Chronicles.

VERSE 16

"Cursed shalt thou be in the city" — Contrast with v. 3. For example see 2 Kings 6:25-30. See Jer. 9:11; 26:6.

"And cursed shalt thou be in the field" — Contrast v. 3. Example: see Ruth 1:1; Jer. 14:2-5. These were curses that came upon disobedient Israel whilst resident in the land. In their case, drought and failure of crops were not the result of chance, but

direct punishment of God. See note Ruth 1:6.

VERSE 17

"Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store" — Contrast v. 5. See Hab. 1:6; Mal. 2:2.

VERSE 18

"Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body" — Contrast v. 4. There will be no alleviation of trouble, for the curse shall fall upon the children of the disobedient nation. See Lam. 2:11,12,20; Hos. 9:11-14; Cp. Luke 23:29-30; Matt. 27:21.

"And the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep" — See Lev. 26:19-20,26; Hag. 1:9-10.

VERSE 19

"Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out" — Contrast v. 6. See Jud. 5:6-8.

VERSE 20

"Yahweh shall send upon thee cursing" — The Hebrew has the definite article: "the curse". The curses now listed contrast with the national blessings promised for obedience. See vv. 7-13. The verse before us summarises the ultimate effect of the national curse, the succeeding ones describe more particularly aspects of it.

"Vexation, and rebuke in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do" — The Berkeley Version renders this as "confusion and failure". The words express the frustration the Israelites would experience in all that they would attempt to accomplish (see mg.). See Psa. 80:4-16; Isa. 28:19; 30:17; John 3:36; 1 Thess. 2:16.

"Until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken Me" — See Deut. 4:26. For an outline of the scope of what is threatened, see Lev. 26:31-33,38. In the last clause of this statement "thou hast forsaken Me", the words of Moses pass almost imperceptibly into those of Yahweh. Moses was His representative on earth, and spoke in His name and with His authority. See Exod. 7:1-2; 4:16.

VERSE 21

"Yahweh shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee" — See Lev. 26:25; Jer. 14:12; 21:6-7. The prophets usually connect sword, pestilence and famine (2 Sam.

25:15), because one is usually the corollary of the other. The insanitary conditions that follow war usually result in pestilence and famine.

"Until He have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it" — Moses warned the nation that it would be consumed from off the land if its people failed to obey the terms of the covenant. This became the constant burden of prophetic warning as the prophets endeavoured to guide the people along a course consistent with Yahweh's requirements. They raised their voices in vain protest as Israel rushed headlong towards national disaster, as the verse before us implies they would.

VERSE 22

"Yahweh shall smite thee" — Israel is warned that sickness, war and drought are the inevitable consequences of sin. See Ruth 1:6 note; 2 Chron. 6:28; Jer. 14:12.

"With consumption" — See Lev. 26:16. The word *shachepeth* signifies a wasting away; an emaciation. The reference is to the nation, not to individuals. The material stability and political virility of the people would waste away as their spiritual integrity waned.

"And with a fever" — See notes Lev. 26:16. Moses warned that sickness and plague will devastate the nation. Contrast with Exod. 15:26.

"And with an inflammation" — The word *dallegeth* is from a root rendered *chasing* (1 Sam. 17:53), *persecute* (Psa. 10:2), *inflamm* (Isa. 5:11) and *kindle* (Ezek. 24:10), all of which relate to conditions of nervous anxiety inducing heat. The word could relate to a fever caused by extreme adversity, or to a rapidly consuming cancer or ulcer. Again, Moses was referring to the body politic of Israel, not to any individual.

"And burning" — The Hebrew *charchur* is from a root *charar* signifying to glow, melt, burn, dry up, excite passion, be angry. The word denotes not only an inflammation of the body, but an agony of the mind and self torture through recrimination and remorse in the realisation that help offered earlier had been ignored which could have prevented the adversity developing if it had been accepted.

"And sword" — The Hebrew text has *sword*, but the Vulgate and Samaritan have *drought* (see mg.) reading *choreb* instead of *chereb*. See Amos 4:9; Hag. 2:17.

"And blasting" — The blasting of crops in the M.E. is usually caused by the hot, dry, burning east wind, which sweeping across the wide expanse of desert is most devastating to crops; not only drying them up, but cutting them to pieces with the brittle sand it brings with it. See 1 Kings 8:37; Amos 4:9; Hag. 2:17.

"And mildew" — The word *yeraqown* denotes paleness of countenance due to fright, or of plants due to drought.

"And they shall pursue thee until thou perish" — Contrast the notes on v. 2. The reference is to the nation rather than to individuals. The clause implies that the disasters mentioned would be the prelude to ultimate national disruption and dispersion.

VERSE 23

"And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron" — This describes the effect of extreme drought such as is recorded in 1 Kings 17:1; Jer. 14:1-6. The burning sun, blazing in the heavens like a fiery ball of polished brass, would draw all moisture from the earth which would become as iron, baked hard by heat. See Ruth 1:1; Amos 4:9. The expression "thy heaven" (see the warning of Lev. 26:19) indicates that Israel would be affected, whilst other neighbouring nations might not. Such were the circumstances when Elimelech left Bethlehem for the nearby land of Moab (Ruth 1:1-3). The expression also suggests the use of the term in a figurative sense for the political heavens and earth of Israel; the former manifesting a harsh, dictatorial and oppressive form of rule such as was exhibited by Rehoboam and others; and the latter dried of all moisture and growth, manifesting a hard, fruitless exterior to the appeal of Yahweh through the prophets. Brass and iron are metal symbols for the flesh.

VERSE 24

"Yahweh shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust; from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed" — The reference of this verse is to the devastating dust storms, caused by the sands of the desert which sweeping across the land would blight it, cutting and ruining the crops, and making life miserable for all. The continuing disasters should have acted as a warning to Israel that unless the nation repented it would be destroyed.

b. Invasion And Domination By Foreigners — Vv. 25-35.

These verses warn that continuing disobedience will result in Yahweh withholding His protection so that marauding armies that would devastate the nation. Moses first epitomises the result of the continuing judgments that would fall upon the disobedient and unhappy nation, and then shows the terrible effect of national weakness on the populations of the Land which would be exploited by invading armies. This will lead to the internal weakening of the nation until it will be destroyed. All the horror and sorrow of this will be felt by such of the common people who allow themselves to be influenced by foolish and spiritually-bankrupt leaders.

VERSE 25

“Yahweh shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies” — See notes at Lev. 26:17; Deut. 32:30. The protection and defence that Yahweh was prepared to grant His people would be withdrawn because they “broke the everlasting covenant” (Isa. 24:5), so that Israel’s enemies would be permitted to invade the land.

“Thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them” — Contrast with v. 7.

“And shall be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth” — The Hebrew (see mg) suggests a partial removing of the nation. History followed this course, because the northern tribes went into captivity as the result of the depredations of the Assyrians, before the southern kingdom was overthrown by the Babylonians. Therefore these curses foreshadowed the events that subsequently took place. See 2 Kings 17:4-23.

VERSE 26

“And thy carcass shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth” — A carcass is the dead body of a once living animal. To that state politically the northern kingdom of Israel was reduced when the Assyrians were finished with it. Birds and beasts are symbolic of nations (see Dan. 4:12), so that in figurative language the curse described how that the northern kingdom would suffer political death, and that all the subject nations under Assyria would feed off it.

“And no man shall fray them away” — To “fray” them away is to frighten them away, as some versions render the word. No one would come to the aid of Israel as

Jeremiah reminded the people when he cited this passage — Ch. 7:33. The symbolism teaches that the political body of Israel would lie unburied, whilst the nations others figuratively gorged upon its flesh. How true this proved to fact! Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians but was never permitted to be buried out of sight. Unlike other nations (e.g. the Edomites) the Israelites were never completely absorbed or assimilated into the nation of their conquerors; they always remained a distinct people, such as the verse requires.

VERSE 27

“Yahweh will smite thee with the botch of Egypt” — The “botch” or sores of Egypt probably related to the scars of leprosy (See Exod. 9:9; 15:26). Leprosy is treated in the Bible as a living death, typical of the political state of Israel when it went into captivity.

“And with the emerods” — Emerods are haemorrhoids or tumours, frequently caused by the discomfort of extreme dysentery. See Psa. 78:66.

“And with the scab” — Some render this as *scurvy*. See Isa. 3:17 where it is again associated with judgment.

“And with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed” — The Hebrew word is *cheres*. Everywhere else it is used, it is rendered as “sun” (Judg. 8:13; 14:18; Job. 9:7). As a disease it could relate to skin cancer, or some hot, burning, itching complaint. If the term relates to the sun in this context, it could describe political persecution, in this case continuous, as it does elsewhere (see Rev. 7:16 note).

VERSE 28

“Yahweh shall smite thee with madness” — The reference is to political insanity, doubtless induced by the pressures of national and international problems. Note that Jeremiah describes the nations as “mad”, and that *The Apocalypse* refers to the “spirits of demons” sending the nations into a frenzy of insanity, at the time of the end (Jer. 25:16; 51:7; Rev. 16:14). This “madness” prevented Israel’s leaders recognising or devising an intelligent solution to their growing problems.

“And blindness” — The reference is to blindness of heart. See Isa. 42:19; Lam. 4:14. Israel’s leaders would have no light or hope to illuminate their future.

encouraged, by the appearance of them.

Certainly it has afforded us both profit and pleasure to prepare the material. Our knowledge of the Word has been enhanced as a result, and we can the more readily thank our God for placing in our hands such a wonderful revelation of His purpose as *The Bible!*

Meanwhile Deuteronomy 28 is well known as recording the curses of the Law that anticipated the overthrow of the Jewish State in A.D. 70. But, in fact, it forms part of a prophecy that covers every aspect of Israelitish history from the moment the tribes entered the Promised Land, until Messiah will again re-establish them there, in the Kingdom he will set up upon the earth.

The cursings of Deuteronomy 28, together with the words of Chapters 29,30 form a continuous prophecy. Moses’ language of terrible warnings gradually, and imperceptibly, are moulded into an ominous prophecy that foretells the future. In them Moses set before his people the long panorama of their history before they were established as a nation in the Land.

Such an outline witnesses to the amazing and miraculous nature of Bible prophecy. Its fulfilment shows that every confidence can be placed on that which the Scriptures predict. It matters not how impossible the predictions of Holy Writ may appear, they will come to pass.

Our next issue of *Christadelphian Expositor*, God willing, should see the completion of our treatment of Deuteronomy; and we are looking forward to the *Book of Joshua*, with its narrative of active movement.

Yours fraternally,

H. P. Mansfield

Christadelphian Expositor

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The Christadelphian Expositor



A Verse by Verse Commentary Upon the Scriptures

Editorial

Dear Reader,

The concluding chapters of Deuteronomy are tremendously interesting and are packed with vital information concerning the will and purpose of Yahweh. Moses' *Song of Witness*, recorded in Chapter 32, is one of the most important sections of the whole of Scripture, and provides a foundation for the exhortations and predictions of the rest of the Old Testament.

Therefore it is necessary to spend some time with these chapters, and carefully consider the last words of Moses to the people he had led through the wilderness. We had anticipated concluding the book of Deuteronomy with this number, but because of the deep significance of these closing chapters, this has not been possible. Our next issue (God willing) will see it completed, and then your copies of the whole of the book can be bound into a more permanent form.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

"And astonishment of heart" — Rotherham renders this as *"terror of heart"*. Isolated among the nations, and hated by most people because of their "peculiar" ways and beliefs, the Israelites would experience terror unrelieved, because of their forsaking the One who could have helped them.

VERSE 29

"And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness" — See Isa. 59:10; Zeph. 1:17; Rom. 11:7-10. Note the emphasis on "darkness". In noon day others can see the blind, and perhaps help or avoid them for their safety; but in darkness the dangers of being injured by accident are accentuated, for others cannot see them to avoid them; and they, in their blindness cannot see their danger to escape it. The Israelites were not merely blind of heart as to the requirements of Yahweh; but others were blind to the unique position that they held in the considerations of Yahweh, and in their dispersion would not hesitate to persecute them. Most of the prophecies uttered against foreign nations were in punishment of the way they had persecuted the Israelites (e.g. Ezek. 26:2) for no nation can persecute the Jews with impunity.

"And thou shalt not prosper in thy ways" — Adversity shall dog their every decision. See Psa. 60:3; Jer. 4:9.

"And thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee" — See Psa. 106:40-42; Isa. 51:23; Luke 21:24. The fact that "no man" would be able to save would finally cause Yahweh to provide the one who can (Isa. 63:5). This expression is used by Yahweh to introduce the Messiah as the ultimate Redeemer of Israel (Isa. 59:16).

VERSE 30

"Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her" — All that is most dear and precious to them would become the prey of their enemies because they cast off Yahweh Who would have protected them (Jer. 8:10).

"Thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein" — See Amos 5:11; Zeph. 1:13. And contrast with the future when Israel is restored to favour (Isa. 65:21-22).

"Thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof" — See Mic. 6:15 and contrast with Isa. 65:21-22.

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

VERSE 31

"Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof" — The ox was used for ploughing, and therefore provided for the food of the household. This would be denied them, so that food would become sparse (Isa. 4:1).

"Thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee" — The ass was used for transport and contributed to the comfort and status of its owner.

"Thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue them" — The sheep provided for milk, wool and meat, all of which would become in short supply.

The ox, ass and sheep were also figuratively used for the nation of Israel which would suffer from depredations indicated in this verse.

VERSE 32

"Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long" — Children of both sexes shall be taken into captivity. In their captivity pressure would be brought to bear upon them to wean them away from the true worship (see Dan. 1:1-7). In medieval times, in some countries, the children of Jewish parents were forcibly taken from their homes and compulsorily educated in the Popish religion. This was particularly the case in Portugal and Spain. See Jer. 15:7-9; Joel 3:6.

"And there shall be no might in thine hand" — The Hebrew word for "might" is *El* or God, so the clause is rendered by R. Young in *his literal translation* "not to God . . ." By their actions, the Israelites will deny themselves access to God. He will refuse to hear their prayers. See Lev. 26:16; Neh. 5:5; Jer. 7:16; 11:14; 14:11; Mic. 2:1.

VERSE 33

"The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours" — This describes spontaneous growth such as pasture land; as well as fruits that are cultivated.

"Shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up" — In fulfilment of this warning the Assyrians invaded the northern kingdom and took the people into captivity, then moved south and devastated Judah (cp. v. 25). The prophetic aspect of the curses was fulfilled to the very letter.

"And thou shalt be only oppressed and

crushed alway” — The Berkeley Version renders this: “You will be continually oppressed and trampled on”.

VERSE 34

“So that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see” — The Berkeley Version renders: “You will be driven mad by the sight of all you observe” — See Jer. 25:15,16,18. The persecution the children of Israel experienced, and the atrocities to which they were subjected

were so extreme as to send them insane.

VERSE 35

“Yahweh shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head” — An incurable leprosy will affect the joints and extremities, spreading over the whole body. The word “botch” is rendered “boils” in Job 2:6-7. Note that Yahweh promised immunity from this living death, conditional upon obedience. Exod. 15:26.

The Babylonish Captivity — vv. 36-37

The Assyrian captivity of the northern tribes is anticipated in v. 32. This section of the prophetic curse is fulfilled in the Babylonish captivity of the southern kingdom. So, in a very real sense, these curses became prophetic of the future.

VERSE 36

“Yahweh shall bring thee, and thy king which thou set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone” — This is an amazing prediction, anticipating the people’s demand for a king (1 Sam. 8:5-6), and the captivity of Zedekiah and Judah by the Babylonians (2 Kgs. 25:7; Jer. 52:8-11), and their decline into idolatry (see citation of this verse Jer. 16:13; cp. Dan. 3:6). The ministrations of Daniel and his companions weaned many of the captives from their idolatrous practices, preparing them for the restoration under Zerubbabel and Joshua (Ezra 1,2).

VERSE 37

“And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations where Yahweh shall lead thee” — See these words cited as fulfilled in the Babylonish captivity (1 Kgs. 9:7-8; Jer. 24:9; 25:9). It is a sad reflection upon human nature, that a people so privileged could fall so low. Instead of being a blessing they became a curse among the nations (see Zech. 8:13). In subsequent times, the Jewish people became a proverb, or a taunt of contempt and hatred; and a byword, or the mark of biting criticism by all nations (Psa. 44:14; Ezek. 14:8), whether Pagan, Christian so-called, or Mohammedan. The name *Jew* (only used for the people in dispersion) became a title of ignominy and contempt among all peoples. Significantly, it has only been within the last seventy years, and particularly since the establishment of the modern state of Israel, that this condition has changed.

In these verses the people are represented as again back in the land (See vv. 40,41,45). The restoration of the nation under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah fulfilled this. However, because of lack of faith, the people continued to suffer.

VERSE 38

“Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in” — This was the lot of the returned exiles as

recorded in Hag. 1:6-11; Mal. 3:9-11. In the latter place Malachi warned the people: “Ye are cursed with a curse” (Mal. 3:9).

“For the locust shall consume it” — The impoverished people back in the land tended to explain their problems as the result of natural causes, but Yahweh through Haggai stated the case properly by pointing out that the people were cursed by Him (See Hag. 1:9).

VERSE 39

“Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them” — The reference is most likely to the wine-weevil which is particularly destructive. Naturalists prescribe elaborate precautions against the feared ravages of this pest.

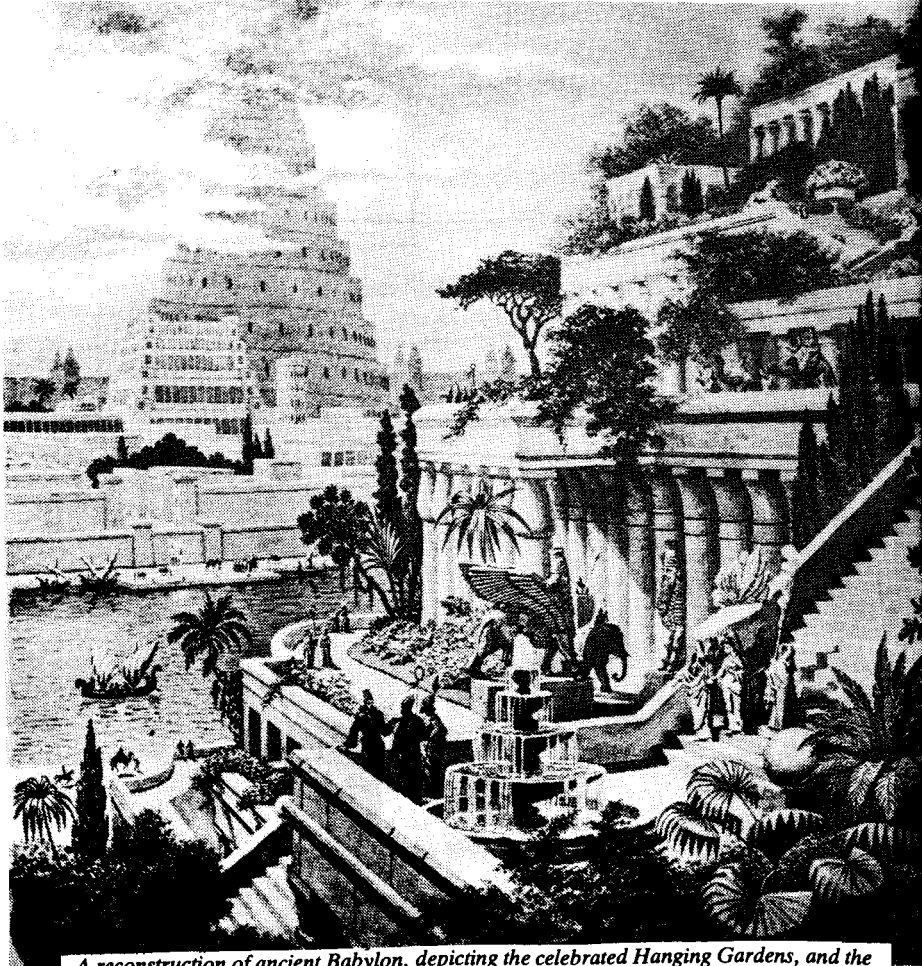
גדול ליהודים ורצ
דבר שלום לכל זו



Jews arrived in China from Persia. Some have taken on the appearance of Chinese. This scroll of Esther is illustrated in the Chinese style.

VERSE 40

“Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit” — The reference to olive trees “throughout all thy coasts” implies that the people are again back in the land; and history reveals they did return. Olive oil was used for many purposes, and when it



A reconstruction of ancient Babylon, depicting the celebrated Hanging Gardens, and the Ziggurat (Tower of Babel) in the background. Deuteronomy 28:26 was fulfilled when King Zedekiah was taken there into captivity.

was abundant it was used for personal anointing (see Psa. 104:15). The statement, "thou shalt not anoint thyself" therefore, implies a shortage of the oil. The cause is given as "thine olive shall cast his fruit". However the Hebrew word is *nashal*, which signifies "to pluck off" i.e. divest or drop its fruit. Therefore some prefer to render: "shall be spoiled" or plundered. The husbandmen shall be robbed of their crops, the nation being too weak to protect them.

VERSE 41

"**Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity**" — The returned exiles experienced "troubulous times" (see Dan. 9:25), until adversity compelled them to turn completely to Yahweh. When this happened they experienced the Divine help (Dan. 11:34).

VERSE 42

"**All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locusts consume**" — Because of continued disobedience the returned exiles continued to suffer even though back in the land. Malachi makes mention of these troubles (see Mal. 3:7-10).

VERSE 43

"**The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high**" — It is an amazing phenomenon of history that Rome never conquered Palestine but by infiltration gradually came to dominate it as a conqueror, fulfilling the terms of the prophetic curse. In the days of Christ, under the surveillance of Rome, Herod the *Idumean* ruled Judah (Luke 1:5), whilst Rome remained its overlord (see Jhn. 19:15).

"**And thou shalt come down very low**" — Under the increasing power of Rome,

with its governor in Jerusalem, and the Tower of Antonia used as a barracks overshadowing the Temple itself, Judah was very much humbled. So the prophetic aspect of these curses anticipated every major change in Israel's history.

VERSE 44

"**He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him**" — Contrast with v. 12.

"**He shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail**" — With all its ability to resist, Judah became very much dominated by foreigners.

The Reason for the Calamities

— vv. 45-48

A repetition of the cause of these calamities is now given. They are due to the spiritual decline of the people. Jewry's rejection of Yahweh (v. 47), will be sealed by His rejection of them by delivering them up to their enemies (v. 48).

VERSE 45

"**Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed** — Contrast with v. 15. See also the warning of Lev. 26:27-28; Ezek. 7:15,21.

"**Because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of Yahweh thy God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded thee**" — It is appropriate that at this point of the prophetic curses emphasis should be given to the refusal of the Jewish people to hearken. For it was at this time, when the stranger within Jewry had obtained the dominance of the nation that the Lord (who proclaimed the word of Yahweh) appeared to give his final warning to the people, urging upon them to hearken lest a worst punishment came upon them. Therefore, the people were without excuse. In the parable of the king who prepared a marriage feast for his son, only to find his servants contemptuously reject his invitation, Christ warned his contemporaries that they would inherit the curses that yet remained to be poured out upon them in accordance with the chapter before us (See Matthew 23). When, in the parable, the people remained obdurate, the King, made angry by their obstinate refusal to hearken unto his servants, "sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city" (Matt. 22:7). That disaster is anticipated in vv. 49-57 of this chapter.

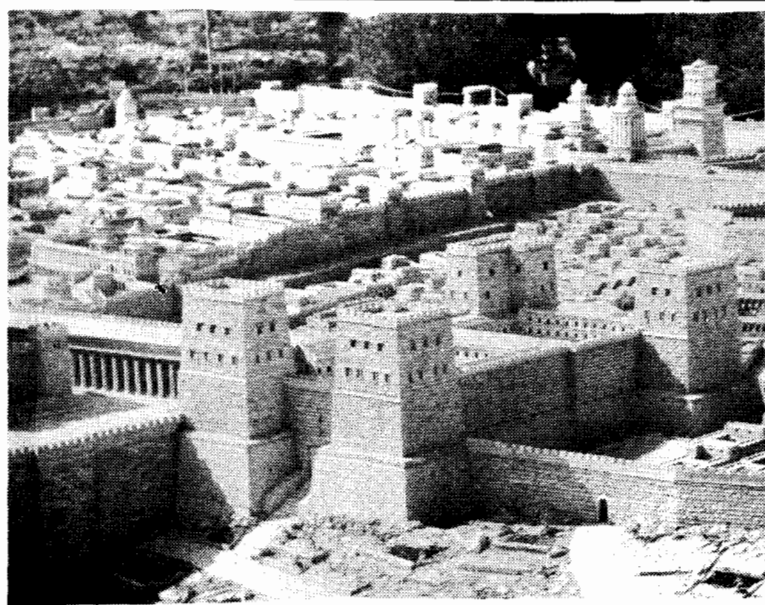
VERSE 46

"**And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder**" — The outpouring of these curses would excite astonishment and dismay in those who suffered from them, for it would be obvious that they were from God. This would witness to the Divine intervention of history (Dan. 4:17), and would also form the basis of exhortation for those who are properly exercised thereby (see Isa. 8:18; 1 Cor. 10:11).

"**And upon thy seed forever**" — The Hebrew word here rendered "ever" literally means a *hidden period*. It does not denote for ever in the sense of without end. In Deut. 30:1-3 the restoration of Israel is predicted, therefore, the sense in which term "forever" is used in this verse, is as long as the people remained faithless. Though the people would experience the cursings predicted, the nation of Israel would remain forever (see Isa. 6:13; 10:22; Rom. 9:27; 11:5).

VERSE 47

"**Because thou servedst not Yahweh thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things**" — True worship demands a recognition of the goodness of God, and a response in joyfulness and gladness in worship. Ezra's prayer, during the ministry of Nehemiah, gave expression to the goodness of Yahweh towards Israel (see Neh. 9:35-37). Unfortunately, despite the covenant into which the people entered with Yahweh, they did not adequately respond to the recognition of His goodness. Malachi during the absence of Nehemiah in Persia, indicted the people because of their faithless disobedience. And Nehemiah, on his return to the land, as recorded in Neh. 13, had to severely discipline the people. The Lord, likewise, warned the leaders that their hypocritical worship, their lack of true love of Yahweh, and their rejection of the spirit of Moses' teaching would result in the overthrow of the nation as predicted in the chapter before us (see Matt. 23:13-39; 24:2; Luke 19:41-46). Believers need to recognise the goodness of God and give expression to it in their prayers. Paul exhorted: "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).



The Tower of Antonia in Jerusalem in Christ's day was used as a fortress by the Roman legions. Overshadowing the Temple area it was a constant reminder of the domination of Rome as predicted by Deuteronomy 28. Arrogantly the Jews boasted: "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man" (John 8:33). The Tower of Antonia was a silent fulfilment of Moses' warning.

VERSE 48

“Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which Yahweh shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things” — The people of Judah would be brought down to the lowest extremity by the foreign invasion they would suffer. Because they would refuse to serve Yahweh, He would sell them to their enemies,

whom they would be compelled to serve. Again, a powerful lesson is presented in this statement, for it reminds readers that they must serve somebody: either Yahweh or self. Paul taught: “the wages of sin (that is the flesh) is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). We are wise to serve Yahweh; it is both right and profitable to do so.

THE BLESSINGS AND CURSINGS OF THE LAW ARE PROPHETIC IN THEIR SCOPE

Reference	Prediction	Fulfilment
Deut. 28:1-14	Blessings in the land	Experienced by the initial occupation under Joshua and his associates. (Josh. 24:31).
Deut. 28:15-24	Cursings whilst in the land.	Agricultural, domestic and public calamities including civil dissension and division whilst resident in the Land (1 Kings, 1 Chron.).
Deut. 28:25-35	Invasion and domination by foreigners	Inflicted by neighbouring nations. Assyria takes the northern nation into captivity (cp. v. 25).
Deut. 28:36-37	King and nation taken into captivity.	The Babylonian captivity.
Deut. 28:38-46	Back in the land (v. 40) troubles continue. Ruled by foreigners (v. 43).	Period of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh. 1:3; Hag. 1:6,9-11; Zech. 8:10; Mal. 3:9-10). Romans rule the land. Herod the Idumean reigns in Jerusalem.
Deut. 28:47-62	Yoke of iron (v. 47) siege.	Roman invasion, siege of Jerusalem in AD 70.
Deut. 28:63-68	Dispersion and distress.	Jews scattered among the Gentiles by the Romans, suffer slavery and persecution in all nations.
Deut. 29:22-28	The Land cursed becomes arid and uninhabitable.	Erosion and neglect by Turkish overlords robs the land of its fertility.
Deut. 30:1-5	Restoration and great mercies promised the remnant.	Present restoration a token of fulfilment.
Deut. 30:6-10	The hearts of Israelites to be circumcised whilst their enemies are reduced.	Manifestation of Israel's Deliverer (Rom. 11:23-27), influence of Spirit-word (Ezek. 36:21-28), the granting of a new covenant (Jer. 31:31-37) with the Kingdom established and Israel the head of the nations (Mic. 4:8; Zech. 8:22-23).

“The secret things belong unto Yahweh our God . . .” (Deut. 29:29).

“And he shall put a yoke of iron upon thine neck until He have destroyed thee” — Note that the yoke of Egypt was broken when the children of Israel left that land (Lev. 26:13); but because of continued disobedience, it would be replaced by the yoke of Rome. This is described as a “yoke of iron”, and appropriately so, because the iron in the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream represented Rome. The symbolism of Moses anticipated that of Daniel relating to the Roman Empire.

Foreign Invasion Of the Land — vv. 49-52

In this section of the prophetic curses, the climax is reached: military defeat, leading to the overthrow of the nation will provide the greatest mark of Divine disapproval. It is clear that the attack predicted was fulfilled by the Jewish revolt and the Roman invasion of AD 66-70. This resulted in the destruction of the Temple and the overthrow of the nation.

VERSE 49

“Yahweh shall bring a nation against thee from far” — This nation was Rome. It came from the extremity of the earth in those times as far as Judah was concerned. When Rome marched against Judah, the Western world was completely under its control. It exercised universal influence over all nations. In the Lord's parable of the marriage supper of the King, he described how that the Jewish people would make light of Yahweh's invitation to the marriage of His son; how they would take hold of His servants, and treat them spitefully, and slay them. The Lord's parable, shewed the inevitable result of such treatment of Yahweh's Son and servants: “but when the King heard thereof he was wrath: and he sent forth His armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city” (Matt. 22:7). The parable then described how Yahweh's servants would be sent to the Gentiles, that the wedding may be furnished with guests. In this parable, the Lord referred to the Roman legions as “Yahweh's armies”. They were His armies because they were the medium through which His judgment would be poured out upon the people of Israel. He had previously used the Assyrians against the northern kingdom as “His axe” through which he punished that guilty nation (See Isa. 10:12,15). After the Assyrians had accomplished His purpose on the northern kingdom, Yahweh punished them because though they fulfilled His

work they did not recognise His authority. Rome was the same. Meanwhile, in the judgment poured out upon Judah, Rome constituted “His armies”, as the Assyrians previously were “His axe”.

“As swift as the eagle flieth” — The eagle was the common ensign of the legions of the Roman army. A flying eagle, on the Roman standards, preceded the legions when they marched into battle. It is said that when the standard bearer neared the enemy, the standard would be thrown by him into the opposition ranks and the legionary who retrieved it, would be rewarded, and promoted. The word “eagle” is *nesher* which signifies to lacerate or tear. It therefore is a fit symbol for the ruthless methods of warfare engaged upon by Rome (see Matt. 24:28).

“A nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand” — There is no language more foreign to the structure and idiom of Hebrew than is Latin.

VERSE 50

“A nation of fierce countenance” — This describes a warlike nation. And no nation equalled Rome at the height of its power in its ability to wage war.

“Which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young” — Rome proved to be completely pitiless and ruthless in its attack upon the city of Jerusalem. Antagonised by the indomitable courage of the defenders, once the city was breached, the Roman soldiers exacted cruel revenge upon its defenders together with their wives and children.

VERSE 51

“And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee” — The land shall be completely denuded by the invading Romans. Contrast v. 4 and cp. v. 33. The words of Isa. 47:8 which apply primarily to Babylon were also fulfilled by Rome. Hadrian ploughed the site of the destroyed city (Mic. 3:12). But also note the promise of Isa. 62:8.

VERSE 52

“And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land” — See the warning of Lev.



A drawing illustrating a Roman standard.

26:25; and that of the Lord. See Luke 19:43-44; 21:22-24.

“Which Yahweh thy God hath given thee” — Yahweh who gave them the land will also take it away from them and bestow it upon the Roman legions.

VERSE 53

“And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which Yahweh thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee” — See the warning of Lev. 26:29; Matt. 24:22. The siege of Jerusalem became notorious as being one of the worst sieges in history. Its inhabitants were not only oppressed by the Romans surrounding the city walls outside, but also by dissension and bitter mutual hostility within. Whilst fighting for their lives against the Romans, the Jews were attacking and slaughtering each other within the walls of the city. It was the worst calamity in Israel’s history. The Lord predicted **“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be”** (Matt. 24:21). The reference to the “world” relates to the Mosaic era, not to the beginning of creation, for the destruction of Jerusalem did not match the destruction of Noah’s day. But the overthrow of Jerusalem in AD 70, was so terrible, as to

exceed that which shall take place through the attack of the Russian Gog (Zech. 14:1-2). It resulted in the complete overthrow of the Jewish state, and the scattering of its people into all parts of the earth; whereas Gog’s attack will culminate in the manifestation of the Messiah to the house of Israel, and the restoration of the Davidic throne as promised by the prophets. Bro. R. Roberts’ account of the last days of Judah’s Commonwealth in *The Ways of Providence* chps. 24 to 26 can be consulted for an account of the siege of AD 70.

VERSE 54

“So that the man that is tender among you” — This expression signifies the most refined of men.

“And very delicate” — This signifies of the most kindly nature.

“His eye shall be evil towards his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and towards the remnant of his children which he shall leave” — The siege of Jerusalem was among the most awful in recorded history. The inhabitants were brought to the direst extremities of suffering. So extreme were the ravages of hunger that all normal considerations of humanity were forgotten, and self-preservation, even at the expense of those most near and dear to one, became the order of the day.

VERSE 55

“So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he has nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates” — Frightful examples of cannibalism during the fearful siege of Jerusalem, are recorded by historians. One has written: **“The Roman armies at length besieged, sacked, and utterly desolated Jerusalem; and during the siege, the famine was so extreme, that even rich and refined persons, both men and women, ate their own children, and concealed the horrible repast, lest others should tear it from them! Women snatched the food out of the very mouths of their husbands, and sons of their fathers, and (what is most miserable) mothers of their infants. In every house, if there appeared any semblance of food, a battle ensued, and the dearest friends and relations fought with one another; snatching away the miserable possessions of life. A woman distinguished by birth and**

wealth, after she had been plundered by the tyrants (or soldiers) of all her possessions, boiled her own suckling child, ate half of him, and concealing the other half, reserved it for another time”. This account of the extremities to which the people of Jerusalem were reduced, are taken from the accounts recorded by Josephus, an eye witness of the awful circumstances. These terrible sufferings were all unnecessary. They were brought about by the rejection by the people of the protection that Yahweh could have, and would have, given them. Hosea warned: **“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee”** (Hos. 4:6). The leaders of Jewry cruelly rejected and crucified the Lord shouting in their stupid anger: **“His blood be upon us and upon our children”**. They also boldly shouted: **“We have no king but Caesar”**. Therefore Yahweh abandoned them to their own resources, and they were delivered into the cruel embraces of Caesar who destroyed both people and city, and scattered the nation into all parts of the earth. It is a sad, depressing, and unnecessary history of a people who were given grand privileges, but did not appreciate them.

VERSE 56

“The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness” — See v. 54. The *NIV* renders “tender and delicate” as *the most gentle and sensitive woman among you*. The description “would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground” signifies one brought up in the lap of luxury, and carried on the back of an animal, so that she does not have to walk anywhere. Such would be humbled by the extremities to which they would be reduced.

“Her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter” — The self-sacrificing love normally shown by such a woman towards her own will be abandoned in the extremities of the siege.

VERSE 57

“And towards her young one that cometh out from between her feet” — The A.V. hides the real horror of this statement. The literal rendering of the Hebrew is given in the margin as *afterbirth*. As the grim hunger and frightful ravages of the

siege took hold upon her such a woman would forget the restraints of her upbringing, and even those of nature, and would resort to the most awful cannibalism, such as the lowest animals revert to.

“And toward her children which she shall bear; for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee within thy gates” — In his history of the war, Josephus advances examples where this actually occurred, so frightful were the conditions in the city.

The Nation Reduced and Threatened with Extinction — vv. 58-63

This section of the prophetic curses commences with a condition: “if thou wilt not observe to do”. This reminds Israel that the drastic curses now listed will fall on the people if they fail to heed the disciplinary punishment of the fall of Jerusalem. Prophetically it seems to relate to the conditions of the Jews in the land following the destruction of AD 70. They were placed under restrictions by the Romans such as limited their activities considerably, and this continued, until the revolt of Bar-Kochba during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian. In AD 135 he finally suppressed the revolt, the city was destroyed, its land ploughed as a field (Mic. 3:12) and given a new name. Aelia Capitolina. Jews were forbidden to dwell therein. So the prophetic scope of the curses proved true to the course of history.

VERSE 58

“If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book” — See note v. 15.

“That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, Yahweh Thy God” — Great and precious promises are given to those who fear the name of Yahweh (See Mal. 4:2; Isa. 59:19). The fear of Yahweh is the firstfruits of knowledge (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 15:33). Such reverence will instill a fear to offend Yahweh, and therefore induce obedience (Job 28:28; Psa. 111:9-10). A person who does not obey the commandments of the Word, has no real fear of God. One who fears Yahweh, will respect and glorify His holy name. The Lord exhorted his followers to “fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). Fear, or reverence, for the Name will be manifested in developing its principles (Prov. 30:9; Jer. 22:16).

The Name as expressed in this verse is Yahweh *Eloahaikha* (see *Phanerosis* p.

114). This Name was named upon the people of Israel through the blessing of Aaron (see Num. 6:23-27). It is also named upon those who embrace the Truth in Christ Jesus (see Acts 15:14). All who are in that category, that is all who are "called by My Name" saith Yahweh, "I create him for My glory" (Isa. 43:7). The people of Israel were not called out of Egypt merely to be saved, but to be made worth saving, to develop such characters as to reflect the glory of their Creator. A Godly fear was required to do that. This would have resulted in the manifestation of such a way of life as to attract the commendation of all who would come in contact with them. Therefore Moses exhorted the people: "keep therefore and do them (i.e. Yahweh's commandments) for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, that hath God so nigh unto them, as Yahweh our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?" (Deut. 4:6-7). The Jewish people, in their superstition, imagine that they manifest fear toward the Name by avoiding its use. However Ezekiel's condemnation of the people during the times when they have avoided use of the Name, illustrates that this does not constitute fear of it. He declared that they have "profaned Yahweh's name among the nations whither they have been scattered" (Ezek. 36:33). The name is feared and glorified, when it is used in understanding reverence, and the qualities expressed therein (Exod. 34:6-7), become the motivation of a transformed character. Only those who reveal His characteristics in action are said to "know" Him (Jer. 22:16), and thereby are related to eternal life (John 17:3). It is possible to know the Name academically, but fail to manifest its qualities in action, and that is described as "denying" Him (Prov. 30:9). The Name itself, as it here appears, signifies *He Who Will Be Thy Mighty Ones*. It therefore is an exclusive Name, limited by the pronoun "thy" to Israel. Only true Israelites can worship *Yahweh Eloahaikha* or reveal His characteristics. Gentiles must become Israelites to do so (Eph. 2:12-13; Gal. 6:16); and only Israelites circumcised in heart qualify as being "of the Name". Separateness, therefore, is a basic requirement of this family Name, for Yahweh will only reveal Himself as Father to such (2 Cor. 6:17-18). Yahweh's characteristics are expressive

of Goodness and Severity (Exod. 34:6-7; Rom. 11:22), and those who are truly of His family will likewise extend goodness to others whilst remaining sternly apart and hostile towards all forms of blasphemy and wickedness. The Name and its qualities are expressed only in the Word, which therefore becomes the channel of instruction and motivation to the members of His family, and which, therefore, He has "magnified above all His Name" (Psa. 138:2). To fear the Name, therefore, is to highly respect Yahweh's Word (Isa. 66:2) and apply its principles in action. In the verse before us Israel is warned that if they did not do this, their problems would increase.

But why introduce this name at this point in these prophetic curses? Because they synchronise with the time when the qualities of the Name had been more completely revealed in the personal appearance of Christ as the Name-bearer, and the separation of a people for the Name (Acts 15:14) by the preaching of the Apostles.

VERSE 59

"Then Yahweh will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed even great plagues and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance" — The use of the term *then* suggests the cause of increased troubles and repudiation of the nation would be due to the people's refusal to heed the preaching and appeal of Christ as the Name-bearer, and the Apostles as his "ambassadors" (Eph. 6:20). Rejecting this final appeal the nation was given over to its own resources until the Deliverer will come to turn away ungodliness (Rom. 11:26). The reference to "great plagues" is to great trouble, rather than diseases. In Deut. 25:3, the word for *plagues*, is translated "stripes". Stripes were publicly administered to those who were guilty of disobedience, and that is how the word is used in this verse. It relates to the various ways in which Israel would be punished. The word "wonderful", signifies *extraordinary*, or *exceptional*. Obedience brought exemption from the plagues poured out on Egypt (Exod. 8:22-23; 9:4,6-7,26; 10:23; 11:7). However, whilst obedience brought immunity from the punishment that was poured out upon the Egyptians, Israel was warned that disobedience would add to the severity of them. See Lev. 24:11-16; Cp. Lam. 1:9,12; 4:12; Dan. 9:12; Amos 3:2; Mark 13:19.

VERSE 60

"Moreover He will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee" — The diseases of Egypt are the plagues sent upon Pharaoh and his people, as recorded in Exodus 7 to 11. Besides these, other plagues, not recorded in the book of the Law, would be experienced by rebellious Israel, so as to almost annihilate them. The worst of the "diseases of Egypt" was the dread disease of Leprosy. Figuratively, Israel experienced this. Leprosy symbolised active and unforgiven sin. The sufferer was accounted "unclean" and had to publicly proclaim his state. He was denied access to the Temple worship and excluded from the company of others. All this became figuratively the fate of Israel. It has been excluded by other nations, accounted "unclean", denied access to Divine worship because of its rejection of the Messiah, and has experienced a living death. However, this will be changed for "a fountain shall be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1).

VERSE 61

"Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will Yahweh bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed" — The book of the law referred to, relates not merely to Deuteronomy, which was not then written, but to the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses, as a whole. When the people ignored the counsel and appeal of Yahweh revealed therein they were left to their own resources and suffered from every form of adversity as a result.

VERSE 62

"And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude" — Israel increased greatly in number (Exod. 1:12), but the siege of Jerusalem and subsequent punishment, severely reduced them numerically. Over one million died in the siege of AD 70, and millions more were sold into slavery, to be scattered throughout the world.

"Because thou wouldst not obey the voice of Yahweh thy God" — All the misery that Israel has endured is traceable to their stubborn refusal to heed the appeals of Yahweh. See Psa. 81:11-16; Hos. 4:6; 6:5-6.

VERSE 63

"And it shall come to pass that as

Yahweh rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you — Yahweh did this in the Egyptian captivity, during the wilderness wanderings, and in the land. The lesson of those times revealed that when the people obeyed they were blessed; when they disobeyed (like the old generation from Egypt) they suffered.

"So Yahweh will rejoice over you to destroy you and to bring you to nought" — As Yahweh finds pleasure in rewarding virtue, He will punish wickedness; but, in Israel's case, with the object of reform. Ezek. 18:23; 2 Pet. 3:9.

"And ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it" — Obedience to Yahweh brought Abram into the land (see Gen. 12:1); disobedience on the part of the children of Israel would drive them from it. See Jer. 31:28. See the warning given to Zedekiah to submit to the instruction of Yahweh and subject himself to Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 42:10). And see the promise of restoration in Jer. 12:14-15.

The Dispersion of Israel Among The Gentiles — vv. 64-68

The curses continue in their prophetic foreshadowing. Following the destruction of Jerusalem, the people would be scattered throughout the Gentiles, and there would find no ease. Instead their lives would hang in doubt and they would become a perpetual prey to anxiety. They are pictured as being transported in slave tradership back to Egypt, to a bondage worse than that from whence their forefathers escaped. They would suffer the ultimate indignity of being undesired even as slaves. And so the sad record of disaster through disobedience continues.

VERSE 64

"And Yahweh shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth to the other" — Though these curses are given conditional upon disobedience, Moses was under no false illusions as to the future of the people. See Lev. 26:33; Deut. 4:27-28; 31:29-30. See also the prophecy of the Lord (Luke 21:24).

"And there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone" — Even in dispersion the Israelites would continue their disobedience by failing to worship Yahweh in truth.

VERSE 65

"And among those nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the soul of thy foot have rest" — The people are warned that among the nations of their dispersion they would find no abiding place, but would be driven from country to country. History reveals the sad facts of this. The Roman Emperor Hadrian banned them from Jerusalem, and they were taken as slaves into every corner of the globe. In no country were they accepted freely as citizens, but always as aliens, and as such were generally harassed, oppressed and persecuted (see Ezek. 5:17; Amos 9:4). At one time or another almost every nation has legislated against the Jew, driving him from its borders. Even Britain has done this. The legend of the wandering Jew has been a significant feature amid Gentile history. Six million were destroyed in the concentration camps of Germany. Yet that tragedy of modern history was only one of many similar episodes of violence and terror the Jews have experienced in many other countries throughout the long night of their dispersion. All this is traceable to their rejection of Yahweh's mercy and refusal to heed the counsel of His Word.

"But Yahweh shall give thee a trembling heart, and a failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind" — A "trembling heart" expresses such fear as is beyond hope; a "failing of eyes" expresses the gradual extinction of hope, the eyes being turned from the prospect ahead, and so refusing their office because they see only horror; whilst "sorrow of mind" describes unrelieved sorrow, as one incident of horror exceeds the other. See the warning of Lev. 26:16,36. Typical of Jewish sufferings throughout the ages was the horror of the Nazi holocaust. Sheer terror was the weapon used by the Nazis to extirpate the Jewish people. As Hitler's conquests grew, his influence extended throughout Europe. The most horrifying experiences, in which death itself was not the worst, were felt by the Jews. Every detail of Moses' warning words had their fulfillment. But the root cause was lack of obedience on the part of the nation as a whole. In rejecting God's counsel the people denied themselves the protection He would have extended to them. However, the partial restoration of the Jewish people in modern times, has given them a measure of refuge from the vile anti-semitism they have experienced through-

out the ages. The words of Jeremiah have been partially vindicated: "For I am with thee, saith Yahweh, to save thee; though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished (Jer. 30:11).

Again: "And it shall come to pass that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them to build, and to plant, saith Yahweh" (Jer. 31:28).

And finally: "For Yahweh hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of Yahweh, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd; and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all" (Jer. 31:11-12).

The present restoration is only a token of this coming state. It shows the world is on the eve of the great revolution of Jewish experiences graphically predicted in Isa. 51:22-23.

VERSE 66

"And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night" — This has been the experience of Jews throughout the ages, as their persecutors have taken of their number at random and delivered them unto death. The expression of the verse denotes an object hanging by a thread, dangling before them, ready to fall or be cut down in a moment.

"And shall have none assurance of thy life" — Jews would be subjected to a perpetual prey of frightful anxiety. Hitler's policy, as was that of others before him, was the extermination of the Jewish people entirely. But, as we have indicated above, this was only one incident in the long record of persecution and anti-semitism they experienced during which many despaired of life.

VERSE 67

"In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! And at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! For the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see" — We have personally spoken to Jewish people who have experi-

enced such fear and horror as this. In the concentration camps of Germany, as starvation took its toll, and persecution and torture were indulged in by the Germans, many wished for death, but it would not come. There is not space here to record the horrifying experiences of the Jewish people, but many books have recorded their sufferings, and to them we refer the reader.

VERSE 68

"And Yahweh shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you"

— This is a startling climax to all the curses pronounced. The ultimate distress came when the Jewish people were taken back to the lands of their captivity, from whence they had been delivered. Hosea 8:13 predicted a return to Egypt as a punishment for Israel's sins. Figuratively, Egypt is the land of captivity for the Jewish people, so that the warning that they would be taken back to Egypt, does not necessarily limit their dispersion to that country. The world at large is Egypt in a figurative sense; and to all parts of the earth the Jewish people were taken to be sold as slaves. So the expression that

"Yahweh shall bring them into Egypt" figuratively expresses that they would be delivered up unto the world at large (see Rev. 11:8 for the figurative use of the term "Egypt"). As the Exodus out of Egypt led to the birth of the kingdom of God, the return to Egypt would witness its death-throes. However, the verse before us warns that the people would return, not as free men, but cooped up in slaveships with no way of escape. Moreover, their numbers would be so great as to cause a glut of Jewish slaves on the market, so that they would no longer command a price. This literally took place after the destruction of Jerusalem. The Jewish people were led into captivity as slaves, but because there was so many of them, their price slumped and they were considered the cheapest and most miserable of all slaves.

In his *History Of The War*, Josephus records that after the city fell the Romans finally grew weary of slaughter, and 97000 of the younger prisoners were spared. Those over 17 years of age were sent to the mines or to the arenas to fight as gladiators, or against wild beasts. Those under 17 were sold as slaves. But the market was so glutted that though offered at bargain prices few would buy them. Those who remained were placed into confinement where large numbers perished from hunger. See Matt. 27:25; John 19:15.

SUMMARY

Yahweh's primary intention is to bless, hence the precedence of blessings over cursings. This is in accordance with Yahweh's character. See Exod. 34:6-8; Psa. 103:6-8; Jer. 29:11-13; Lam. 3:32-34; Hos. 11:8-9.

However, the way to blessings is obedience. A central doctrine in Deuteronomy is that national obedience will bring prosperity; whilst disobedience will bring disaster. Yahweh permits trouble and disaster to humble and reform those of His people subject to it. See Deut. 8:2-3. The sufferings Israel has experienced are due to their continued rejection of God's way of wisdom and true happiness. As they have persisted in turning their backs to Yahweh, their sufferings have increased. The lesson of these blessings and cursings, therefore, is to bring home that the penalty of disobedience is judgment and punishment. The national application of this principle emphasised in Deuteronomy, is also a personal one applicable to those who have been granted the privilege of the Gospel. It reveals that those who, having been granted knowledge, will not receive Christ as saviour will face him as judge (See Jhn. 3:18,36; 5:28-30; 2 Cor. 2:15-16).

***Jews During the
Nazi Holocaust***

These dramatic photos capture the grim circumstances which the Jews suffered during the Nazi regime. None were exempt; not even little children. Left — under arrest: one false move and the guards would shoot to kill. Below: Herded together without hope for the German Concentration Camps — and death. The curses listed in Deuteronomy 28 have had terrible fulfillment throughout the ages.



DEUTERONOMY:
DIVINE FAITHFULNESS
IN DISCIPLINING AND DELIVERING

***Discourse Four:
COVENANT —
CONDITIONS THAT
WILL ENSURE
ISRAEL'S
CONTINUED
OCCUPANCY OF THE
LAND***

Ch. 29,30

In this section, the leading elements of Deuteronomy are repeated in brief. Deuteronomy 29:1-9 develops the historical prologue in Deuteronomy 1:6-4:49. Deuteronomy 29:10-15 develops that set forth in Chapter 5:1-33 which, in turn, is amplified by the instructions and warnings of Deuteronomy 6:1-26:19. Deuteronomy 29:16-29 answers to the blessings and cursings of Ch. 27:1-28:68.

Deuteronomy 30 records the Divine mercy that is ever outstretched to Israel, even in times of disobedience. Verses 1-10 promises a restoration of blessing when the people revert back to the ways of Yahweh. Verses 11-20 concludes the covenant by reminding the people of its availability and the need to heed its terms.

In these chapters, therefore, the solemnity of the covenant and the oath that Israel took to keep it, is underscored by a brief outline of what is required. The final verses of the section (ch. 30:15-20) contains the summons to the oath of confirmation, and the invocation of witnesses. The covenant includes strong exhortatory appeal.

It is also important to recognise that the prophetic scope of the curses of Chapt. 28, continues on in this section of the Book of Deuteronomy. The curses terminated in the siege of Jerusalem that took place in AD 70, and the consequent dispersion of the people throughout the Gentiles. This section anticipates the state of the Land during the period the people are in dispersion (Deut. 29:22-28). It moves on, in Chapter 30, to anticipate the ultimate restoration of the people to the Land again, when, "Yahweh thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love Yahweh thy God, with all thine heart and with all thy soul that thou mayest live" (Deut. 30:6). Hence, in this remarkable section of Divine revelation (Deut. 28,29,30) there is prophetically set forth an outline of Israel's history from the time the tribes entered the Land, until the Millennium will be established under the Lord Jesus Christ.

Truly could Moses write: "The secret things belong unto Yahweh our God: but those things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29:29). How amazing it is, that even in the curses that Israel inherited through their disobedience, the prophecies of God were fulfilled: a guarantee that His ultimate purpose to bless is beyond doubt.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

THE NEED TO KEEP THE COVENANT

The chapter is divisible into two parts: 1. With whom the covenant is made (vv. 1-17); and 2. Punishment that will result from breaking the covenant (vv. 18-29). The first section is divided into: 1. An Introduction (v. 1); 2. An Exhortation to the people to keep the covenant on the grounds of personal experience (vv. 2-9); 3. A Reminder that all Israelites of every age are involved (vv. 10-13); 4. The Involvement of the yet unborn (vv. 14-17).

The second section is sub-divided into three parts. 1. The severe punishment that will result from backsliding (vv. 18-21); 2. The curse that will fall upon the land if Israel breaks the covenant (vv. 22-28); 3. An exhortation to keep the law (vv. 29).

WITH WHOM THE COVENANT WAS MADE — vv. 1-17

The covenant involves all: both men, women and children, and extends even to the unborn.

Introduction — v. 1

This verse introduces the new section in the book of Deuteronomy.

VERSE 1

"These are the words of the covenant which Yahweh commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which He made with them in Horeb" — This was not a new covenant in addition to that made at Sinai, but a renewal of that made then. See Deut. 4:10,13,23. The covenant was originally confirmed with sacrifices at Horeb (Exod. 24) and is now renewed. If Deuteronomy outlined a new or additional covenant, it would have necessitated further confirmatory sacrifices but nothing is recorded of such. The Bible knows of only two covenants, one of Law; the other of Grace. The covenant of Law as all references to it reveal, was made at Horeb, and now is reaffirmed by Moses to the generation about to enter the land. The other covenant was the Covenant of Grace, proclaimed to Abraham, and confirmed through Christ (Rom. 15:8). An unfortunate mistake is made if it is

thought that Deuteronomy is an additional covenant.

Exhortation To Keep The Covenant — vv. 2-9

Moses warns the people of the tendency of the flesh to go astray, and exhorts them to continuously keep in mind the terms of the covenant. He appeals to them on the ground of personal experiences.

VERSE 2

"And Moses called unto him all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that Yahweh did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land" — Moses appeals to the people on the grounds of their personal experiences. See notes Exod. 19:4; Deut. 4:32-35; 8:2-6; See also Neh. 9:9-11.

VERSE 3

"The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles" — The word "temptations" is better rendered *trials* (Gen. 22:1). The trials are recorded in Deut. 8:2-6, and the miracles by which they were relieved constituted the signs of Yahweh expressive of His goodness. See Neh. 9:9-11.

VERSE 4

"Yet Yahweh hath not given you an

heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day" — A discerning heart, open eyes, and hearing ears, are the workmanship of Yahweh formed by the influence of His Word (Prov. 20:12), and the effects of His grace (Jer. 31:33). But they are dependent upon the co-operation of individuals (Deut. 2:30; Psa. 81:11-16; Isa. 63:17; Heb. 3:7-12). Whilst the ability to understand the things of God is partly a gift from Him (1 Cor. 2:13-14), yet man is not guiltless if he ignores the means available. It is a talent that can be developed by application to the Word and Prayer (James 1:5). Of course, if believers do not feel the need of it they will not ask Yahweh for the blessing of it. (See 2 Cor. 3:14-15 and the exhortation of James 1:1-3.

VERSE 5

"And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot" — See note Deut. 8:4, and observe the exhortation of Christ (Matt. 6:31-32).

VERSE 6

"Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink" — The Israelites were not supported by food in any ordinary way, but were miraculously sustained throughout the wilderness as promised. The food they received is described as "the corn" and "bread from heaven" (See Psa. 78:24-25; Neh. 9:15). Their drink was water either from the rock, or from heaven. They were sustained by miracle, until miracle became commonplace, and they were inclined to despise it. How necessary to beware a similar reaction towards the goodness of Yahweh which we daily experience. In the provision of water in the wilderness, Israel learned the need to depend upon Yahweh, and was taught the lesson of faith and obedience (See Num. 20:8; 1 Cor. 9:25; 10:4; Eph. 5:18).

"That ye might know that I am Yahweh your God" — See also the exhortation of Deut. 8:3. The experiences of the children of Israel in the wilderness brought home to them the reality of Yahweh. They learnt to know Him experimentally, and not merely academically.

VERSE 7

"And when ye came into this place, Sihon the King of Heshbon, and Og the

King of Bashan, came out against us unto battle, and we smote them" — The goodness of Yahweh was with the Israelites in granting them victories over the most powerful enemies. See notes Num. 21:21-24,33-35; Deut. 2:32; 3:1; Psa. 135:10-12; 136:16-21.

VERSE 8

"And we took their land, and gave it for an inheritance to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half tribe of Manasseh" — See Num. 32:33; Deut. 3:12-13.

VERSE 9

"Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do" — For the use of the word "keep" see Deut. 4:6; 26:16; and note the exhortation of Isa. 56:1-2,4-7. The Hebrew word for "prosper" is *sakal*, and signifies *to be circumspect*, and therefore *intelligent*; to carefully consider a matter, and on the basis of that thought to act wisely and prudently so as to ensure success (see Josh. 1:7-8). It is the prosperity that comes from wise and prudent action that Yahweh commends to His people.

All Israel Of Every Age Involved — vv. 10-13

The people of Israel are commanded to enter into the covenant of Yahweh in faith and with enthusiasm. Only by so doing will they prosper in the land they are about to enter.

VERSE 10

"Ye stand this day all of you before Yahweh your God" — The use of "all" shows that the covenant is a national one, and not merely a personal one. All are involved whether or not they individually endorse it. The people are reminded of the onerous position in which they stood. They were "before Yahweh their God", and were to engage upon their part of the covenant with that knowledge well in mind. Yahweh was to be a reality to them, not merely a theory. They were called upon to follow the exhortation delivered to Abram: "walk before Me and be thou perfect" (Gen. 17:1).

"Your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel" — The verse is better rendered "ye stand this day all of you before Yahweh your God, your chiefs, your tribes, your elders, and your officers, every man of Israel". In the ceremony that

took place various representatives were assembled so revealing their status. The first group were the leaders: the elders and officers of the tribes.

VERSE 11

"Your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water" — This constituted the other extreme, the children, women-folk etc. As the covenant was a national one, it not only included the adults and men of the existing generation, but future ones as well. It also included the little ones, the strangers resident in Israel, as well as the lowest menial servants found among the children of Israel. There were, of course, proselytes from Egypt among the tribes at that time (see Exod. 12:38,48,49). In contrast to the Covenant of Grace, which is conditional upon personal endorsement of Yahweh's Truth, the covenant through Moses was national, and therefore binding upon all both old and young.

VERSE 12

"That thou shouldest enter into covenant with Yahweh thy God" — The word "enter" is from the Hebrew *abar* and signifies *to cross over or pass through*. It is similar to the word *Hebrew*, so that a true Hebrew is one who has passed over or through a way of death to a way of life via a covenant with Yahweh (see Deut. 30:19; 1 John 3:14). The margin renders it "pass". This also is how it is rendered in Gen. 15:10 in regard to the covenant victim. In establishing a covenant, the covenant victim was divided into two parts, and the contracting parties met between the two pieces. This is what had happened between Abraham and Yahweh as narrated in Gen. 15:10,17. Reference to confirming a covenant in that way is found in Jer. 34:18. In a time of trouble, under threat from Babylon, the people of Israel had entered into covenant with Yahweh to reform their actions. A covenant-victim was slain, it was divided into two parts, and representatives of the nation passed between the pieces to enter into a covenant of reform before Yahweh. In Heb. 9:15-18 Christ is set forth as the covenant-victim of the Abrahamic Covenant of Grace. And the comment is made: "where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the covenant victim" (v. 16 — see *Diaglott*). When believers meet around the Table of the Lord, they figuratively pass through the pieces to renew their coven-

ant with Yahweh. In Deut. 30:15-20, Moses summons the people to accept the terms of the oath of confirmation, and invokes witnesses thereto.

"And into His oath, which Yahweh thy God maketh with thee this day" — Yahweh's oath and the terms by which it would be fulfilled, are outlined in Deut. 7:8-12. This was the renewal of the covenant made with Moses, and centuries later again renewed with the people by Nehemiah (see Neh. 10:29). A consideration of the circumstances by which a covenant is confirmed reveals seven particulars: 1. The parties about to contract were considered as previously separated. 2. They now agree to enter into a state of close and permanent unity by mutually observing the terms of the covenant. 3. They meet together in a solemn manner for that purpose. 4. Their action is confirmed by partaking of a covenant victim. 5. The victim is divided exactly into two equal parts, the separation being in the direction of the spine; and these parts are laid opposite to each other, sufficient room being allowed for the contracting parties to pass between them. 6. The contracting parties meeting between the victim, the conditions of the covenant by which they are to be mutually bound are recited. 7. An oath is taken by these parties that they shall faithfully observe their respective obligations; and the covenant is ratified. In this manner the new generation of Israelites renewed the Covenant already made between Moses and Yahweh. The contracting parties were Yahweh and the nation of Israel; whilst Moses acted as mediator (Gal. 3:19). This was not a new covenant established with a new generation but the old covenant of Sinai confirmed with the new generation. That a covenant-victim was offered on this occasion is suggested by the word "maketh". The word is from the Hebrew *karath*, and signifies *to cut*. Hence the phrase can be rendered "into His oath which Yahweh thy God cutteth with thee this day".

VERSE 13

"That He may establish thee this day for a people unto Himself" — The covenant is not a personal, or individual one, but a national one. It involved not only the generation of Israelites living at that time, but their unborn posterity as well (see v. 15).

"That He may be unto thee a God, as He hath saith unto thee" — Israel was called out of Egypt for that very purpose. See Exod. 3:15; 6:7.

"And as He hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob" — See Gen. 17:7; Heb. 11:16-21. On his death-bed, Joseph reminded the people of the oath of Yahweh to bring the nation into the land that He had sworn that He would give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 50:24).

The Involvement Of The Yet Unborn — vv. 14-17

The covenant extends to future generations involving those as yet unborn.

VERSE 14

"Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath" — For the use of the word make, *karath*, see note v. 12. In this statement Moses acts as mediator for the people.

VERSE 15

"But with him that standeth here with us this day before Yahweh our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day" — This verse involves the unborn in the national covenant made with Yahweh. Previously Moses reviewed the various classes of people, assembled to confirm the covenant with Yahweh; now he includes unborn generations who hereafter shall take their places in such solemn acts. He warns everyone against nourishing evil in their hearts, and presuming to avoid the requirements of the Law. All as individuals must conform to that which is there set down. He warns that the sinful shall be separated for punishment (see vv. 18-20); the land of a sinful tribe shall be overthrown as the result of a curse (see vv. 21-26). But he adds words of mercy, and makes solemn appeals to the people to choose life and not death (See Ch. 30:19-20).

VERSE 16

"For ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt; and how we came through the nations which ye passed by" — Experiences in Egypt, and also with those nations with whom the people of Israel had come into contact as they moved towards the Land of Promise, should have caused them to recognise the need of such a covenant with Yahweh. The nation had fallen into idolatry in Egypt, and had seen the effects of idolatry among the nations through whom they had passed on their way to the Promised Land, and this underlined the need of such a covenant as Moses now presented to them. Moreover,

Yahweh's merciful protection which they had experienced throughout, should have induced in them a response of love for Him manifested in obedience.

VERSE 17

"And ye have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them" — the word "abominations" comes from a Hebrew word signifying that which is filthy, or disgusting. In this verse, it has relation to the sexually impure forms of worship engaged in by the heathen of the countries through which the Israelites had passed. The word "idols" is from the Hebrew *Gilulim* and signifies *blocks* or *logs*. It is a term of contempt implying the uselessness of the inanimate gods carved out of wood or moulded from metals, worshipped by the heathen (see Psa. 115:5-8). In contrast, Israelites were invited to worship a living and powerful God able to hear, instruct, guide, and protect. In that way, the privileges of Israel were great in contrast to the state of heathen worshippers round about.

PUNISHMENT THAT WILL RESULT FROM BREAKING THE COVENANT — vv. 18-29

Solemn warning is issued against those who may break the covenant; concluding with an exhortation to study the Law as an incentive to keep it.

The Severe Punishment That Will Result From Backsliding — vv. 18-21

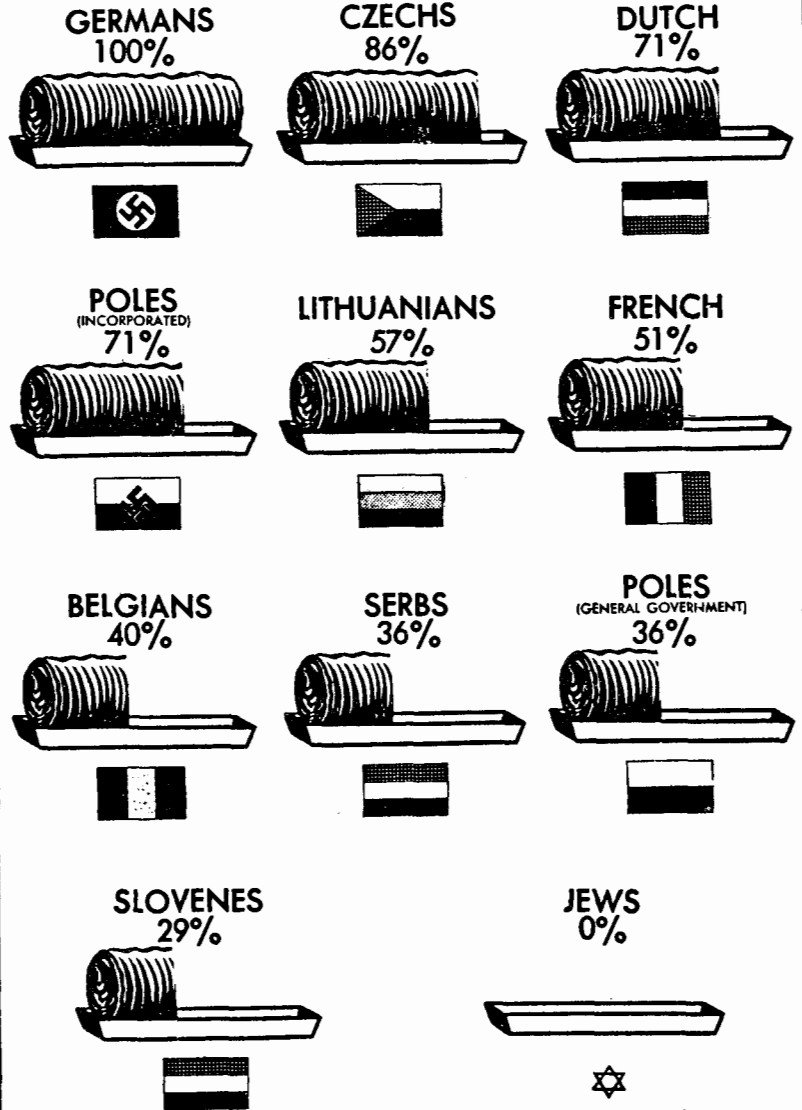
Yahweh's mercy will not be available for those who break the covenant and lead others to do likewise.

VERSE 18

"Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from Yahweh our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations" — The words "lest there should be" are better rendered: *see that there be not*. The NIV renders the verse *make sure there is no man or woman* etc. Evil influences must be strictly eliminated. See Deut. 11:16-17; 13:1-15; 17:2-7; and note the exhortation of Paul (Heb. 3:12).

"Lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood" — The root of a plant is hidden under the soil but in due time it makes its appearance as a plant, and ultimately brings forth a flower that can be very attractive in appearance, but disastrous in its influence. So it is with

COMPARATIVE MEAT RATIONS



Nazi Opposition to Jews. Meat was in short supply during World War II and nations were rationed according to their use to Germany. A food ration was issued to Jews that was scientifically adjusted to destroy their will to resist or live, and contribute to genocide. See Deut. 28:65-67.

false doctrine. Its root may be hidden from view in the earth, or not seen of men; but its fruit can be disastrous. In this case, the Hebrew word *Rosh* rendered "gall" relates to a poisonous herb. Gesenius identifies it as the poppy with its large and beautiful flower-head. The poppy, however, produces a drug that acts as a narcotic, a term used in the New Testament for false doctrine (See Gal. 5:20 — "witchcraft" signifies sorcery from the Greek *pharmakia* related to a drug; Rev. 9:21; 18:23). Opium, a drug that dulls the mind, and causes lethargy is derived from the poppy. It is significant that the word *Rosh* is used in relation to Russia in Ezek. 38:2, for whereas communism is proclaiming that religion is the opiate of the people, the doctrine of communism, drawing its adherents away from God, acts as an opium, dulling the mind by its false promises and claims, and causing lethargy in regard to responsibility towards God (see Jer. 9:15; Hos. 10:4; Amos 6:12; Acts 8:23; Heb. 12:15). The term "wormwood" is from a Hebrew word signifying *to curse*, or *to make bitter*. It is rendered *hemlock* in Amos 6:12. The wormwood has been identified with the desert species *Artemisia Monosperma*. It is greyish in colour, with a strong aromatic odour, and therefore is attractive to the flesh. But it is in taste so bitter that even sheep in the poor pasture lands of the semi-arid wilderness will spurn it. It is expressive of bitterness (Jer. 9:15; 23:15; Lam. 3:15-19). A bitter drink was derived from the sap (called by the Greeks absinthe) and was added to wine to make it more potent. The well known wine Vermouth is flavoured with wormwood (See *Plants of the Bible*). "A root that beareth gall and wormwood", is described by Paul as "an evil heart of unbelief departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12), for it is to Moses' words he obviously refers. The expression clearly relates to false doctrines and idolatrous practices, the effect of which acts as the drug opium, and the intoxicating bitterness of wormwood.

VERSE 19

"And it came to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst" — This verse describes the stupefying effect of the drug opium which in this context symbolises false doctrine. The mind is dulled to the requirements of God; it suf-

fers from self-delusion, such as takes possession of many who fall under the influence of false doctrine. Paul describes it as "all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them *strong delusion*, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. 2:10-11). The Hebrew word rendered "curse", in this verse is a different one to that normally used. From the Hebrew *alah*, it signifies *an oath*. The NIV renders it as such: "when such a person hears the words of *this oath*". He hears the oath of God, and believing that it promises unconditional security, whilst forgetting that he, himself, has failed to respond to his responsibilities as required, he proceeds to, "bless himself" or congratulate himself on enjoying immunity from trouble. The NIV renders this "he invokes a *blessing on himself*", and thereby thinks; "I will be safe, even though I persist in going my own way". Flesh can be very blind to its failings, and its responsibilities to God. False doctrine can act as a narcotic, dulling the mind to that which is due to Yahweh. Under its influence, clarity of thought will be clouded, and the delusion will cause those affected to imagine that they are doing God's service, whilst gratifying the flesh. The term "peace" signifies *to be at one with another*, in this case, with Yahweh. The narcotic, therefore, will cause those under its influence to believe that they are at one with God even though they walk in the imagination of their hearts, or, as the margin renders, in the stubbornness of their hearts. The verse concludes by stating that for such a person drunkenness will be added to thirst. Indulgence will always increase desire to satisfy it, so leading to further excesses; and that seems to be the intent of this statement. It is a metaphor denoting the natural decline and extremes of evil expected in unrestrained people.

VERSE 20

"Yahweh will not spare him" — See Ps. 78:50; Jer. 13:14; Ezek. 5:11; 7:4,9; Rom. 11:21; 2 Pet. 2:3-9. Such a man will suffer the consequences of his folly. For Yahweh to ignore him, would be to set an unwise precedent in the midst of Israel. Punishment will be heaped upon him, in order that others might observe and avoid the folly that leads to such a fate.

"But then the anger of Yahweh and His jealousy shall smoke against that man,

and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him" — Though the sinner may imagine that all is well with him, and is hardened in his iniquity, leading others astray by his example, Yahweh will not suffer him to rest in his delusion, but will afflict him with terrible punishments. So strong will be the heat of His anger as Lord, and His jealousy as a Husband that it is described as smoking against the offenders (see Note on Exod. 20:5; 34:14; Ps. 79:5). The verb *shall lie*, is interesting. It is from a Hebrew word *rabats*, signifying "to crouch". It describes the crouching of a wild beast awaiting its opportunity to spring and devour. It does so without warning to its victims. So the curses of the book of Deuteronomy will afflict such men at times when they are least ready to counter them. They will spring upon them like a wild beast against its prey without warning.

"And Yahweh shall blot out his name from under heaven" — See Exod. 32:32-33; Ps. 69:28; Ezek. 14:7-8; Ct. Rev. 3:5. There is no future happiness nor hope for such as these verses describe. Self deluded by the false doctrine that they have embraced, a wrong concept of Yahweh is created that leads deluded sinners along a course that is disastrous to their future wellbeing.

VERSE 21

"And Yahweh shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel" — The tribe, or family in Israel that refuses to separate itself unto Yahweh to obey Him, shall, in turn, be separated unto evil. Thus, separated within the covenant nation, and placed beyond the sphere over which rests the protection of Yahweh, they will be exposed to overwhelming judgment. Examples of this are seen in the case of Achan (Josh. 7:16-26); the false prophets of Ezekiel's day (Ezek. 13:9); the warning of Malachi (Mal. 3:18); and the separation between righteous and wicked at the judgment seat of the Lord (Matt. 24:51; 25:32,41,46).

"According to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law" — The margin renders the verb in the singular, "is written", the reference being to the covenant rather than the curses.

A Curse Upon The Land If Israel Breaks The Covenant — vv. 22-28

The root of wickedness, referred to in v. 18, and which might well affect a family or

which Yahweh hath laid upon it" — Instead of sicknesses, the margin, following the Hebrew has *wherewith Yahweh hath made it sick*. In complete fulfilment of these verses, when Israel was banished from the land it fell into disuse and neglect, and into a state of aridity. In Leviticus 26:34,35,43, Moses warned that if the people proved disobedient, they would be driven from their inheritance, and the land would enjoy a sabbath rest.

VERSE 23

"And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which Yahweh overthrew in His anger, and in His wrath" — Israel is warned that the land which then was described as "flowing with milk and honey", will not only be neglected, but afflicted. It, like its disobedient people, will be subjected to a curse. It would become like the land surrounding the area of Sodom and Gomorrah: completely arid. This, indeed, became the state of the land when the people went into dispersion after the Roman invasion. The trees were cut down for purposes of war, and erosion took over to make the land extremely barren. During the era of Turkish domination, a tax was placed on trees, the effect of which was to denude the land even more. Areas such as the valley of Esdraelon, were afflicted by swampy conditions, that bred malaria, and made the cultivation extremely dangerous for any who might undertake to cultivate it. Israelites who returned to the land half a century ago have had literally to restore its fertility. They have had to replant trees, drain swamps, and even top-soil areas where erosion had exposed bare rock. Today, a vast difference exists between the land that has been cultivated by returning Israelites, and those parts under Arab control, that remain neglected. Moses' warning in the verses before us has been vindicated by the condition into which the land was reduced.

VERSE 24

"Even all nations shall say, wherefore hath Yahweh done thus unto this land" — See this warning repeated in 1 Kings 9:8-9. It is significant that this statement is not made conditional. Moses proclaims it as a prophecy. He predicts an Apostasy, not merely of individuals, families, or tribes

a tribe as expressed in vv. 20-21, becomes the source of infection to the whole nation, so that the tone of Moses' address changes from warning to prediction. The verses reveal the condition to which the land will be reduced whilst the nation as a whole is separated unto evil and banished from its precincts.

VERSE 22

"So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far country, shall say, when they see the plagues of the land, and the sicknesses but the nation as a whole, and the punishment which would be outpoured in consequence of it. He proclaims what Gentiles shall see, say, and question.

"What meaneth the heat of this great anger?" — The Gentiles shall recognise the state of the people and the land as the punishment of God. The words describe such emotion as Moses manifested when faced with the stubbornness of Pharaoh (see Exod. 11:8). The land suffered as described. In spite of the efforts of Israelis today it has not recovered its former fertility — far from it! Israel entered a land that was figuratively "flowing with milk and honey". But that same land, through human neglect, and denied the fructifying rain of heaven, became barren and harsh. A traveller in the Middle East about 150 years ago is reported to have commented: "From whence proceed such melancholy revolutions? For what cause is the fortune of these countries so strikingly changed? Why are so many cities destroyed? Why is not that ancient population reproduced and perpetuated? A mysterious God exercises His incomprehensible judgments. He has doubtless pronounced a secret curse against the land. He has struck with a curse the present race of men in revenge of past generations". So the misfortunes that have befallen Israel as a nation, and the land of its fertility, have caused men to consider the evidence of scripture.

The state of the land has greatly changed in modern times. The Israelis, in spite of incredible hardship, and by constant labour, have brought a measure of fertility to it. Millions of trees have been planted, orange groves flourish, fruit orchards, banana groves, fields of waving corn, have been established. This has been brought about by careful cultivation, by the hard work of rooting out huge boulders, and replacing them with top

soil. How much more will the land be blessed when Yahweh restores it to its full fertility in the age to come! Then the fullness of His promises will be apparent, and the words of the prophets will be fulfilled as completely as have the curses of Moses: "Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the trader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith Yahweh thy God" (Amos 9:13-15). The fulfilment of the curses because of the disobedience of Israel, provides witness to the assurance that the blessings of the prophets will be experienced again in the land.

VERSE 25

"Then men shall say, because they have forsaken the covenant of Yahweh God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt" — The folly of Israel in departing from the covenant of the living God has been made obvious through the ages. See Isa. 24:6-7; 47:6; Ezek. 39:23-29. For a summary outlining the cause of Israel's dispersion see 2 Chron. 36:14-17; Isa. 24:5; Jer. 22:8-9. Notice also, that the covenant referred to, was the one made with the children of Israel when they were "brought forth out of the land of Egypt". This is further evidence that the covenant referred to in the book of Deuteronomy, is not a new covenant in addition to the one made at Sinai, but is a re-affirmation of it.

VERSE 26

"For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom He had not given unto them" — See Deut. 4:19; Jer. 19:3-13; 44:2-6.

VERSE 27

"And the anger of Yahweh was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book" — See the comment of Daniel in his prayer (Dan. 9:11-14).

VERSE 28

"And Yahweh rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day" — See the expressions of 1 Kings 14:15; 2 Chron. 7:20; Luke 21:23-24. Yahweh rooted the people of Israel out of the land because of their wickedness but it is His intention, in fulfilment of the covenant made with David, to thoroughly "plant them" that "they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more" (2 Sam. 7:10). The promise is "neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime". Zechariah adds his witness: "Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited" (Zech. 14:11). It is interesting to note that in the pleas of Daniel and Ezra (See Dan. 9:7; Ezra 9:7) the very expression of this verse, as it is this day, is used.

An Exhortation To Keep The Law — v. 29

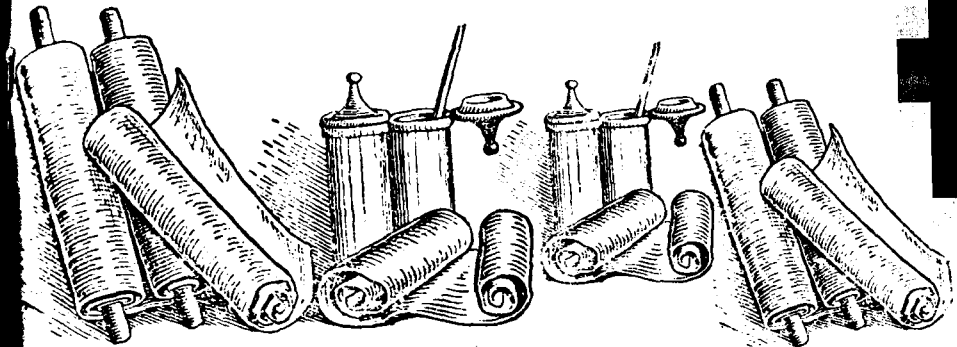
As an incentive to keep the Law, Israel is urged to study it.

VERSE 29

"The secret things belong unto Yahweh our God" — These things are the future intentions of Yahweh. He has not revealed all the details concerning the methods He will use to restore and rehabilitate His people. He is to give them a heart transplant, by replacing the heart of stone with one of flesh more easily malleable. The means by which this will be done are stated in the scripture, but are beyond the comprehension of human thought (Ezek. 36:26). We can be assured that everything that He has predicted will come to pass, even though the means whereby it is to be brought about may be beyond our comprehension.

"But those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children for ever" — The things that are revealed, comprise the outline of His purpose as recorded in His revelation. They are revealed unto us, and by study and meditation we can make them part of our mental selves. See Psa. 78:2-7; Matt. 11:27-30; Rom. 16:25-26.

"That we may do all the words of this law" — The responsibility of believers is to live by what is contained in the revelation of Yahweh. In His word He has stated His purpose, commandments, and covenants. Believers are called upon to take hold of these things, and apply them in acts of obedience and devotedness in worship unto Him. There are some things that are very difficult for flesh to comprehend, but in the light of the fulfilment of much of what He has already predicted, confidence can be placed in Him to fulfil all that He has promised. In addition to the punishments He warned the people He would bring upon them (the fulfilment of which history reveals) Moses and the prophets also speak of the restoration and conversion of the nation (see Ezek. 37:21-28). The Spirit-word will be active among the people of Israel (Ezek. 36:25-27; 37:1-14; Zech. 12:10). The basis of all this will be the good pleasure of Yahweh in regard to His covenant (See Isa. 43:25; Ezek. 16:60-63; 36:21-23,32). There will be a literal "resurrection from the dead" for Israel after the spirit (Rom. 11:15) and a political resurrection for Israel after the flesh (Ezek. 37:1-14). The process by which this shall be brought about, comprises some of the "secret things", which Yahweh has reserved within His own counsel. We accept them in faith, without being able to understand all the means whereby they will be brought about.



CHAPTER THIRTY

3. DIVINE MERCY IN SPITE OF SHORTCOMINGS

This chapter comprises the Third Part of the Fourth Discourse of Deuteronomy. The key thought is that of Choice. They shall have life who choose it. Those who come short of life and happiness must blame themselves for it. They would have had it if they had chosen communion with God (See vv. 15,19). Israel has never yet possessed the land under the unconditional Abrahamic covenant, nor ever possessed the whole of the land promised the patriarch (Gen. 15:18). The fulfilment of that covenant awaits the coming of Christ the King. However, the Chapter before us shows that in spite of the cursings that shall follow the blessings (for Moses knew that they were inevitable through weakness of the flesh), Divine mercy is always available for whosoever applies for it in the way appointed and will ultimately establish the nation in the land. Therefore, in common with the other sections of Deuteronomy 28 to 30, this part becomes prophetic of Yahweh's future intentions with the nation as promised to Abraham; it foreshadows the final restoration of Israel and the Millennium.

The Chapter is divisible into three parts:

- 1. Divine mercy promised the repentant — vv. 1-10*
- 2. The terms of the Covenant made easily assessible — vv. 11-14;*
- 3. An Exhortation to seek Life and Goodness — vv. 15-20.*

The fact that these words are predictive shows that whilst the New Covenant supercedes the Old, it is in the sense of fulfilling rather than nullifying it. The Old Covenant is based upon the New, that is, upon the Promises made to Abraham. Christ not only fulfilled the terms of the Law in that he manifested perfect obedience, but he will also fulfil its prophetic requirements. He will bring about the Restoration, and will change the heart of Israel, so making the nation worthy of the inheritance. Meanwhile, the appeal is to individuals to seek the way of life.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Great Mercies Promised The Repentant — vv. 1-10

After the outpouring of curses there will follow great blessings. The people will respond to the invitation to return, and will be gathered back into the land. Their stony heart of unbelief will be removed, and their attitude towards God will change. Therefore, even when the curse is felt to the full, it will not amount to final rejection. Indeed, Yahweh will, by the discipline of suffering, lead the people to repentance, in order to bestow the promised blessings.

VERSE 1

“And it shall come to pass” — So clearly did Yahweh foresee the way in which the people would use the freewill granted them (see Psa. 81:11-14) that the warning of shortlived blessings and more extensive cursings became prophetic.

“When all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee” — Moses' words are unmistakably predictive. The people would experience both blessings and cursings. The first were experienced when through obedience under the ministration of Joshua and others, the people enjoyed the goodness of Yahweh; the cursings followed their apostasy from the way of goodness.

*“And thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither Yahweh thy God hath driven thee” — In the lands of their dispersion the people would meditate their fallen state, recognise the cause of their disgrace, and, as in Egypt, cry unto Yahweh for help (see 1 Kings 8:47-53). Yet Yahweh hath not cast off His people (Rom. 11:1), and will open His ears to their cry. A token fulfilment of this has taken place in the current restoration of the people, and revival of the nation. Divine help has been extended the people, even though “blindness in part” continues with Israel (Rom. 11:25). It is true that Israel remains “in ignorance of the Messiahship of Jesus, and the hope of salvation in him” (*Elpis Israel* p. 441), but that was also the state of the nation in Egypt when, in unbelief of the status of Moses, they cried unto God and He sent Moses the second time to deliver them. It should never be overlooked, that Yahweh styles the people in the land at the time of Gog's descent upon it, as “My people of Israel” (Ezek. 38:16), and that at least a “third” of those therein will be saved for the Kingdom (Zech. 13:8-9). Therefore, we are liv-*

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ing in the epoch of this latter-day political miracle. In the amazing incidents that have taken place to establish Israel as a nation among the Gentiles, the arm of Yahweh is seen at work.

VERSE 2

“And shalt return unto Yahweh thy God, and shalt obey His voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul” — It is significant that the Chapter refers to three returns of the people (vv. 2,3,5). These provide for: 1. The return of Israel to the land (vv. 2-5; cp. Isa. 11 11-16; Ezek. 37:21-22). 2. The return of Israel to Yahweh through conversion (vv. 2,6,8. See Jer. 3:14-17; Ezek. 36:16-37; Zech. 12:10-13:1; Mal. 4:3-6; Rom. 11:25-29); 3. The return of Divine favour to Israel (v. 3. See Jer. 31:31-40; Hos. 3:5; 6:1-2; 14:1-9; Joel 2:21-27; Zech. 12:10). See references to the children returning in Isa. 65:20-23; Jer. 31:17).

VERSE 3

*“That then Yahweh will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee” — In such a grammatical context as this verse expresses, the term *shuw* does not signify merely that God will cause the people to physically return to the land; but will bring about a spiritual revival as well. It is often used in a way expressive of repentance on the part of the people to God, or of His care for them (see Ezek. 14:6). In the verse before us, the expression (being in Qal) can denote the action of Yahweh towards the people of Israel. The *Septuagint* has, “will heal thy iniquities”. The words of Moses comprise a consoling prediction that Israel's woes will lead to Israel's betterment, and indeed, that Yahweh will extend Himself to convert and heal them. The Psalmist declares that there is a set time to favour Zion (Psa. 102:13), and this is related to “forgiveness, healing and restoration” (Psa. 103:3; 147:2-3). It seems that Moses anticipated this “set time”. The modern revival of Israel provides a token fulfilment of this, though the fullness of it will not take place until Elijah is sent forth to educate and comfort the people (Mal. 4:5-6). It is an amazing fact, however, that the land seems to have an impact for good upon those Jews who return even today. Wedded to the land, compelled to make sacrifices in luxury living to establish themselves there, they tend to lose*

those characteristics that cause them to be despised among the Gentiles.

"And will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither Yahweh thy God hath scattered thee" — The restoration of a portion of Israel under Zerubbabel and Joshua (Ezra 1,2) does not answer to the requirements of this prediction. In fact, the prophecy still awaits fulfilment though a "partial and primary restoration of Jews before the manifestation of Christ" (*Elpis Israel* p. 441) has taken place. In N.T. times, the people were still "scattered abroad" (James 1:1).

VERSE 4

"If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven" — This describes the state of Israel in dispersion, for the people are given the title of "outcasts" (See Isa. 16:3-4; 27:13; 56:8; Jer. 30:17; Mic. 4:6). The words are cited in Neh. 1:9. The term "utmost parts of heaven" relates to all lands under Gentile rule, such as the "heavens" of Babylonish power (Isa. 13:1,10). Moses' prediction is also referred to in Matt. 24:31. It states that the Son of man "will send his angels" to "gather his elect" (a term frequently used in the O.T. for Israel as the elect nation) from "one end of heaven to the other". Who are the angels? Not those of heaven, for the ministration of the "age to come" will not be in their hands (Heb. 2:5), but to the saints then "made equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36). They will be sent forth under the superintendence of Elijah to proclaim to those Jews remaining outside the Land of Promise that their Messiah has returned; and to gather them back to the land. A summary of the Redemption of Israel is set out below:

Redemption Of Israel: A Summary

- * General restoration: Jer. 33:7-9; Ezek. 36:21-38.
- * Elijah supervises the work: Mal. 4:5-6.
- * The Exhortation of Elijah: Isa. 40:1-8; Jer. 3:12-4:2; 43:25-26.
- * Israelites sorrow over their past blindness: Hos. 8:10.
- * They willingly respond: Psa. 110:3.
- * Difficulties accompanied on the return: Ezek. 20:33-38.
- * New Covenant given: Jer. 31:31-38; Rom. 11:23.
- * They enjoy mighty victories

against hundering enemies: Mic. 7:14-17.

* Some nations assist in their return: Isa. 18:1-2; 60:9; 66:20; Zeph. 3:10.

* The route of the return: Isa. 11:11,16; 27:12-13; Hos. 2:14-19; 11:11.

* Tribal cantonments in the land: Ezek. 48.

* Restored to covenant favour in a national ceremony: Ezek. 43.

* Final status: Amos 9:11; Acts 3:20-21; 15:16-17.

* Israel becomes the channel of divine blessing to all nations: Zech. 8:13,23; 14:16,20-21.

"From thence will Yahweh thy God gather thee, and from whence will He fetch thee" — See Jer. 29:14; 31:10; 32:37; Ezek. 34:12-13; 36:24; 37:21-22. To "gather" and "fetch" implies first a gathering together of the people, and then a leading of them back into the land. They will evidently be brought back in small groups (see Jer. 3:14) and then assembled either in the north by the River Euphrates, or in the south in Egypt south of the Red Sea, and then from those two directions, brought into the land (Isa. 27:12-13). Those who enter from the north will follow the steps of Abraham from Haran to the land; those who are assembled in Egypt will repeat the wanderings of Israel under Moses (see Hos. 2:14-19).

VERSE 5

"And Yahweh thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed" — Evidently the assembled Israelites will move from the north and the south to converge at the place where Joshua led the people over Jordan into the land; and from there they will see "the valley of Achor (trouble) as the door of hope" (Hos. 2:13).

"And thou shalt possess it" — They will be separated into their various tribes, and will occupy the land as apportioned in Ezekiel 48.

"And He will do thee good" — See Rom. 11:22; and Nehemiah's prayer seeking a manifestation of the "goodness of Yahweh" (Neh. 9:25,35).

"And multiply thee above thy fathers" — One commentator in doubt has observed: "If there is to be an increase in the number of Jews when gathered out of their dispersion into the land from all the

world, above the number of their fathers, and therefore above the number of the Israelites in the times of Solomon and the first Monarchs of the two kingdoms, Palestine will never furnish room enough for a nation multiplied like this!" However, a wider extent of land than that previously limited to Palestine will be allocated the nation of Israel in the Age to come (Gen. 15:18; Psa. 72:8). Isaiah predicts that the previous borders will be too limited to accommodate the great increase then seen (Isa. 49:20). They will be greatly extended beyond the confines of Palestine, to include the territory promised to Abraham: an extent of land never as yet possessed by Israel (Obad. 17-21).

VERSE 6

"And Yahweh thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed" — Circumcision is the token of the covenant (see notes on Gen. 17:10-14); and true circumcision requires not merely the physical cutting off of flesh, but that of the heart (Rom. 3:28-29). A truly circumcised believer does the will of God instinctively, without constant prompting or prodding because "the work of the law is written in his heart" (Rom. 2:14). However, circumcision is a painful operation, particularly for an adult. Therefore, to circumcise the heart of Israel is to subject the nation to some anxiety and pain, so as to humble it, and cause it to seek Yahweh in its extremity. The latter day "time of trouble" (Dan. 12:1) will involve Israel as well as other nations, so that Zechariah predicts that "two parts therein (in the land) shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein". That third will respond to the appeal of God and proclaim: "Yahweh is my God" (Zech. 13:8-9). The word used by Zechariah in regard to the two-thirds to be "cut off" is *karath* which, whilst it does signify to destroy, is also used to describe the process of circumcision (Exod. 4:25). It also is the word used to describe the cutting in twain of a sacrificial victim to establish a covenant. Far better, therefore, for Israel to voluntarily accept Yahweh as exhorted in Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4,14 than to be compelled to do so by so painful a process as described by the prophet. Figurative circumcision is essential to salvation (Rom. 2:28-29), and this is accomplished in Christ Jesus (Col. 3:11). At present Israel is uncircumcised in heart though still practising circumcision of the flesh (Jer. 9:26), but the circumcision of the future is essential to bring them within

the compass of the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34). The spirit-word of truth will change their hearts, taking away the stony heart of unbelief, and replacing it with a heart of flesh capable of being circumcised (Ezek. 36:26-28).

"To love Yahweh thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" — Circumcision of the heart manifests itself in performance of the will of God: a first principle requirement of the Law (See Deut. 6:4-5). Figuratively, Israel will be subjected to a new heart transplant (see Ezek. 11:19-20; 36:26-27; Rom. 11:26).

VERSE 7

"And Yahweh thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee" — Jeremiah warns that if Yahweh's people and city are to be disciplined by trouble, the Gentiles will not escape (Jer. 25:29). Armageddon will see Israel reduced, but its aftermath will see it revived, and will witness divine judgment against those nations that refuse to respond to the ultimatum that will go forth from Jerusalem following the overthrow of Gog (Psalm 2:10-12; Isa. 14:32; Rev. 14:6-10). They will experience the judgments of Yahweh until they submit (see Num. 24:17-23; Isa. 10:12; 14:1-27; 60:18; Jer. 50:33-34; 51:24-26; Obad. 10,15,16; Zech. 12:3-9; Rev. 19:1-5).

VERSE 8

"And thou shalt return and obey the voice of Yahweh, and do all His commandments which I command thee this day" — See note v. 2. Yahweh will effect this reform in Israel by the painful process of circumcising their heart, that is, by subjecting them to discipline (see Jer. 30:5-8; Prov. 16:1; Isa. 1:25-26; Jer. 32:39-40; Ezek. 11:19-20; 36:27; Rom. 11:26-27). This is certain of fulfilment (see Jer. 31:35-40; 33:20-26). The Law of Moses will again be imposed (see Mal. 4:4), though it will be modified to apply to the conditions of the Millennium, and Israel will fulfil the requirements of the covenant of grace into which it will be incorporated and to which its people will respond (Jer. 31:31-34). Grace will enable them to fulfil the requirements of the Law even as it enables believers to do so today (Rom. 3:31). The Law of Moses to be re-imposed, however, will be subject to amendment, as is necessary to provide for a world-wide observa-

tion of its terms rather than a limited national involvement. All nations are to be made subject to it (Zech. 14:16), and this will require some changes. Some of the amendments are expressed in the alterations to the festivals, offerings and sacrifices outlined in Ezekiel's Temple prophecy (Ezek. chs. 40-48). But this does not mean a change of Law but a change in the Law. There were amendments made to it when Israel entered the land. For example, the Festival of Tabernacles was not kept during the wilderness wanderings, Cities of Refuge were not then provided, and throughout Deuteronomy the Law was modified, or extended to provide for the new conditions that were about to be experienced when the people entered the land. So, also, with the Millennium. The changes this will bring about will require some alteration to the Law of Moses, which, however, will still remain the basic Law of the times. Isaiah predicts that "out of Zion shall go forth the Law" (Isa. 2:3), that Law being the one with which he was familiar, the Law of Mt. Sinai. Then, however, as now, it will be on the basis of a covenant of grace.

VERSE 9

"And Yahweh thy God will make thee plenteous in every good work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good" — See Lev. 26:4-6, 9-11; Deut. 28:11; Psa. 72:16; Isa. 65:21-22; Amos 9:11-15 etc. Nehemiah prayed that Yahweh may remember him for "good" (Neh. 13:31). His prayer is the last recorded prayer in the Old Testament. It can be joined to the last recorded prayer in the New Testament: "Even so, come Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). And the bridge linking both prayers is the exhortation of Paul: "Behold the goodness and severity of God; towards thee goodness if . . . otherwise ye also shall be cut off" (Rom. 11:22). In the past, Israel experienced goodness, but that came to an end with the disobedience of the people; but in these verses further good is promised.

"For Yahweh will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers" — Contrast Deut. 28:63.

VERSE 10

"If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Yahweh thy God, to keep His commandments and His statutes" — Instead of "if", Dr. Young renders this as *for* implying

certainly of fulfilment. See Jer. 31:35-40; 33:20-26. The future of Israel is not a matter of doubt, nor does it depend upon the fickle response of flesh. Yahweh will see that the terms are carried out and His promises fulfilled.

"Which are written in this book of the law" — See Mal. 4:4, and notes above.

"And if thou turn unto Yahweh thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul" — See note v. 2; Deut. 4:29. The promise is conditional, though Yahweh will see that the conditions are carried out.

The Terms of the Covenant Are Easily Accessible — vv. 11-14

Successful and joyful possession of the land depends upon obedience to the terms of the covenant. Those terms have been made known by the revelation of Yahweh through Moses. Being easily accessible, true Israelites are expected to avail themselves of them, and by the study of the Word develop a faith that will enable them to please Yahweh. Paul quotes the words of this section of Deuteronomy as being expressive of the "righteousness which is by faith" (Rom. 10:6).

VERSE 11

"For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee" — Rotherham renders this: "It is not too wonderful", that is, it is not too difficult to be understood; it can be comprehended. Cp. Isa. 45:19; 48:16.

"Neither is it far off" — It is not inaccessible. The heart might refuse it; the mouth might disown it; yet, in fact, Yahweh had made it as simple as possible, consistent with His purpose to change believers by His Word. Man has himself to blame if he does not grasp its meaning and obey its precepts.

VERSE 12

"It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?" — These words, to v. 14, are cited generally by Paul in Rom. 10:6-8 to demonstrate the righteousness which is by faith; for, as he comments in context to the quotation, "faith cometh by hearing the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Faith always recognised the need of a Redeemer who, as the "seed of the woman" (the manifestation of Yahweh — Gen. 3:15), must be from above. But was it to be left to man to provide the impossible in accomplishing

this? Would one have to ascend into heaven to bring such a manifestation down to earth? No! God would accomplish it. His Word is the sanctifying power by which it can be done (John 17:17); and that Word had been sent down from heaven. Christ, the promised Redeemer, the complete manifestation of Yahweh, was the Word made flesh. He was "from above" (John 6:38) in the manner described to his mother Mary (Luke 1:34-35). The goodness of Yahweh as exhibited in the Truth, was revealed, *first* in the Word from above ministered by Moses unto the people, and *ultimately* in the Lord who was that Word made flesh (John 1:14). One did not have to ascend into heaven to learn of God; he can read of Him in the Word, or see Him revealed in the Son as recorded in the Gospels.

The Law clearly shows flesh for what it is: that it falls short of the righteousness of Yahweh (Deut. 9:4-6; Rom. 7:7). It therefore revealed the need for a Redeemer who would provide the means of conquering sin (through forgiveness) and its consequence (death); so it acted as a schoolmaster leading unto Christ (Gal. 3:24). The need that the Law revealed would be satisfied by the provision of the Seed as proclaimed in the promises made in Eden, to Abraham, and to Moses in "the prophet" whose coming he predicted (Deut. 18:18-22). No need, therefore, to ascend to heaven to obtain that which Yahweh will condescend to provide. Only blindness of heart would hide those facts from view.

VERSE 13

"Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?" — The term "over the sea" describes a place inaccessible to Israelites, and would require one descending thereunto to obtain what was wanted. Paul quotes, or interprets, the phrase by rendering it: "who shall descend into the deep?" and explains, "that is, to bring Christ up again from the dead" (Rom. 10:7). In comprehending Paul's use of Moses' words, let it be recognised, that the word he used is *abyss*. Bro. Thomas, in expounding upon the term "the abyss" in *Eureka* states:

"Abyss is frequently used in the Greek version (of the O.T.) as synonymous with sea. The following passages show this sense of the word *abussos*. In Job 30:30,

'the face of the *abyss* is frozen'; 41:31: 'He maketh the *abyss* to boil like a pot: He maketh the sea like a pot of ointment'. In Isa. 63:13: 'Where is He that led them through the *abyss* by the hand of Moses?' In Rom. 10:7, *abyss* is used by Paul in asking, 'Who shall descend into the *abyss*?' in the C.V. deep; and he tells us what sense he attached to the word by letting us know the purpose of the descent — 'that is,' says he, 'to bring Christ again from among dead ones, *ek nekron*'. This is an *abyss* which is 'never full'; still bottom can be reached when there shall be no more death, and the grave shall be destroyed. In this use of the word, *abyss* does not signify 'the invisible receptacle of departed spirits', but the common receptacle of dead bodies; or more strictly speaking, the aggregate of dead bodies themselves. These are a sea of death, which when living were 'a troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt' (Isa. 57:20)." (*Eureka* vol. 3, p. 85 — *Logos* Edition).

According to Paul's understanding of Moses' words, therefore, "heaven" in the verse before us relates to the origin of the promised Redeemer in that the Spirit descended from heaven to supervise the conception and birth of the Lord; and "sea" represents the deep, pit, or grave. Only Yahweh could accomplish what the verse requires; only He could by His spirit arrange for the conception and birth of the Lord; and later, His resurrection from the dead. No mortal man could effect either, and therefore salvation is entirely dependent upon Divine intervention. The Word proclaimed and predicted the coming of this one, but faith is needed to understand and believe it. The Word was there, to be hearkened and heeded. To "hear and do it" demanded works of faith (see Rom. 10:17), and only by such could the Law be fulfilled (Rom. 3:31). Faith takes the believer beyond the Law to grace.

VERSE 14

"But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it" — When the Word is in a believer's mouth and heart; when he not only speaks of it but also ponders its message, and thinks according to its teaching, he will be motivated by faith which produces works (James 2:17-26). Moses, therefore, is impressing upon the people that the only way they can acceptably keep the Law before God is through faith. So Paul comments: that in such believers "the

righteousness of faith speaketh" (Rom. 10:17). Justification by faith demands that the works of faith be manifested (see Rom. 2:13; Jam. 2:24). Therefore, the terms of the New Covenant are expressed in the Old (see Psa. 147:19-20; Isa. 45:19; Jer. 31:33; Rom. 16:25-26). In quoting Moses' word Paul does not do so verbatim. He *interprets* them and applies them to Christ as the Word made flesh. In context therewith, he also quoted Lev. 18:5 and refers to the "righteousness which is of the Law"; but in doing so (see Rom. 10:5) he does not interpret Leviticus as such, but as the Jewish legalists of his day were incorrectly doing so. Their approach to the Law was wrong. In fact, Leviticus, with its emphasis on sacrifice and priesthood demonstrated that flesh of itself is inadequate, and the sacrificial provisions provided were typical of the true sacrifice and priest that would come. The Jewish legalists did not see it like that, and incorrectly rested their case on Leviticus 18:5. Paul answered with Deut. 30:11-14 which teaches that it is the Word in heart and mouth that motivates action to perform the Law. Brother J. Carter comments: "The Law could thus give life, but not in itself and by itself. It was the divinely arranged medium for the manifestation of faith, but it was not designed to give life in the way that the Jews understood the purpose of it being given to them. This is seen by the further teaching of Moses, through whom they received the law" (*Epistle to Romans* p. 90).

Whilst the New Covenant supercedes the Old, it is in the sense of fulfilling it rather than nullifying it. Christ is the fulfillment of it (Matt. 5:17; Rom. 3:31).

An Exhortation To Seek Life and Goodness — vv. 15-20

In this sub-section Moses reveals the benefits of obedience. Yahweh makes clear the alternatives; it is for man to make the decision recognising that the consequences are certain.

VERSE 15

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil" — See Deut. 11:26-27; 32:47; Mark 16:16; John 3:16; Rom. 11:22; 2 Cor. 2:16.

VERSE 16

"In that I command thee this day to love Yahweh thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His stat-

utes and His judgments" — See notes on Deut. 6:5; 10:12-13. To love Yahweh in the way expressed is the "first and great commandment" upon which, with the second which extended that love to one's neighbour, "hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40). Love, explained John, is walking after His commandments (2 John 6). The manifestation of such love, declared Paul, was "the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10).

"That thou mayest live and multiply" — Long national life and prosperity depended upon obedience of the law.

"And Yahweh thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it" — The form of blessing is outlined in Deut. 28:1-14.

VERSE 17

"But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them" — The secret hankering after Gentile worship, is a sin discrediting to Yahweh, which stems from "an evil heart of unbelief".

VERSE 18

"I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go and possess it" — The verb "denounce" is better rendered *declare*. Continued possession of the land depended upon Israel's obedience. The nation would go through a form of baptism when it passed over Jordan, but that would not mean that it would continue in possession of the land if the people failed to obey the terms of their tenancy: the Law. So also with baptism into Christ. Though it introduces the candidate to a relationship with Yahweh and with Christ, such a state must not be presumed upon: eternal life will not be granted in the absence of justification by works of faith (Rom. 2:13).

VERSE 19

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you" — Moses summons heaven and earth to stand as witnesses to the truth of his words. Such terms are frequently used figuratively for the rulers and people of Israel (see Deut. 4:26; 31:28; 32:1). In Isa. 1:2 they clearly denote the Government and the People of Israel (cp. v. 10 See Isa. 65:17-18).

"That I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" — The way to life is to love Yahweh in the manner described in v. 16. This "has promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). The choice is ours. See Psa. 119:30,111,173; Isa. 56:4-5; Luke 10:42 and ct. Prov. 1:29; 8:36.

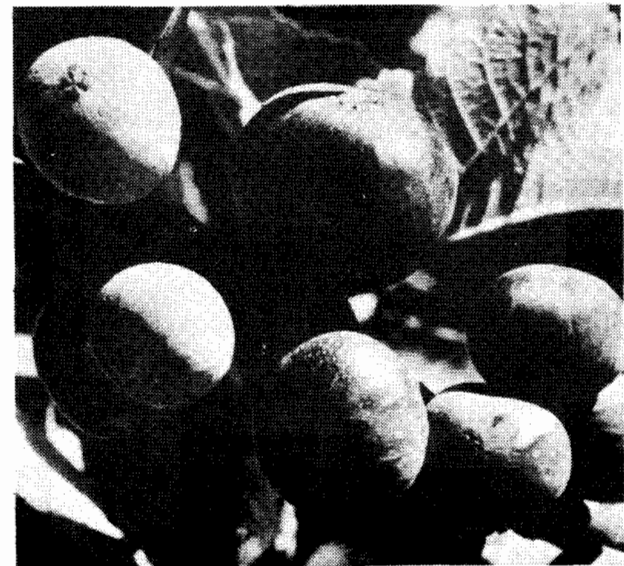
VERSE 20

"That thou mayest love Yahweh thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice and that thou mayest cleave unto Him" — To love is to obey. See 2 John 6. The Hebrew *shama* rendered "obey" signifies to hear intelligently with the object of obeying. The verse therefore sets out what true Israelites should aim to do: love, hear to obey, and cleave. Yahweh had taken the people to Himself as His bride (Isa. 54:5; Ezek. 16:8); and these are the requirements of a bride to her husband (see Eph. 5:22-24). The term "cleave" is first used in Scripture to describe the state of marriage

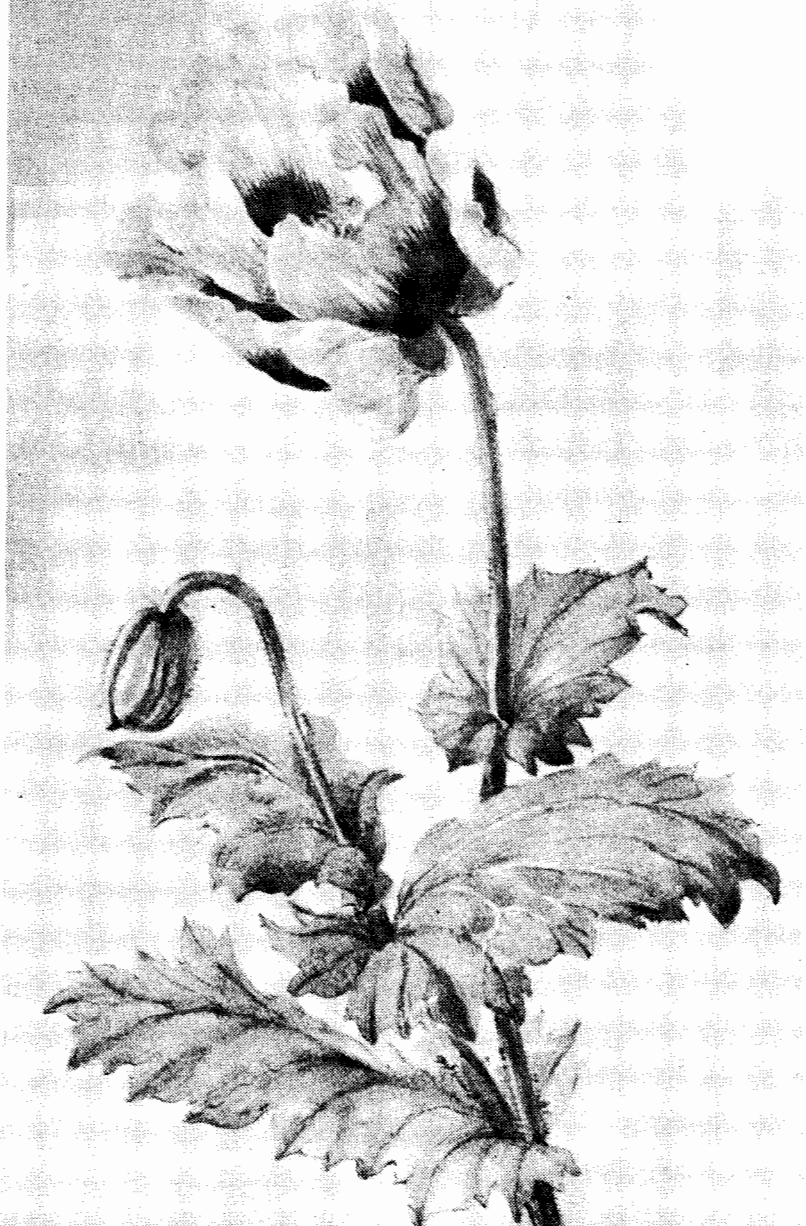
(Gen. 2:24). It is a term that denotes to so join as to be never separated in life.

"For He is thy life, and the length of thy days" — National continuance and length of occupancy in the land are dependant upon the loving obedience of the bride, otherwise she will be driven from the home (Deut. 24:1).

"That thou mayest dwell in the land which Yahweh swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them" — Fleshly relationship with the patriarchs did not automatically guarantee their descendants an inheritance in the land, as was demonstrated by the failure of the old generation. See also the exhortation of Paul: Romans 11:22, and cp. Deut. 4:40; 5:16; 11:8-9. The promises made to Abraham will be fulfilled without doubt, but personal participation therein depends upon the measure of obedient faith shown by each individual. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will receive the inheritance promised them, so that the expression of Moses guarantees for them a resurrection to eternal life.



The nutritious and honey-sweet fig, a product of the Promised Land witnessed to it as a land "flowing with milk and honey".



"Lest there be among you a root that beareth gall . . ." (Deut. 29:18). "Their grapes are grapes of gall . . ." (Deut. 32:32). The Hebrew word is *Rosh* (see also Ezek. 38:2), and in this context denotes the Poppy. The roots of this flower are hidden in the soil; its bloom is most attractive; but from the poppy comes the drug opium that dulls the mind towards that which is morally right and true. Israel was warned of the evil effects of a doctrine that may seem attractive to the flesh, but which would act as a drug. The teaching of Russian Communism has such an effect, turning mankind from God. "Rosh" literally signifies head and is identified with the Poppy because of its large head.

DEUTERONOMY:
DIVINE FAITHFULNESS
IN DISCIPLINING AND DELIVERING

Discourse Five:

***COUNSEL —
MOSES' FINAL
WORDS OF
ADVICE***

Ch. 31:1-23

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

MOSES' LAST COUNSEL

This Fifth Discourse is limited to Chapter 31:1-23. It records Moses' last counsel to the people, the priests and the Levites. Sadly it concludes with a prophetic warning of Israelitish apostasy. The Discourse sets forth counsel (v. 1), and gives words of encouragement (vv. 6-8). It shows that though grand leaders, like Moses, may depart the scene, Yahweh will provide others capable of carrying on the work, if the people remain true to their trust. Therefore, despite the limitations resting on Moses (vv. 1-2), assurances of success are given (vv. 3-6), and in the appointment of Joshua a leader provided to continue the work begun (vv. 7-8). However, as success in its fulness depends upon the faithful obedience of the people (vv. 9-13), there is need for them to be on their guard against personal failure. As in the case of the Gentile Ecclesias, warnings of perilous times and of apostasy are given (vv. 16-21). The Chapter concludes with the charge given by Moses to Joshua (vv. 22-23).

Moses informs the people that he is not permitted to enter the Land of Promise, so that they must be led thereinto by another appointee: Joshua the Son of Nun. Both the people and their new leader are exhorted to faith and courage, with the assurance that Yahweh will be an unfailing source of help if they manifest those qualities. The discourse is interrupted by an incident in which open endorsement of Joshua's appointment is made by a divine theophany, and a very solemn warning is given of coming apostasy and its consequences. The section concludes with a charge given to Joshua. The Chapter is divisible into the following sections:

1. The people are exhorted to faith and courage (vv. 1-6);
2. Joshua is appointed and charged (vv. 7-8);
3. The Law is delivered to the Priests for instruction of the people (vv. 9-13);
4. Yahweh gives warning of coming apostasy (vv. 14-21);
5. Moses' charge to Joshua (vv. 22-23).

The final verse introduces the Sixth Discourse of Deuteronomy.

The People Exhorted — vv. 1-6

Moses, recognising that his death is imminent, and that he will not be able to lead the people into the land, calls upon them to manifest faith and courage. If they do so Yahweh will bless them in their war of conquest, as He helped them to win victories against Sihon and Og. Israel must not fear but reveal strength of character to conquer.

VERSE 1

"And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel" — This is the preamble to the Fifth Discourse of Deuteronomy.

VERSE 2

"And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day" — This day was evidently his birthday. His life was divided into three equal parts of forty years: the first in Egypt being educated to rule (Acts 7:22-23); the second in Midian, learning the principles of shepherding (Exod. 7:7); the third in the

wilderness, ruling and pasturing the people. If this was the day of Moses' birthday, it was also the day when he spake to the full assembly of the nation's representatives (Deut. 1:3), and the day of his death (Deut. 34:7). Moses' age covered the same period given to Noah for preaching (Gen. 6:3). In Biblical numerics 120, denotes a divinely appointed period of probation being made up of three forties.

"I can no more go out and come in" — The expression describes the work of a shepherd. See Psa. 77:20. Though Moses still retained full vigour (Deut. 34:7), he could feel the weakening effects of age, and recognised that this failing lessened his ability to effectively lead the people.

"Also Yahweh hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan" — See notes at Num. 20:12; 27:13; Deut. 3:27. This was the second reason he could not lead the people over Jordan: he was not permitted to do so.

VERSE 3

"Yahweh thy God, He will go over before thee" — Yahweh, as ever, would continue to lead the people as "the great Shepherd of Israel" (Psa. 77:20; 78:52-54; 80:1). This would be through the Angel of His presence (Exod. 23:20-23; Isa. 63:9).

"And He will destroy these nations from before thee and thou shalt possess them" — Through the appointed Angel in whom He had placed His name, Yahweh would obtain victory for Israel (Exod. 23:20-23; Josh. 5:13-15).

"And Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as Yahweh hath said" — Joshua was the Divine appointee to act as shepherd to Israel. See Psa. 78:56. His name means *Yah will save!*

VERSE 4

"And Yahweh shall do unto them as He did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them, whom He destroyed" — Israel need not fear the enemy, for the remarkable victories the people had experienced on the east of Jordan would be repeated on their entrance into the land. See Exod. 23:28-31; Num. 21:23-35; Deut. 2:33; 3:3-11,21; 7:2,16.

VERSE 5

"And Yahweh shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you" — This promise was conditional upon the people keeping the terms imposed by Yahweh. See Exod. 23:32-33; 34:12-16; Num. 33:52-56; Deut. 7:23-26; 20:16-17.

VERSE 6

"Be strong and of good courage" — This is the constant exhortation of the Word. See Josh. 1:6,7,9; 10:25; 1 Chron. 22:18; 28:10,20; 2 Chron. 32:7; Psa. 27:14; Isa. 43:1-5; Hag. 2:4; Zech. 8:13; 1 Cor. 16:13; Eph. 6:10; 2 Tim. 2:1. Throughout the ages it has been a rallying call, to stimulate flagging resolve. Whilst faith is necessary to please God (Heb. 11:6), determination and courage are necessary to motivate faith.

"Fear not, nor be afraid of them" — This is the keynote of Deuteronomy. See note Deut. 1:17.

"For Yahweh thy God, He it is that doth go with thee" — Confidence and courage were not to be motivated by the

flesh, but by the realisation that Israel could rely upon its God to assist.

"He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" — This assurance was repeated to Joshua (Josh. 1:5), and is cited by Paul (Heb. 13:5).

Joshua Confirmed As Successor to Moses — vv. 7-8

Moses officially appoints Joshua as his successor before the assembled representatives of Israel, and exhorts him in similar terms to those he has already addressed the people.

VERSE 7

"And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel" — See also Num. 27:23; Deut. 1:38. Joshua is officially presented before all Israel as successor to Moses.

"Be strong and of good courage" — See vv. 6,23.

"For thou must go with this people unto the land which Yahweh hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it" — The assurance of victory was the oath of Yahweh to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and His purpose in appointing Joshua to accomplish it.

VERSE 8

"And Yahweh, He it is that doth go before thee" — See v. 3; Deut. 9:3; Psa. 78:52-54. Though unseen, Yahweh was always present (Isa. 63:8-9). In these terms, Moses describes Yahweh as the great Shepherd of Israel (Psa. 80:1).

"He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee; fear not, neither be dismayed" — See these words repeated in Josh. 1:5; and used to encourage believers by Paul in Rom. 8:31; Heb. 13:6. If God be for us, who can (successfully) oppose us? Nevertheless we will experience circumstances calculated to cause dismay and fear; but they must be met in faith.

The Priests Publicly Commissioned — vv. 9-13.

Moses next turns to the priests and elders and commits to them the Law, obedience to which is a further element necessary to salvation. Accordingly, it is to be publicly read to the people at the end of every seven years, the Year of Release, at the Feast of Tabernacles.

VERSE 9

"And Moses wrote this law" — A copy of the Law was recorded for the use of the priests and elders so that the people might be properly instructed in the ways of Yahweh. See Num. 33:2; Deut. 31:22-24. The authority of Moses was constantly cited: Mark 10:3; 12:19,24-26; Luke 20:28; John 1:17,45; 5:46 etc.

"And delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh, and unto all the elders of Israel" — The Law was publicly presented to the religious and civil representatives of the people, for it comprised their national constitution. It was given to the priests that they might teach the people; and to the elders for it was their responsibility to see that it was administered.

VERSE 10

"And Moses commended them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release" — At the time appointed, at the end of every seventh year, see notes on Deut. 15:1,2,9. Whereas, in other years, it was obligatory only upon males to assemble together (Deut. 16:16), on the seventh year all Israel were to do so, as well as the stranger (see vv. 11-12). All who enjoyed the benefits of the covenant must be made aware of its obligations.

"In the feast of Tabernacles" — The Hebrew calendar provided for a religious year which commenced in Abib, the fifth month of the civil year. The civil year commenced with Tishri in which the festivals of Atonement and Tabernacles were celebrated. There would have been no sowing or reaping in the seventh year, but the Israelites would have been sustained by the goodness of Yahweh as a reward for their obedience to the Law. The seventh year being a Sabbatical year, was accounted a year of rest (Lev. 25:1-7), in which the land was not sown, nor the vines pruned. Yahweh promised that the harvest of the sixth year would supply the need for the seventh (Lev. 25:20-22).

It was therefore a very significant occasion, when the abundance of the natural harvest brought in would witness to Yahweh's goodness, and provide a vindication of His promise. Debtors, too, would thank Him for the provision of release. During that period, in the circumstances provided for under the Law, faithful Israelites lived off the land, in that

which it naturally produced, so that conditions in that seventh year (pointing forward to the millennium) would be like Eden restored, when the fruits of the field were freely provided as meat for Adam and Eve. How appropriate that the Law should be read at that time, so reminding Israelites of the requirements for a continuance of Divine goodness.

VERSE 11

"When all Israel is come to appear before Yahweh thy God in the place which He shall choose" — Unlike other times when it was obligatory only for males to appear at the Feast (Deut. 16:16), in the seventh year, after depending entirely upon Yahweh to provide the wherewithal to live, entire families were called together. The place being the central place of worship (Deut. 12:5).

"Thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing" — For instances where this was done, see 2 Kings 23:2; Neh. 8:1-3.

VERSE 12

"Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates" — A general assembly was called of all resident in the land, for the Law was the law of the land. The reference to "children" is particularly interesting, for in the Hebrew it is given in the singular number with the article as "the child", the word *taph* denoting a small child. The R.V. renders it the *little ones*. Why should the word be rendered in the singular in the Hebrew? Probably for emphasis, so that the young one of the family may not be overlooked. All were to be gathered together to hearken to the law read.

"That they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear Yahweh your God, and observe to do the words of this law" — Note the progression: hear, learn, fear and observe. This demands the closest concentration upon the reading of the Law. Moreover such a reading would occupy considerable time during which the congregation both aged and young was expected to pay attention. How different to modern practices when the emphasis is placed on comfort and brevity, and "the little one" is not expected to pay attention, but is given something whereby it may comfortably endure the time of meeting! For the transforming power of the Word, see Psa. 19:7-11; 34:11-14; John 5:39; 2

Tim. 3:15-17. For such an occasion, consider the reading of the Law by Ezra, and the length of time involved (Neh. 8:2-8). The urgency of the circumstances demanded the most attentive hearing.

VERSE 13

"And that their children, which have not known anything" — The Hebrew word is *sons*, but is generic of both sexes, and the expression "which have not known anything" implies children under the age of seven years who were not present at the previous Sabbatic reading. The Law is specific that the things of God should be taught to children at a very early age — in fact, the earlier the better. See Deut. 6:7; Psa. 78:4-8; Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:15. Samuel, when weaned, was taken to the Tabernacle by his mother, and commenced his education in the things of God (2 Sam. 1:24-28). It is claimed that in those days, weaning took place at a latter age than today; sometimes as late as between 3 and 5 years of age. Levites were weaned at 3 years old, for at that time they were granted a share of tithes (2 Chron. 31:16).

"May hear, and learn to fear Yahweh your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it" — See Psa. 78:5-6. Young children, by observing the intense interest of parents in the things of Yahweh, learn at an early age to observe and reverence Him themselves. Observe a young child at play; how frequently it may give itself to "playing at meetings". So habits of regular worship and reverence for things divine are instilled in the mind of a child. At a very early age, the writer was required by his parents to sit and listen to addresses that often to him seemed inordinately long and boring, but the practice instilled habits of attention and reverence that have stood him in good stead since then. The acquired habits of parents in regular attendance at meetings, in the daily reading of the Word, in the offering of thanks for benefits received, in family prayers, and so forth greatly help to develop the mental ability of a child. When these things are neglected, however, the observance of them in others appears strange to the young child.

Moses Warned That The People Will Fail — vv. 14-21

This section of Deuteronomy reverts from discourse to narrative. It is included here because it illustrates the points already

made in the Leader's speech. In view of the imminence of Moses' death, a charge to keep the law is given to Joshua in an official presentation at the Tabernacle. A theophany then occurs in which Divine endorsement is given to all that has been expressed, including a warning as to what shall happen to the people when they turn to other gods, as it predicted they will.

VERSE 14

"And Yahweh said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation" — When Moses received these instructions is not recorded, but obviously, having been given, they were fulfilled at this time when the nation through its representatives was gathered to hear his discourses as recorded in Deuteronomy. The word "congregation" is from the Hebrew *mowade* signifying "a set time", that is, for worship (see note Lev. 1:1). Therefore the "tabernacle of the congregation" can be rendered the *Tent of Meeting* (Exod. 29:42; 30:36); the meetings being the appointed set times established for such purposes. See Lev. 23:1 note.

"That I may give him a charge" — The word signifies to officially constitute him in his position of authority. Joshua had already been commissioned (Num. 27:18-23; Deut. 31:7-8), but now his position was to be officially confirmed by Yahweh in the sight of the people.

"And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation" — Moses and Joshua moved to where the Tabernacle was placed, and in doing so ceremonially presented themselves before Yahweh, for this was the place of personal encounter between Yahweh and His people (Exod. 25:22; 29:42; 30:36). Figuratively, they presented their bodies as living sacrifices unto Him (Rom. 12:1; Jude 24); to be accepted by Him.

VERSE 15

"And Yahweh appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud" — Evidently the cloud glowed with light in a Divine theophany, revealing the presence of Yahweh in manifestation, and His endorsement of Joshua to succeed Moses. See notes Exod. 33:9-10; 40:38; Psa. 99:7.

"And the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle" — The glow-

ing cloud descended until it stood before the door of the Tabernacle. That holy place, the only access to Yahweh, would be denied those who refused to heed the leadership of Joshua.

VERSE 16

"And Yahweh said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers" — The Hebrew *shakab* signifies to *lie down* for sleep or other purposes; therefore, for a temporary period, with the certainty of a resurrection.

"And this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them" — This was not a very encouraging message for Moses after giving a lifetime of arduous service to the people of Israel. It reminded them, and reminds us, that nothing we accomplish now is permanent. Reforms may have a temporary success, and movements may be built up and have every appearance of permanency but because flesh is so fickle the future will reveal a decline. Moses was warned that the people would tire of Divine worship. The covenant they entered into with Yahweh is likened to a marriage contract (See Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:30-32; Ezek. 16:8), and therefore to indulge in idol worship is tantamount to committing adultery. See Exod. 34:15; Jud. 2:17-19; Psa. 73:27; 106:39; Isa. 57:3,8; Jer. 3:1-2; Ezek. 16:15, 25-26; 23:5-8; Hos. 2:2-5; Jam. 4:4; Rev. 17:2-5; 19:2.

"And will forsake Me" — See Jud. 2:12; 10:6,13.

"And break My covenant which I have made with them" — These words were prophetic, and warned that Joshua's task would be as difficult as that of Moses. But they also comprised a warning that any could heed, and being alerted thereby could personally guard against being involved. No individual has to conform to his environment; the household of Boaz did not succumb to the ungodliness in Israel with which it was surrounded. Christ appealed to individuals in Laodicea to heed his counsel (Rev. 3:20). Here the prophecy of coming apostasy provides a fitting introduction to the *Song of Witness* set before the people by Moses and Joshua and recorded in Deut. 32.

VERSE 17

"Then My anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake

them" — See the warning reissued (2 Chron. 34:24-25), and the performance of it (2 Chron. 24:20; 36:14-16).

"And I will hide My face from them" — Ct. Num. 6:23-27 with Deut. 32:20; Psa. 30:7; 104:29; Cp. the plea of 80:1 with the waiting of Isa. 8:17. See Isa. 59:2; 64:7; Ezek. 39:23.

"And they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them" — The Hebrew signifies "shall find them", as though the evil and troubles were on the search for them.

"So that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?" — For example see Dan. 9:7-12; Neh. 9:32-35.

VERSE 18

"And I will surely hide My face in that day for all the evils which they have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods" — See v. 17. When Yahweh hides His face, He refuses to see or consider the troubles of His people.

VERSE 19

"Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel" — The song witnesses that Israel knowingly broke their promise to obey Yahweh. It forms the basis of much of that proclaimed by the prophets.

"Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel" — This song, which constituted the national anthem of Israel, comprised an attestation from the lips of the people, of Yahweh's benefits, their duties and responsibilities, and their deserts in refusing to perform these. See Mal. 3:5.

VERSE 20

"For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke Me, and break My covenant" — The affluence Israel would experience in the land of "milk and honey" (see Exod. 3:8) would test their faith and integrity (see Deut. 32:15), so that they would break the covenant made with Yahweh (see Isa. 24:5).

VERSE 21

"And it shall come to pass, when many

evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed" — The Song is not only recorded in the Word, which succeeding generations of Israelites, in their apostasy, might overlook, but the adverse experiences that the song predicts would be graphically brought home to them.

"For I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear" — These words were a call for earnest heart-searching on the part of that generation of Israelites.

Moses' Song and Charge to Joshua
— vv. 22-23

The Song is recorded, and Joshua is charged.

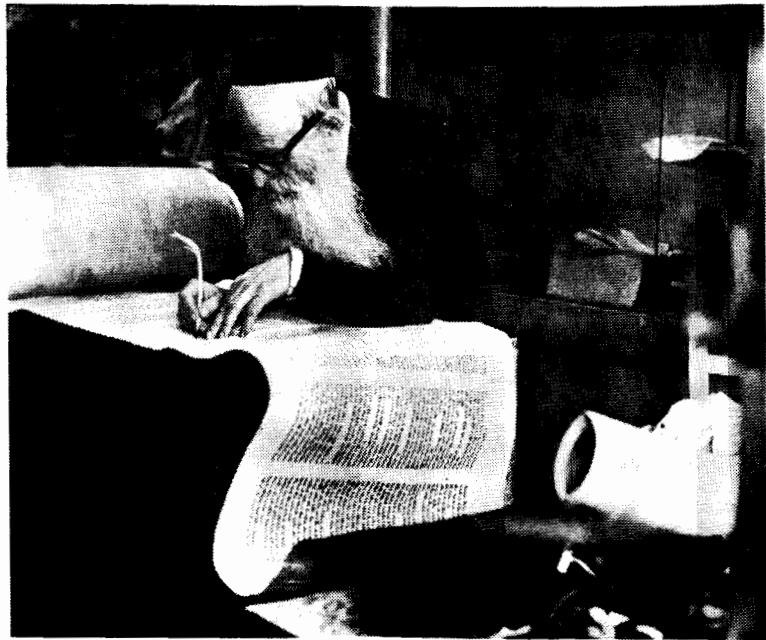
VERSE 22

"Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel" — See v. 19. It is interesting to note that the wilderness wanderings commenced and ended in Song (Exod. 15). But there was failure in between! One song sang of triumph; the other of trials and failure.

VERSE 23

"And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said" — Moses did this with the authority of Yahweh. See Josh. 1:5-9.

"Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swear unto them: and I will be with thee" — See Notes vv. 6,14; Acts 7:45.



The scribe correcting a Torah scroll. Parchment, pen and ink are well hand-made; and every letter is carefully formed so as to ensure an exact copy.

DEUTERONOMY:

DIVINE FAITHFULNESS

IN DISCIPLINING AND DELIVERING

Discourse Six:

INSTRUCTION — THE RECORDED WITNESS

Ch. 31:24-29

Though short, this section of Deuteronomy is extremely important. Already the Ark is known as the Ark of the Covenant, the Covenant having been confirmed by sacrifice at Sinai and renewed by the generation about to enter the Land of Promise. But now it is to also earn the title: Ark of Witness, for at its side is to be placed this Book of the Law, to be a Covenant witness, to provide the basis of the Song then to be recorded.

The Law put in writing and solemnly deposited in the side of the Ark, is the foundation of our present Bible. All Scripture is built upon it. It is the channel of authoritative revelation to man. It was first given verbally and afterwards recorded on parchment. The written Word embodies Truth in a form which secures its transmission to posterity without material distortion or corruption. The Law, therefore, was put into writing; and was made readily available for the use of any who desired to be instructed and guided by Yahweh. The value of this written revelation is revealed by the record of Josiah's reformation. During the repairs of the Temple, the copy of the Law was found, and its instruction and warning motivated the King to increase his demands and the extent of the reformation and revival he initiated. The Book of the Law also motivated Jeremiah: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mind heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Yahweh God of hosts" (Jer. 15:16). The Word of God can become the transforming power in the life of a believer: the "power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Christ prayed: "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). That Word is likened to the seed of God designed to develop in a believer so as to change him for eternal life in the Kingdom (1 Pet. 1:23-25).

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Verses 24-29

The Law Completed And Laid Up As A Witness — vv. 24-29

The Book of the Law is written, placed in the side of the Ark, and the people exhorted.

VERSE 24

"And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished" — Having installed Joshua in his position, Moses finished writing the Book of the Law that the new Leader and the People may have written guidance for the successful occupation of the Land.

VERSE 25

"Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, saying" — Those to whom was given this charge comprised the priests (see v. 9); for the non-priestly Levites could not so much as enter the Sanctuary or touch the Ark (Num. 4:15). Though in journeying through the wilderness the Ark was borne by the non-priestly Kohathites, they were not permitted to touch it. It had to be carefully covered by the priests, so that the Levites could not see it, and then carried by staves so they did not touch it. On other occasions, of a more solemn and public character, it was carried by the priests themselves (Josh. 3:3; 4:9-10; 6:7,12; 8:33; 1 Kings 8:3).

VERSE 26

"Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of Yahweh your God" — Some claim that this was at the side of the Ark, not in the Ark (see 1 Kings 8:9). When the Temple was repaired in the days of Josiah, a book of the Law was found and given to the King. On reading this book, the curses of the Law recorded therein caused him

great concern, so that he took steps to bring the nation into line with the requirements thereof (2 Kings 22:8-20).

"That it may be there for a witness against thee" — Josiah read it in that manner. See also Rom. 3:19-20.

VERSE 27

"For I know thy rebellion" — Rotherham renders this *perverseness*; the Septuagint as *contentious disposition*. See Deut. 32:20.

"And thy stiff neck" — A stiff neck describes a stubborn attitude. See note Exod. 32:9 where the description first occurs. Israel manifested the characteristic of a stubborn ass in danger of having its neck broken instead of obtaining redemption through the lamb provided of Yahweh. See Exod. 13:13 — note. Isa. 48:4; Acts 7:51.

"Behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against Yahweh; and how much more after my death?" — Moses had held the people in restraint during his lifetime, and even so the first generation had perished. Care would need to be exercised in the future, lest the nation again be cast off by Yahweh.

VERSE 28

"Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears" — See Deut. 29:10.

"And call heaven and earth to record against them" — See note Deut. 30:19. See Deut. 32:1; Isa. 1:2.

VERSE 29

"For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded

you” — Moses was a prophet, and clearly recognised the prophetic application of the curses of the Law. He knew human nature for what it is, and recognised its tendency to stray from the ways of righteousness. Faithfully he set these facts before the people without concern for his popularity in so doing. In this action he was courageously followed by such as Paul to the believers of his day. See Acts 20:29-31; 2 Tim. 3:1-6; 2 Pet. 3:3-4. Such warning messages are the words of true love (2 Cor. 12:15); though usually they are not popular with a community which prefers to hear smooth things (Isa. 30:10).

“And evil will befall you in the latter days” — The Hebrew is derived from a root signifying the *hindpart* and hence the

future. Rotherham renders it “the afterpart of the days”.

“Because ye will do evil in the sight of Yahweh, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands” — In these words Moses reminded the people of the tendency of flesh to go astray, and, therefore, the inevitability of apostasy. History has confirmed this tendency both in regard to the nation of Israel, as in the Ecclesias throughout Gentile times. However, there is no irresistible compulsion to go astray. No individual, tribe, generation, or Ecclesia need succumb to this tendency of the flesh, nor to the particular environment in which he or it may be found. The challenge is to resist it and aim to rise above it.

MOSES' PSALM OF WITNESS

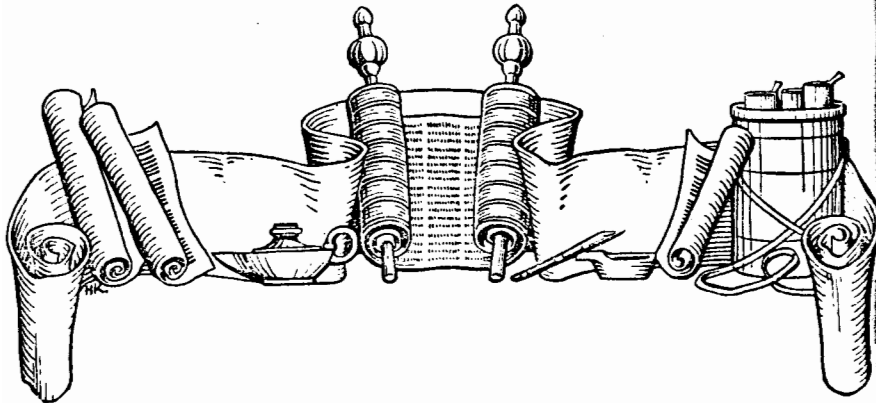
A Song is a convenient method of impressing truth upon the mind. Once it is learned it is easy to recall, and therefore a most valuable aid to memory. In Moses' Song, the attributes and Names of God are emphasised, and Israel's relationship and responsibility thereto are carefully stated. The Introduction to the Song is recorded in the last verse of Chapter 31 which should have been incorporated in the following Chapter.

Introduction — v. 30

VERSE 30

“And Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this

Song, until they were ended” — This introduction to the Song should be linked with the Song itself in the next section of Deuteronomy. But we have included it here, so as to commence the next part with Deuteronomy 32.



DEUTERONOMY:

DIVINE FAITHFULNESS

IN DISCIPLINING AND DELIVERING

Discourse Seven:

SONG —

A PSALM OF WITNESS AGAINST ISRAEL

Ch. 31:30-32:1-52

Moses' song comprises the second of two witnesses to be pressed against the people if and when they go astray. First there is the Book of the Law at the side of the Ark. This sets forth the terms of the Covenant entered into by the nation at Sinai. The second witness is the Song recorded in Deuteronomy 32. This Song epitomises much of Deuteronomy, and certainly all the prophetic portion of it. Moses commanded that the Book of the Covenant be read regularly in the hearing of the people, and also that this Song be taught them. The Covenant of Witness and the Song of Witness were designed to complement each other, and to be constantly brought to mind in case Israel forget her promise and break it. In these matters, Moses not only reveals himself as Leader and Lawgiver, but also as Poet and Prophet (Deut. 18:15-22). The Song epitomises all subsequent prophecy, and it is cited constantly by the prophets who succeeded him. It can be compared with Psalm 90, another poetic composition by Moses that contrasted the fate of the two generations with which he was associated.

The Song first records the lovingkindness of Yahweh, Who when the nations were divided, retained Israel for Himself. It sets forth His characteristics, and the care He displayed for the people: how He brought the nation out of Egypt, cared for them in the wilderness, and reserved for them an inheritance in the Land (vv. 1-14). But then the joyousness of the Song clouds over, as it records how Jeshurun would wax fat and kick and move Yahweh to jealousy with new gods, that their fathers did not know. Because of this apostasy, the fire of Divine anger will burn as from the lowest pit, devouring the increase of the earth. So, as the people continue to provoke Yahweh by their ungodliness, they will be given over to the curses predicted earlier. Mischief will be heaped upon them, arrows will be directed against them, and they shall be consumed with hunger, burning heat, wild beasts, deadly poisons. The sword without and terror within shall devour them, and all will suffer in consequence. The nation will be taken into captivity, and scattered into the very corners of the earth as its army experiences unexpected defeats. Only short of entire destruction will the judgment stop, lest the adversary should boast that his might, and not Divine punishment, had done all. Completely blind of spiritual vision, and void of common wis-

We have already commenced writing our exposition of the exciting *Book of Joshua*, and have thrilled to the rapid movement, and vivid campaigns and adventures of that great man of faith. The amazing typology of the book is also most fascinating. In a remarkable manner, Joshua foreshadows the work of the Lord, and helps us to more clearly recognise our personal responsibilities thereto.

So we repeat what we mistakenly said last issue: Our next issue of *Christadelphian Expositor*, God willing, should see the completion of our treatment of Deuteronomy; and we are looking forward to expounding the *Book of Joshua*, with its narrative of active movement.

Yours fraternally,

H. P. Mansfield.

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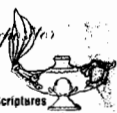
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A Verse by Verse Commentary Upon the Scriptures

Editorial

Dear Reader,

This number completes our treatment of Deuteronomy, and you can now gather together the various copies and bind them in a complete volume. This will make an attractive volume of over 400 pp. If you desire us to do this for you, please advise us immediately, and forward your copies to us for binding. We may be able to negotiate a cheaper price.

The subject matter has been processed in depth, so that the book will make a valuable addition to your home library.

Now that we have completed our treatment of the five books of Moses, with their emphasis upon the Law and its requirements, we look forward to commencing *The Book of Joshua*. This is a book of campaign and action, recording how a people motivated by faith challenged their enemies, and occupied the land — partially at least. Already we have given considerable study to this Book, and enjoyed the fruits of research. We look forward to sharing these with you. Some most amazing features and types

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

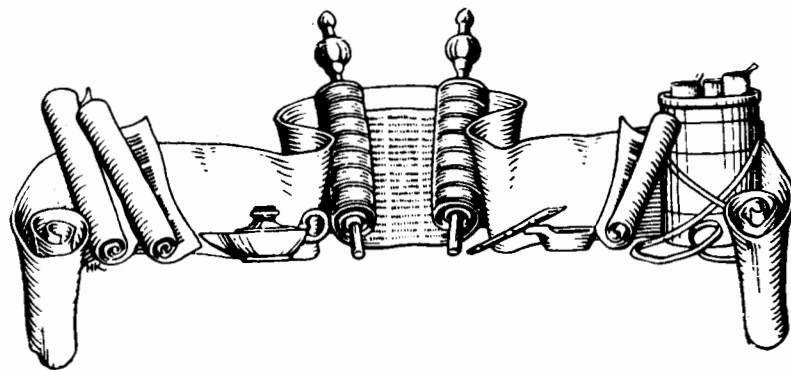
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dom must the people be, if they fail to see the meaning of the judgments they will experience, and so recognise that their Rock has forsaken them (v. 30).

The imagery flows on to paint the loathsome gods and evil practices to which Israel will give herself: things of rottenness like grapes of Sodom, bitter as gall, poisonous as the wine of Egypt, and deadly as the venom of asps. All this until they will recognise their folly, realise how vain are the gods of nations, and seek at last their God (v. 39). Then will Yahweh bestir Himself for His ancient people, and use His glittering sword, and bright arrows against those who have lifted up their hands against Israel. Then, finally, all the earth will be forced to recognise His goodness, and His covenant with Abraham, for He will "render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful to His land, and to His people" (v. 43).

The song is presented to the people as a duet by Moses and Joshua, after which instructions are given to Moses to prepare for his death on Mount Nebo. His work completed, he is to enjoy the sleep of death until the resurrection when again, with a greater Joshua, he will join in song (Rev. 15:3).

As the Song of Witness, its expressions were cited by the prophets to press home their exhortations and predictions, and also used as a lawsuit against the people. See Isa. 1:2; Hos. 4:1; 12:2; Mic. 6:2; Mal. 3:5 etc.



CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

DIVINE GOODNESS AND HUMAN FOLLY

When Israel crossed the Red Sea, escaping destruction at the hands of Pharaoh, Moses taught them a Song of Victory and Praise recorded in Exodus 15; now as his life is about to end, he teaches them one of Instruction. The key word of the important chapter is "doctrine" v. 2, and outstanding verses are vv. 4, 29, 43. The Song is a Song of Witness. It not only provides the basis of all prophecy that follows, but is frequently drawn upon by the prophets to testify against Israel in times of backsliding. An outstanding instance of this is given in Micah 6, where the prophet witnesses against Israel, graphically revealing the extent of the people's failure, and calling upon them to "humble themselves to walk with their God" (v. 8). The Chapter is divisible into two parts: vv. 1-43, the Song; vv. 44-52 the Sequel. The Song of Witness, can be sub-divided into the following sections: 1. Yahweh's righteousness; Israel's folly — vv. 1-6; 2. Yahweh's tender care; Israel's helplessness — vv. 7-14; 3. Israel's Ingratitude and disobedience; Yahweh's rebuke and punishment — vv. 15-27. 4. Israel's spiritual blindness; Yahweh's unfailing mercy — vv. 28-39; 5. Yahweh's faithfulness; Israel's ultimate deliverance — vv. 40-43.

The Sequel to the Song (vv. 44-52), comprises 1. The formal presentation of it to the nation vv. 44-45; 2. Moses' final exhortation to the people — vv. 46-47; 3. Instruction to Moses to prepare for death — vv. 48-52.

The Chapter is rich in its descriptiveness of Yahweh, including many Divine titles, and is dramatic in its illustrations of Israel's weakness and apostasy.

Yahweh's Righteousness Versus Israel's Foolishness — vv. 1-6.

A summons is issued to witnesses to hearken to the evidence to be pressed against Israel. The failure of the people to fulfil the terms of the Covenant is stressed. Moses describes his teaching as dew and tender rain fructifying the soil bringing forth fruit. The Covenant is incorporated in the Divine Name to which Israel has been called and upon whom it has been named. But Israel has failed to fully re-

spond to the influence of the Word, and thereby has despised the privilege of being the people of the Name.

VERSE 1

"Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth" — "Heavens" and "earth" are frequently used in Scripture for the Leaders, or Government (the heavens); and the People, or the Ruled (the earth). Isaiah uses the same expressions in the same way

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

(see Isa. 1:2), and describes his use of them by calling the "heavens" the "rulers of Sodom", and the "earth" the "people of Gomorrah" (v. 10). The figurative use of "heavens" is frequent in Scripture. See Isa. 13:10; 14:14-15; Jer. 2:12; 4:23-31. In describing the "new heavens and new earth" of the future, the prophet declared: "Behold, I create Jerusalem (the seat of Government) a rejoicing, and her people (the Ruled) a joy" (Isa. 65:17-18). In the verse before us the rulers and people are issued a summons to appear before Moses to hearken to the indictment of the Song of Witness.

VERSE 2

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain" — Rain is symbolic of the Word of Yahweh. As Rain is essential for life and growth on the earth, so Yahweh's Word is necessary for spiritual development. See Isa. 55:10; 1 Cor. 3:6-7. The word "doctrine" is from the Hebrew *leqach* derived from a root signifying to take. It therefore is expressive of words that should take hold of one, words that should be accepted without dispute. The Septuagint renders it in the imperative mood: "Let my doctrine fall as the rain", that is, let it fructify and soften the soil or earth (1 Cor. 15:48) to feed the seed planted therein. When Moses speaks of "my doctrine", he means something that he has taken to himself, something given unto him, and therefore a teaching from God.

"My speech shall distil as the dew" — The word "distil" is *nazal* in Hebrew, and signifies to drip or drop. The NIV renders it "descend like dew". The Promised Land rejoices in a very heavy dew, sometimes as heavy as a mist or fog. We personally have seen and felt it in the dry areas of the Negev. Indeed, the ancient Hebrews were adept at conserving the dew, and cultivating plants in areas where they normally would not survive. For example, in the arid desert area adjacent to Avdat, vines have been successfully cultivated by conserving the heavy dew that descends gently to the earth. Heavy rain, or rushing water, can tear the earth with erosion destroying plant-life in its path; but not the "gentle dew from heaven"; it is a blessing to the earth beneath. So Moses' speech and doctrine were capable of refreshing and fructifying those whose lot would otherwise be arid and sterile.

"As the small rain upon the tender herb" — This describes the gentle showers

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that encourage the early growth.

"And as the showers upon the grass" — This describes the heavier downpours capable of watering established growth. This verse reveals that Moses' Song of Witness is capable of softening the soil, refreshing it in times of aridity, gently encouraging growth, and filling out the plant to full productivity. Elsewhere, the Truth is described as the seed of Yahweh (1 Pet. 1:23) which is established and developed by the Word. There is a need for development in the things of God (see Heb. 5:12-14). Moses' Song, therefore, is designed to help spiritual growth, not to destroy it.

VERSE 3

"Because I will publish the name of Yahweh" — The word "publish" in its Hebrew form signifies to proclaim publicly, even to accost a person with it. Moses recognised this as necessary. The Name of Yahweh had been named upon the people of Israel (Num. 6:23-27) as it has been upon those who embrace Christ (Acts 15:14), and therefore it is needful for those so privileged to comprehend the significance of the name they bear, and reveal its qualities to others.

"Ascribe ye greatness unto our God" — Moses was prepared to publish the name of Yahweh, and now, as the basis of his Song of Witness, he calls upon all Israelites to join him in so doing. They can do so, not merely by verbal expression of the Name, but by manifesting its qualities: for the Name is expressive of the character of Yahweh. The word "God" in this place is *Elohim*, and relates to the manifestation of the characteristics and purpose of Deity in His angels, and therefore His multitudinous manifestation. All Israel had experienced the labours of the Elohim in the provisions of life, and the guidance and protection they had received throughout their wilderness wanderings. There was need to remember that the Elohim are directed in this work by Yahweh, Who is above them as a great "King above all the Elohim" (Psa. 95:3; 103:19-22).

In Exod. 33:19, the "name" of Yahweh signifies His character (Exod. 34:6-7), and is parallel with glory (Exod. 33:22). In Deut. 26:19 it is related to praise and honour; elsewhere to His purpose to fill the earth with His glory (Num. 14:21; Psa. 8:1).

VERSE 4

"He is the Rock, His work is perfect" —

The word *Tzur*, Rock, is used as a title for Yahweh by both Moses and David. Both were familiar with the heat of the wilderness and therefore the need of such shade, shelter and stability as a mountain of rock can provide. In the shifting sands of the desert, with which Moses was particularly familiar, the huge masses of granite rock-mountains presented a symbol of permanence, strength, continuance, remoteness, stability and shelter. The Scriptures picture Yahweh the Rock as a shelter (Psa. 61:3), a Defence (Psa. 18:2; 62:6), a Dwelling-place (Psa. 90:1); a Shadow from the heat (Isa. 32:21); an immovable support (Psa. 40:2); a Foundation upon which to build (Matt. 7:24; 16:18); the cleft rock as a place of safety (Exod. 33:22; Song 2:14); the smitten Rock: a source of spiritual refreshment (Exod. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4; cp. 1 John 5:6. See Rom. 8:31-39).

Yahweh the Rock, therefore, is a most expressive name calculated to encourage and give confidence to all who place their trust in Him. Its significance is summarised by Isaiah: "Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat . . . trust ye in Yahweh for ever; for in Yahweh is the Rock of Ages" (Isa. 25:4; 26:4). The title *Tzur* is sometimes rendered "sharp", "edge" etc., suggesting the sharp razor-back ridges of hard granite rock, familiar to Moses in the area of Mt. Sinai. The word is applied to Christ as a hiding place (Isa. 2:10), as a rock of offence (Isa. 8:14); a slaughter rock (Isa. 10:26). In Isa. 30:29 it is rendered "Mighty One". The title *Tzur* frequently enters into composition of proper names in the time of Moses. See

Num. 1:5,6,10; 2:12; 3:35 etc, the title being suggested by the close proximity of the Israelites to the craggy granite rocks adjacent to Mount Sinai.

However, in considering the Name of Deity, it should always be born in mind that Yahweh is prophetic in its significance. It means *He Who Will be*; and in this context it proclaims that He will manifest Himself as the Rock. That Rock is Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). He is the complete manifestation of Yahweh. In mind and character, and now in nature, he reveals the glory of his Father. He identified himself as the Rock. He declared: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock" (Matt. 7:24). Those sayings include the confession of Peter: "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). The Lord responded: "Upon this rock I will build my Ecclesia; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (v. 18). Peter later described believers as "living stones" built upon the "living stone", "a chief corner stone, elect, precious" (1 Pet. 2:4-6). Yahweh as the Rock provides a foundation upon which to build with confidence.

"His work is perfect", declared Moses, that is, it is without fault and blameless. All that He made was "very good" (Gen. 1:31); it is man who has defiled it, and continues to pollute creation to this day.

"For all His ways are judgment" — This is an expression that Nebuchadnezzar was constrained to utter when the judgments of Yahweh were brought to bear on him (Dan. 4:37); and the sentiment to which

the saints will give expression in the age to come (Rev. 15:3). The Hebrew *mishpat* signifies verdict, decree, law, justice. Yahweh's ways are set down in the decrees and laws He has proclaimed to humanity. His judgments will be revealed through Christ in the Kingdom administration (Psa. 72:2; Zech. 3:7), when He shall "judge the ends of the earth" (1 Sam. 2:10). As Judge, He will administer perfect justice to the benefit of all; a justice that will blend with mercy and understanding. See John 5:22-27, Cp. Rom. 3:26.

In Isa. 30:18 Yahweh is described as a God of *Mishpat*. Having laid down the lines of His action in righteousness and wisdom, in His dealings with men He remains consistent with them. True worship must respond in similar fashion by acknowledging and upholding His judgments.

"A God of Truth" — In Hebrew this is *El Eemunah*: *El* denotes Divine strength or power; *Eemunah* denotes faithfulness or firmness and stability. The word expresses security, fidelity, trustworthiness. Yahweh had vindicated this title by bringing Israel to the border of the Land in fulfillment of His promise, in spite of the failure of the first generation. *Eemunah* is from the root *aman*, to "build up", "support", to "foster" (as a parent), or to be firm and faithful. A cognate word is *emeth*, stability, faithfulness, trustworthiness. This is the character of Yahweh, and should be reflected in His children (Heb. 11:6). He is "the faithful (*aman*) God which keepeth covenant and mercy" (Deut. 7:9): "Yahweh that is faithful" (*aman* Isa. 49:7); "Yahweh Elohim of truth (*emeth* — Psa. 31:5). Ultimately Jerusalem will reflect this characteristic of Yahweh, and become a city of truth because there His faithfulness will be manifested (Zech. 8:3; cp. Isa. 65:16).

As with all the names and titles of Deity, the fulness of this one is manifested in Christ. He is "the Amen, the faithful and true witness" (Rev. 3:14). He is this in him because "all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. 1:20). In the fulness of the promises of God, this Divine name will be vindicated.

"And without iniquity, just and right is He" — The word "iniquity" denotes a breach, deviation or treason. Yahweh will not fail in that way for He is just and true.

VERSE 5

"They have corrupted themselves" — Yahweh's faithfulness continued towards Israel in spite of the lack of faith in those He brought out of Egypt. Indeed, He had sustained them in kindness in spite of their corrupt doings (Isa. 63:7-14). For the extent of their corruptions past and then future see Deut. 9:12; 31:29.

"Their spot is not the spot of His children" — Their moral corruption (see Eph. 5:27) is not such as His children should manifest (Jude 23-24). The *NIV* renders: "to their shame they are not His children".

"They are a perverse and crooked generation" — They have deviated from the way of Yahweh, the way of righteousness. See the expression used: Matt. 17:17; Luke 9:41; Phil. 2:15. Living in the midst of such a generation the faithful will not conform to it.

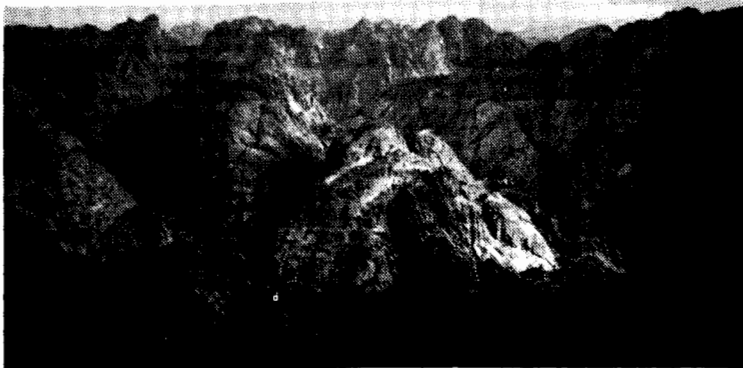
VERSE 6

"Do ye thus requite Yahweh?" — The word "requite" signifies to repay. The *NIV* renders: "Is this the way you repay Yahweh?"

"O foolish people and unwise" — The Hebrew for "foolish" is *nabal*, the name given to the Israelites who refused to honour or repay David for benefits received (see 1 Sam. 25:10). It is also the title given by the Lord to the rich man who did not honour God in a practical way as described in the parable of Luke 12:12-21.

"Is not He thy Father that bought thee?" — The title Father is also given to Yahweh in this chapter and Song that abound with allusions to Deity. It is sometimes suggested that this title was not applied to Yahweh until Christ did so, and therefore it is incidental to the New Testament. That is not the case, the verse before us being witness. The Hebrew word is *Ab*, and the title, or allusions to it (such as Husband of Israel implying the Father of children), are frequent throughout the Old Testament. See Isa. 54:1-5; Jer. 3:20; 31:32; Ezek. 16:20; Hos. 2:2,7. As a Father, Yahweh extends Himself on behalf of those who turn to Him in truth, to replace earthly parents when they are lacking (Psa. 27:10; 68:5). He should be honoured as such (Psa. 89:26; Isa. 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 3:19; 31:9). The honour that the Rechabites paid to their dead father whose commands they scrupulously obeyed, is contrasted with the neglect of

Mount Sinai — Suggestive of the title: Yahweh the Rock.



Israel towards the living Father (Jer. 35:14-19; Mal. 1:6 contrast Jer. 2:27; Mal. 2:10). The title of Father as applied to Yahweh is necessary to complete the family relationship of Israel towards Him, implied by describing the nation as His son (Exod. 4:22-23; Deut. 14:1). The requirements that the law demanded of such a son to his Father are honor (Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16); Love (Deut. 6:4-5); Fear (Lev. 19:14; Prov. 1:7); Obedience (Deut. 11:27 Cp. 21:18-19); Respect (Deut. 27:16; Prov. 1:8); a higher regard to that paid to earthly parents (Deut. 33:9; cp. Heb. 12:9-11). As His "sons and daughters" (Deut. 32:19) true Israelites are expected to submit to the disciplinary chastening of Yahweh (Deut. 8:1-3; 11:2). All this is involved in the title of Father. It should also be noted that whilst Christ is displayed as an elder brother, he is also depicted as the Father of Eternity (Isa. 9:6), and the Ecclesias as his "children" (Heb. 2:11-14). Therefore the adoration, respect, love and obedience that should be rendered to Yahweh as Father, should also be granted to the Son.

Moreover, it should be noted that the people of Israel are not only represented as sons and daughters of Yahweh by birth as descendants of Sarah who was strengthened by Yahweh to conceive (Gen. 18:10; Heb. 11:11), but also by purchase. He "bought" them out of slavery, and drew them unto Himself. Therefore they have greater cause to love, respect and obey Him. See Psa. 74:2.

"**Hath He not made thee?**" — The word *asah* signifies to "make" or "appoint". In Isa. 54:5 this is given as a title of Deity: "Thy *Maker* is thy Husband . . ." He bought the people from Egypt, and made them into a nation by the covenant of Sinai.

"**And established thee**" — The word *kawn* signifies to "develop" and so enable a thing to stand erect. The nationhood of Israel was established through experience gained during the wilderness wanderings, and the settlement of the tribes in the Land of Promise. The sufferings they endured helped to bring them to nationhood, and were overshadowed by Yahweh to that end. So it is with all who embrace the Truth. Let them recognise that any trials are designed to cause them to stand erect at the judgment seat of Christ.

Yahweh's Tender Care: Israel's Helplessness — vv. 7-14

The song proceeds to recall the goodness of Yahweh in separating the people unto Himself into the privileged position they held. It describes His anxious care for their welfare and future, and their utter dependence on Him.

VERSE 7

"**Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations**" — How valuable to review the past, and recognise the hand of God in the developments which take place throughout life. Israelites could recall the call of Abraham, His overshadowing care of Isaac and Jacob, the experiences of earlier generations in Egypt, and acknowledge that all that had happened was "not without cause" (Ezek. 14:23), and that Yahweh had been with them throughout experiences for both good and ill. Those in Christ need to do likewise and are exhorted to "remember" what God has done for them (Eph. 2:11-14). In response to the appeal of this verse, Moses in the Psalms declares: "Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil" (Psa. 90:15).

"**Ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee**" — Harken to the experiences and advice of those who are older than you, and are able to review life in a more mature manner, whilst also recalling God's goodness and severity. The instruction of parents, particularly in relation to such historical festivals as Passover, was required by the Law (see Exod. 12:26-27; Psa. 44:1).

VERSE 8

"**When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance**" — Here is yet another Divine title; and used in conjunction with a statement that illustrates its significance. The Hebrew word is *Elyon*, and denotes Yahweh as Disposer. The first use of this title, as *El Elyon* occurs in Genesis 14:19 in conjunction with the blessing proclaimed on Abram by Melchizedek. Abram had returned from defeating the confederacy of the north and rescuing his relation Lot. He was met by Melchizedek who extended to him fellowship by offering bread and wine. Whilst this is an historical fact, the incident types the overthrow of the confederated Eurasian forces of Armageddon by the household of faith. Abram was blessed by Melchizedek in the name of "the most high God" (*El Elyon*)

described as "possessor of heaven and earth". The title, therefore, describes God as the disposer of national inheritances, and everywhere it is used it has this significance. For example, Nebuchadnezzar was told that "the *Most High* rules in the Kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (Dan. 4:17); and of the Lord it was declared by the angel Gabriel that he would be called "the son of the *Highest*, and the Lord God would give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). The use of the title is appropriate to each of these circumstances, for it illustrates God as the great Disposer of the areas of the earth (see the scope of His control — Acts 17:26-28). Those in Christ, recognising this, have confidence in that they will be elevated to positions of eminence and authority, and shall "reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10; 20:6).

"**When he separated the sons of Adam**" — This is a reference to the scattering of the people at the building of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:7).

"**He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel**" — What an amazing statement! It emphasises the great privilege of Israel and their high status in the sight of Yahweh. The apportioning of the sons of Noah into nations is recorded in Gen. 10:1-7, and the areas occupied by them according to Paul were regulated by God (Acts 17:31). But the statement of the verse before us means that Yahweh had Israel in mind even at that early age, before Abram was born! See also the relationship of this principle to those in Christ (Eph. 1:4). The verse before us states that the numerical division into nations of the descendants of Noah was made with reference to the then non-existent children of Israel. 70 nations are named in Gen. 10:1-7, and 70 souls went down with Jacob into Egypt (cp. Gen. 46:27; Exod. 1:5; Deut. 10:22). Moreover, as indicated in the verse before us, God set out the limits of their individual lands (cp. Acts 17:26). In determining their inheritance, he set boundaries around that of Israel, so that they should not integrate. He arranged the complete separateness of His nation from the pollution of the Gentiles round about, so as to reserve for Himself a place where He may dwell (Exod. 25:22; Deut. 11:12-13;

12:14). This principle shall also apply in the future; cp. Isa. 2:1-4; Jer. 3:17; Ezek. 43:7; 48; Joel 3:16-18; Zech. 14:9,16,20-21. As the Ecclesia is separated unto Yahweh (Acts 15:14), and yet includes within its company those taken out "of all nations" (Rev. 5:9-10), so it is with the inheritance of Israel. The land is separated from all others. On the west there is an ocean; on the east there is a desert; on the north there is a range of high mountains; on the south there is the Negev and the Red Sea. Within the borders of that separated and marked off inheritance, there are all varieties of scenery: mountains, plains, valleys, lakes, inland seas, rivers, cold snow-lands, and hot tropical areas. There is a living ocean and a dead ocean, and a river called the *Descender* (Jordan) linking one with the other. In its geographical variety, it is as though Yahweh has taken a little piece of scenery from all other lands, and placed it in His land, as He has taken a few from all nations to constitute His Ecclesia.

VERSE 9

"**For Yahweh's portion is His people**" — Yahweh separated the people of Israel (whether national or spiritual) unto Himself as His inheritance. (See Exod. 15:16; 19:5-6; Deut. 26:18-19; Psa. 78:71; 135:4; Isa. 43:21; Jer. 10:16; 51:19; Eph. 1:18; 1 Pet. 2:9-10).

"**Jacob is the lot of His inheritance**" — The Hebrew word for "lot" signifies *cord*. Jacob is the measure of His inheritance; and therefore the channel of approach unto Him (Eph. 2:11-13). Within the area set aside for His people, Yahweh also "divided by lot" portions for individual tribes and families. There was nothing left to chance or caprice by the use of the lot in Yahweh's hand; for the word denotes His choice. See Psa. 16:6.

VERSE 10

"**He found him in a desert land**" — Rotherham renders "found" as "met". The reference, therefore, is not to Egypt, but to the wilderness of Sinai where Yahweh met with the people, and entered into covenant with them. See Jer. 2:6; Ezek. 16:3-7.

"**And in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him**" — The description is that of a wanderer, lost in the trackless desert, without food, water, or shelter, exposed to the bitter elements including the harsh winds that blow

up its biting sands. In that state, Yahweh's anxious care overshadowed the children of Israel, provided them with the necessities of life, and by such means instructed them in order to mould the national character to successfully enter the land of promise. (See Deut. 8:2-5).

"He led him about" — With anxious, fatherly care, Yahweh encompassed Israel about as the word "led" signifies in the Hebrew; He protected the nation from all harm. At times during the weary, monotonous journey, it may have appeared to the people of Israel as though Yahweh had abandoned them; so that they became resentful, much the same as a young child will react against the disciplinary action of its parent. Impatient of restraint, immaturity does not recognise that its proper development requires such training. So with Israel as a nation. The people faced many difficulties and temptations in the land, for they had to be developed to a state of spiritual maturity where they could with confidence occupy it. The wilderness wanderings were necessary to that end. In every circumstance of distress or want, Yahweh felt for His people, but, at the same time, recognised what was best and because of that was not over-protective towards them (see Isa. 63:7-14). Meanwhile, He "instructed them" through the teaching of the Law, the hope of the promise, and the care He revealed to them in their needs (Deut. 8:1-7).

"He kept him as the apple of His eye" — The Hebrew word for "apple" in this place is *ishown* or "little man of His eye". The reference is to the pupil, so called because it reflects the image of the one it is gazing at. The image appears to fill the eye, to dominate the vision. That describes the relationship of Yahweh towards Israel. Israel's welfare dominated His vision. In every circumstance He was considerate of the nation and its future; His eyes were ever open to its needs. That also is the relationship of Yahweh towards those in Christ. His eyes are ever upon them, which is something they should ever bear in mind. However, the fact that Yahweh's eyes were filled with the vision and welfare of Israel, did not exempt the nation from trials. As a loving Father, Yahweh saw the need for such; but at no time, and in no circumstances was the nation justified in believing that it was abandoned of God. The pupil of the eye is the most tender part of the body, and is

guarded as one would a helpless baby (Psa. 17:8; Prov. 7:2; Zech. 2:8).

VERSE 11

"As the eagle stirreth up her nest" — The verb signifies to *arouse to action*, and does not necessarily signify to do so physically. The action described to the eagle is to so disturb her young, as to excite them to be the more willing to leave the nest, learn to fly and to fend for themselves. How is this done? Possibly through the parent bird returning with food, and so exciting the eaglets, and encouraging them to do likewise. So Yahweh permitted Israel to be perturbed and disturbed in Egypt and through the wilderness. The purpose was to make them more willing to leave those environs for the land of plenty. Therefore, what was troublesome to the people was to their ultimate benefit and good.

"Fluttereth over them" — This describes the mother bird protectively brooding over the young, caring for them, keeping them warm and preserving them from evil. Yahweh did likewise for His people. The Hebrew *yeracheph* signifies "to brood". It denotes the action of the bird in communicating to her brood some of her own vital warmth. This God did for Israel by the influence of His Spirit Word, enlightening, encouraging and strengthening His people.

"Spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them" — Does the eagle take her young upon her wings to teach them to fly? Modern naturalists state "this is not confirmed by observation" (*Animals of Bible Lands* p. 142). However, W. L. Alexander quotes Bochart and Davy in support of the verse. They claim to have seen this done. In any case, the general reference is to Yahweh's fostering care of Israel, and especially His dealing with them when "He suffered their manners in the wilderness" (Acts 13:18). He trained and disciplined them to equip them for occupation of the Land.

"Beareth them on her wings" — This figuratively describes a state of anxious care. Yahweh tested the people, teaching them the lesson of endurance and faith; never trying them beyond what they could bear (Deut. 8:2-6; 1 Cor. 10:13; Rom. 8:31; 5:3-6. The wings are figuratively a symbol of support and shelter.

VERSE 12

"So Yahweh alone did lead him, and

there was no strange god with him" — See Exod. 13:21; 15:13. Yahweh needed no help of strange gods; His power and ability were sufficient to accomplish His purpose whatever it may be.

VERSE 13

"He made him ride on the high places of the earth" — This statement figuratively describes the conquest and subjugation of the Land. They are prophetic of victory over the Canaanites, a token of which had already been experienced in the defeat of Sihon and Og. See Isa. 58:14.

"That he might eat the increase of the fields" — Having conquered the Land, the Israelites would enjoy its rich produce.

"And He made him to suck honey out of the rock" — This figuratively describes the fertility of the Land. Even its most barren areas would yield an abundance of flowers from whence would come honey.

"And oil out of the flinty rock" — The olive tree can flourish in rocky soil, from whence is obtained the olive oil. Israel has been noted for this throughout the centuries, and still is today.

VERSE 14

"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" — All these expressions denote the fertility of the Land, and th rich produce it supplies. "The fat of kidneys of wheat" is the most tender part of the grain (see Psa. 81:16), whilst the "pure blood of the grape" describes the best juice of the grape.

Israel's Ingratitude and Disobedience — vv. 15-18

In prosperity Israel will manifest indifference to the goodness of Yahweh, and will turn from the true worship.

VERSE 15

"But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked" — The name Jeshurun signifies the *Righteous or Upright One*. See also Deut. 33:5,26; Isa. 44:2. The tendency of flesh in times of affluence is to become self-sufficient and self-reliant and so indifferent to its spiritual responsibilities and responses. Israelites (whether natural or spiritual — see Rev. 3:17-18) prove no different in that regard.

"Thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness" — All expressions denote the effects of good, luxurious living. See Deut. 6:11; 8:10; 31:20. The figure is taken of an ox grown fat through good feeding, and become lazy and unmanageable in consequence (see 1 Sam. 2:29; Hos. 10:4).

"Then he forsook God which made him" — The word "God" is *Eloah*, or *Mighty One*. For the use of the verb *made*, see v. 6.

"And lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation" — The Hebrew for "lightly esteemed" is *nabel*, rendered by Rotherham as: "they treated as foolish". They treated the *Mighty One*, with contempt by the form of service they rendered Him; they utterly failed to recognise His might. For "Rock of his salvation" see 2 Sam. 22:47; Psa. 78:35.

VERSE 16

"They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they Him to anger" — Yahweh had bound Israel to Himself as by a marriage bond (Isa. 54:6), and their unfaithfulness provoked Him to jealousy. Because of His marriage relationship to Israel one of His names is that of *Jealous* (Exod. 34:14). See the note on the law of jealousy (Num. 5:14); and the provocation to that end ultimately caused by Israel's conduct (Deut. 31:16). Note how the verse before us re-



fers first to Yahweh's jealousy, and then to His anger. The first results in the second.

VERSE 17

"They sacrificed unto devils and not to God" — The Hebrew word is *shedim* (related to Shaddai) and signifies destroyers (see also Psa. 106:37). These false gods were destroyers because they had no life to deliver, and the worship of them took Israelites down the pathway to death. The term "not to God" in the Hebrew is "to a no-God". See Rotherham. What the Israelites worshipped were self-destroyers and no Mighty One (*Eloah*) to deliver.

"To gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not" — The Hebrew *qarob* (newly) signifies "near". The reference is to the gods of Canaan that came near to them when Israel invaded the Land. They were induced to worship these gods whilst treating Yahweh with contempt.

VERSE 18

"Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful" — See v. 4. This Rock begat Israel by the power of His revelation (Isa. 17:10; 51:1; See Jhn. 3:3 mg. 1 Pet. 1:23).

"And hast forgotten God that formed thee" — The word "God" is *El* and denotes Divine power. The power of Yahweh overshadowed Israel through the wilderness, moulding the character of the nation for the purpose of entrance into the Land. See Isa. 17:10; 60:21; 63:7-13; Jer. 2:32; Phil. 2:13.

Yahweh's Rebuke and Punishment
— vv. 19-27

Because of their faithlessness and rebellion, Yahweh will cast them off, and permit terrible calamities to overcome them. All this will be due to their refusal to act according to the Revelation given them (Hos. 4:6; 6:6).

VERSE 19

"And when Yahweh saw it, He abhorred them" — Moses, of course, is speaking prophetically. The Song is a Song of Witness to be used against Israel at any appropriate occasion. Hence it expresses in the present and past tenses forms of conduct that the future would reveal. The word "abhorred" in the Hebrew denotes to despise or treat with scorn. Yahweh spurned and rejected them.

"Because of the provoking of His sons, and of His daughters" — As His sons and daughters, the people of Israel were expected to manifest the family characteristics, and honour their Father. But they failed to do so at times, and the women manifested their full share of sin and blame (see Isa. 3:16; Jer. 7:18; 44:15). They "provoked" Yahweh by their gross ingratitude and disobedience. See Isa. 1:2; Hos. 2:5; 9:9.

VERSE 20

"And He said, I will hide My face from them" — See note Deut. 31:17; Isa. 64:7; and the plea of Psa. 80:1. Yahweh would hide His face; refuse to see the abject state to which they would be reduced by their enemies; or hear their cry for help. Great privileges impose great responsibilities (Amos 3:2). We cannot hope to share the good things of Yahweh without reciprocating in loving obedience. "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to thee", James declared (James 4:8). Like the father of the prodigal son, He is always ready to receive His children when they respond to circumstances and seek Him.

"I will see what their end shall be" — Yahweh declares that He will withdraw His protective care, leave them to their own resources, and see how they then fare.

"For they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith" — The children of Israel proved perverse, as all flesh is. See Isa. 30:7-10; Jer. 5:31. These words are cited in Matt. 17:17; Mark 9:19 and applied by the Lord to the generation extant in his day.

VERSE 21

"They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God" — See note v. 16. Rotherham renders the phrase "with a no-god". The word "God" is *El*, and signifies in this context Divine might or power. Israel's no-gods were destitute of such.

"They have provoked me to anger with their vanities" — The word "vanities" is from the Hebrew *habelim*, from a root signifying *emptiness, transitory*. Cf. Jer. 10:6; See Acts 14:15; 1 Cor. 8:4. In Psa. 31:6. In Jonah 2:8 it is rendered *lying*. Israel had angered Yahweh by offering Him words of worship empty of real meaning.

"And I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people" — In this statement there is a play on words. As Israel will forsake Yahweh for a no-god, He

will forsake them for a no-people. These words are cited in Rom. 10:19, and their fulfilment is seen in that Yahweh has not turned to another nation to replace Israel, but has elected to "take out of the Gentiles a people for His name" (Acts 15:14). They are drawn "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9). Therefore they are a No-People, being a heterogeneous group, a remnant of all peoples, not recognised as in covenant relationship with Him (Eph. 2:12; 1 Pet. 2:10). This aroused Israel to jealousy which became manifested in bitter hostility towards Ecclesias in the first century. "Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy", wrote Paul (Rom. 11:11). But he proceeds to show that such blindness is temporary, and that ultimately "all Israel", that is, all the tribes, will be saved (vv. 25-28).

"I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation" — A foolish nation is one that lacks true wisdom. This is a characteristic of the Gentiles, who know not God (Psa. 14:1; 53:1). Unfortunately, Israel imitated such Gentile ways (Deut. 32:6).

VERSE 22

"For a fire is kindled in Mine anger" — The fire of Divine wrath will flare out against Israel, as it did against the foolish sons of Aaron (Lev. 10:2). See Jer. 15:14; 17:4; Lam. 4:11 where this statement is quoted.

"And shall burn unto the lowest hell" — The word "hell" is *sheol*, elsewhere rendered "grave". *Sheol* is derived from a root *shael* signifying *to ask*. This is appropriate because *sheol* or the grave is always asking, always enquiring, for it is insatiable (Prov. 30:15-16). The "lowest sheol" is the one given over to complete destruction from which there is no escape. The expression therefore relates to the fires of Gehenna of the N.T. which figuratively represents the place of condemnation and destruction, such as the nation experienced when it was overthrown by the Romans. See Isa. 30:33; Matt. 23:33-39.

"And shall consume the earth with her increase" — The term "earth" is elsewhere used as a figure of speech for the whole nation. See Isa. 24:1,6.

"And set on fire the foundations of the mountains" — As a figure of speech this describes the seat of government, the foundation of the national organisation. See Lam. 4:11 where the expression is

quoted in relation to the national overthrow at the hands of the Babylonians.

VERSE 23

"I will heap mischiefs upon them" — The word signifies *calamities*.

"I will spend Mine arrows upon them" — Yahweh's judgments and punishments will be directed towards the guilty nation. See Job 6:4; Psa. 18:14; Ezek. 5:16. The phrase is quoted in Lam. 3:13. Some of the arrows of God, that is, His punishments and judgments are listed in the following verses.

VERSE 24

"They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction" — The Oxford Gesenius renders the expression as "sucked out by hunger", absolutely devastated by it, so that nothing seems left in the body, and the bones stick out of the flesh. Davis' Hebrew Lexicon gives it as *exhausted by hunger*. The Hebrew has for the latter expression "devoured by burning coals", which suggests the burning fever of pestilence. Jeremiah constantly warned of the sword, famine and pestilence: Jer. 14:12; 26:9; 27:13; 29:17; 34:17; 38:2; 42:17,22; 44:13. See also Ezek. 6:11; Matt. 24:7; Luke 21:22. In doing so, the prophets and the Lord invoked this Song of Witness.

"I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust" — See the warning of Lev. 26:22. Beasts and serpents are constantly used to figure the Gentile oppressors of Israel (Dan. 7:3; Mic. 7:17). See Ezek. 34:25 where the promise is made that all such "evil beasts" shall ultimately be driven from the land. The reference to "serpents of the dust" might well remind Israelites of the "fiery serpents" sent among the people because of their sin (Num. 21:6).

VERSE 25

"The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs" — See Lam. 1:20. The Song warns that neither innocence of babyhood, nor weakness of old age will escape; all classes of society will be involved in the general calamities that shall overwhelm the nation. History provides the sad record of this horror. The word "destroy" is *beraeve* in the Hebrew. See Ezek. 36:12 where the promise is given that these conditions will no longer prevail in the kingdom.

Yahweh's Restraint — vv. 26-28

Though Israel is deserving of the severest punishment, the nation will not be completely destroyed because of Yahweh's covenant. His reputation would suffer if it were.

VERSE 26

"I said, I would scatter them into corners" — See Ezek. 20:13-14; 36:21-22; Luke 21:24. Because of their wickedness, the people of Israel were scattered into all corners of the earth.

"I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men" — Israel's wickedness in turning its back upon Yahweh, and crucifying His son was deserving of the ultimate punishment: national annihilation.

VERSE 27

"Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy" — Rotherham renders "wrath" as *taunt*, and the RV as *provocation*. Both words imply the boastfulness of the enemy who would rejoice in the destruction of Israel and the failure of Yahweh's promises to Abraham and others. Yahweh feared the consequences of this on the faithful remnant that has always been in evidence.

"Lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely" — The Oxford Gesenius renders the phrase "behave themselves strangely" as *misconstrue*. Yahweh carefully bears in mind the impact that His actions have on men, and provides against them being misunderstood (see Deut. 9:28; Exod. 32:12; Num. 14:13; Isa. 10:12-13; Ezek. 20:13-14). This care is exercised so that no potential saint, carefully considering the evidence, will be led astray. It is this that Yahweh "fears" (cp. John 17:12-13).

"Lest they should say, Our hand is high, and Yahweh hath not done all this" — Yahweh uses Gentile antagonism to punish His people; and then punishes them because of their wicked motives in acting as they do (see Isa. 10:12-15).

The Fickleness of Flesh — vv. 28-31

Both Israel and their opponents fall into the category of failing to comprehend the purposes of Yahweh in punishing or delivering. Israel's conquerors misinterpret the meaning of their victory, believing that it is due to their prowess, and not Yahweh's judgment. And Israel, too, lacks discern-

ment, and fails to consider its latter end, and what can be accomplished given faith and trust in its God. The cause of Israel's rejection was that they were a people utterly destitute of counsel and without understanding. They lacked a vision of the future and perished in consequence. That, too, will be the fate of the Gentiles.

VERSE 28

"For they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them" — This describes flesh in its natural state unilluminated by the Word. See Psa. 81:11-16; Jer. 10:23; Matt. 13:14-15. If the people of Israel had been motivated by the promises of God, and considered their latter end instead of living only for the moment, seeking to satisfy their pleasure and lusts that were destroying their spirituality, their obedience and reliance on Yahweh would have been crowned with victory over the many problems that faced them; but now they are warned that comparatively smaller and weaker nations will gain the ascendancy over them, and they will be taken into captivity (vv. 29-35).

VERSE 29

"O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" — Rotherham renders this in the affirmative: "If they had been wise they would have understood this, they would have given heed to their hereafter". "Where there is no vision", declares Proverbs 29:18 "the people perish". That was the fate of Israel in the past, and will be that of all those who manifest similar characteristics.

VERSE 30

"How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight" — See the promise of Lev. 26:8. It assures Israel that no foe will be strong enough to prevail against it if the people manifest faith in Yahweh.

"Except their Rock had sold them" — For examples of this see Jud. 2:14; 3:8; Psa. 44:12; Isa. 59:1-8. The Hebrew *mokar* signifies to sell as a slave (Gen. 25:33; 37:28,36; 41:56; 45:4), or as merchandise 2 Kgs. 6:25; 7:1,16. The people of Israel were slaves in Egypt, and were purchased by Yahweh, and so became His slaves on the other side of the Red Sea. But proving to be very disobedient slaves, He sold them into the hands of the Gentiles, as it was His right to do.

"And Yahweh had shut them up" — The RV renders this as "delivered them up" See Psa. 31:8.

VERSE 31

"For their rock is not as our Rock" — The heathen also had a rock upon which they built their hopes, even their idols; but those inanimate symbols were not to be compared with the Rock of Israel. See v. 4.

"Even our enemies themselves being judges" — Having experienced the almighty power of Yahweh, the enemies of Israel could not but acknowledge that He was far mightier than the gods whom they worshipped. See the comment of the Egyptians (Exod. 14:25), Balaam (Num. 23:8,23); the Philistines (1 Sam. 4:8); Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:47; 3:29); Darius (Dan. 6:26-27). And see this summarised (1 Sam. 2:2).

VERSE 32

"For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah" — The enemies of Israel are morally depraved, of the same stock as Sodom and Gomorrah; therefore, their triumph over Israel is not because of moral superiority, but because of their immoral seduction. Israel would succumb to this, would taste of the moral wickedness of the Gentiles, and experience the fate of Lot. See Isa. 1:10; 3:9; Jer. 23:14; Ezek. 16:46.

"Their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter" — See note Deut. 29:18.

VERSE 33

"Their wine is the poison of dragons" — The dragon, or crocodile, was the symbol of Egypt (Exod. 7:7-9, serpent is lit. crocodile; the same word as rendered "dragon" Ezek. 29:3). Egypt is represented as the land of sin and death; spiritually opposed to that which is good (Rev. 11:8). Egypt reduced Israel to a state of spiritual degradation and slavery; yet its culture and its affluence were attractive and intoxicating in their appeal. See the description of the wicked and the poisonous "liquor" they offer to their dupes (Psa. 58:4).

"And the cruel venom of asps" — The word "cruel" is rendered "deadly" in the NIV. The Hebrew *Pethen* describes the Cobra (see *Animals of Bible Lands*). This was revered as a sacred animal in Egypt,

and was there the symbol of immortality. If an Egyptian desired to commit suicide, he used the bite of the cobra to bring it about. See Psa. 140:3; Rom. 3:13.

VERSE 34

"Is not this laid up in store with Me, and sealed up among My treasures" — By "treasures" is meant things hidden from view. The treasures of Yahweh include not only a store of blessings, but also instruments of punishment, which He reserves for the Day of Judgment. See Job 38:22-23; Isa. 10:12-13; Nah. 1:2. Psa. 135:6-8

Yahweh's Abounding Mercy — vv. 35-39

Despite the transgression of the people of Israel, justifying the punishment Yahweh will bring to bear upon them, His abounding mercy is still reserved for the nation because of the irrevocable covenant of promise made to its father (Rom. 11:27-29). He will not only punish His people, but ultimately redeem them.

VERSE 35

"To Me belongeth vengeance and recompense" — The RV renders this: "Vengeance is Mine and recompense" (see Psa. 94:1). Israel has experienced the former because of its apathy and apostasy; but will also receive the latter. These words are cited by Paul in Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30.

"Their foot shall slide in due time" — The RV renders: "at the time that their foot shall slide". At that time, Yahweh's people will experience His judgment.

"For the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste" — The punishment of which Israel was warned would soon overcome them in the day of wickedness. They should recall and heed this warning and "cease to do evil".

VERSE 36

"For Yahweh shall judge His people" — These words are cited in Psa. 135:14 in relation to the coming establishment of the Kingdom. "Judgment shall begin at the house of God" (1 Pet. 4:17), will extend to Israel after the flesh, and finally to the Gentiles (see Psa. 50:4; 145:7-9). The Hebrew word *dayan*, denotes a Judge or Advocate from *diyn*, to rule, and by implication to judge (as an umpire), or to strive (as at law — Gen. 6:3). The title appears only in Psa. 68:5, where Yahweh is described as "a Judge of widows", that is, those who have no helper of their own. Those who extend care to the helpless,

therefore, manifest an important Divine characteristic, and will gain the favour of the Dayan; see Deut. 10:17-18, and note the parable of the importunate widow (Luke 18:3-8). In the verse before us, Yahweh declares that He will arbitrate for His widowed people when "He seeth that their power is gone". As Judge, He will judge the world in righteousness (Psa. 9:8; Psa. 96:10; 110:6; Acts 17:31), act as administrator (Psa. 72:2; Zech. 3:7); extend His influence as arbitrator and administrator to the ends of the earth (1 Sam. 2:10). As Judge, He supervises perfect justice to the benefit of all: a justice that is blended with mercy and understanding, and which will be manifested through the Lord Jesus Christ "because he is the Son of man" (John 5:22-27; Rom. 3:26). But there will be no mercy for those who wantonly reject His way; for citing this passage, the Apostle comments: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:30).

"And repent Himself for His servants" — The Hebrew *nacham* can denote "pity" or "compassion". Therefore, Rotherham renders: "And upon His servants will have compassion". Such compassion will be extended to His people, both personal and national after they have been humbled and respond (Rom. 11:25-29).

"When He seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left" — This will be the "time of Jacob's trouble" when Israel will be humbled to the dust by the Russian invasion, but out of which the nation will be redeemed (Jer. 30:7-9). In that day Israel will have none to help her; she will be bereft of all her former "friends" (Jer. 30:13-14). This will apply to all, whether "shut up or left", that is, whether captive in their enemies' lands or free. They will reach a point where there will be no one to whom they can turn, except, as in Egypt, to their God (see Jer. 30:7; Matt. 23:39). As tokens of this future deliverance, Yahweh raised up judges and saviours (such as Gideon) who delivered the people when they were in great extremity. A future greater deliverance, under a future greater Saviour is promised in the verses before us. At that time "the residue of the people" that "shall not be cut off from the city" (Zech. 14:2), shall go forth and resist the enemy (v. 14).

VERSE 37

"And he shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted" —

See Jud. 10:14; 1 Kings 18:27 where similar questions are posed. Note also the difference between *their rock* (vv. 31,37) and *the Rock* (vv. 4,15,18,30,31). The facts of Israel's apostasy will be clearly brought home to the people before they are fully restored to Divine favour. When Christ reveals himself to the people in the land, and Elijah is sent forth to those still in dispersion, their past folly and apostasy will be brought clearly to their attention. Ungodliness must be abandoned before they can be saved (Rom. 11:26). The people will be compelled to recognize the status of Yahweh and His Son, and will be reduced to a condition of humbly mourning for their past blindness (Jer. 3:19-25; Zech. 12:10-14). Even then, they will be compelled as a nation to formally repudiate their past wickedness and accept the Truth in love (Jer. 4:1-2). A national ceremony will be conducted in the Temple in Jerusalem at the commencement of the Millennial reign of the Lord, when the facts of the past wickedness of Israel will again be brought before the assembled representatives of the nation (see Ezek. 43:7-11). Having "been made ashamed" of their past conduct, they will, after a seven days' ceremony, finally be accepted (v. 27). Their gods (supposedly *mighty ones*) and rock (upon which they have built their hopes) will be set aside, and they will have to acknowledge the relationship of Yahweh to the Lord Jesus Christ. What a humiliation for Israel! A people of privilege who have denied the greatest gift given to mankind! But humbled and made repentant by the Lord Jesus Christ they will be brought into covenant relationship with Yahweh upon the basis of Grace (Jer. 31:31-37).

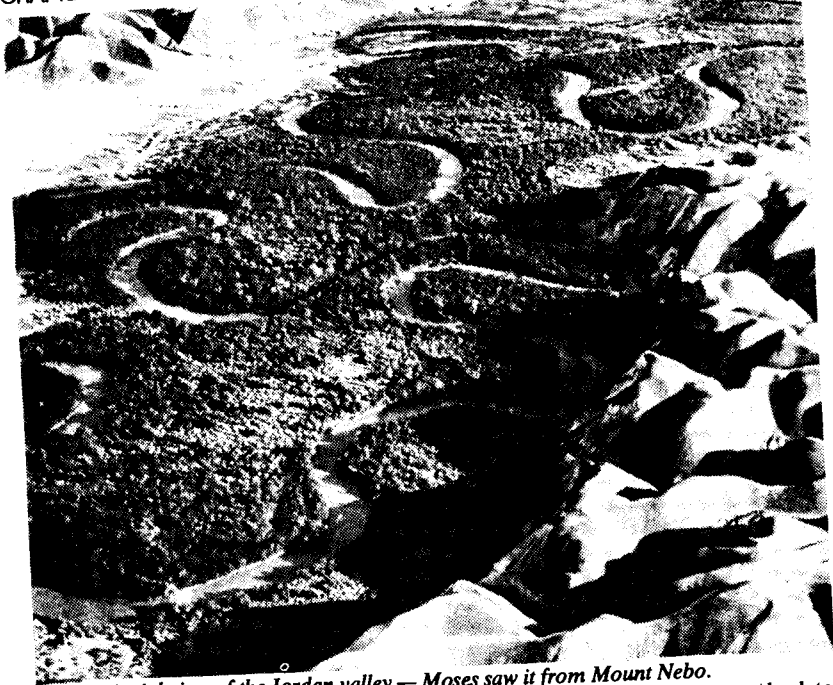
VERSE 38

"Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offerings?" — Israel gave to the false pagan, useless gods their full worship, impoverishing themselves to do so.

"Let them rise up and help you, and be your protection" — Such gods were as ineffectual to help as are the gods of gold and silver in a time of desperate need, as worshipped by a covetous world today (see Psa. 115:4-8; Isa. 2:20-22).

VERSE 39

"See now that I, even I, am he" — The Hebrew is very emphatic: "See now I, I, he". This strange statement is expressive



Aerial view of the Jordan valley — Moses saw it from Mount Nebo.

of God manifestation. "I" relates to Yahweh the "I" of the statement, and it is doubled for emphasis: the "he" being the medium of His manifestation: the true Israel: Christ in multiple manifestation. In Isa. 48:12 it is expressed: "I He; I the first, I also the last". In Isa. 41:4: "I Yahweh, the First, and with the last; I He". However, in the Hebrew, "last" as expressed in Ch. 48:12 is in the singular number: the "last one"; whereas in Ch. 41:4 it is plural: the "last ones". The full manifestation of Yahweh's glory was exhibited first in a "last one" the Lord Jesus Christ; but the ultimate manifestation of glory will be revealed in a multiplicity of glorified ones, the saints, or "last ones". This threefold development: first Yahweh, then His son, and finally His sons is expressed in Rev. 1:4: "From Him which is, and which was, and which is to come". Those thus glorified constitute the Israel of God, the 144,000 redeemed from among men (Gal. 6:16; Rev. 7:1-10; 14:4). Elsewhere Isaiah declares that "apart from Yahweh there is no Saviour (Isa. 43:11), nor Elohim (44:6).

"And there is no God with Me" — The

word "God" is *Mighty Ones*, and relates not to the useless pagan gods, but to the angels of heaven. The Hebrew signifies that there is no *Mighty Ones* that are on an equality with Yahweh; all are subordinate to Him. Concerning this verse, Rotherham has the following note:

"The inquisitive will not begrudge the trouble of examining the context which leads up to this animated and impressive passage. It will be seen that with keenest irony, idolatrous Israel has just been advised to apply in her extremity to the false gods of which she boasted. 'See now' if haply ye have at length discovered how utterly vain is *their* help — 'that I, I' emphatically repeated, as if to invite a penitent nation to fill in the blanks from the stores of reviving memories. 'I' — your own, your real, your living God; 'I' — your long forgotten, but yet faithful, loving God, still waiting, even now after all this, to be gracious. 'See now that I, I am he'; or 'am the One', and the only One, that can help you'. 'And there are no gods with me' — strong negative of substantive verb, hence accent on 'no'. 'I kill' — separate, nominative pronoun, hence emphasis on pro-

noun. 'And make alive' — nominative pronoun not repeated, hence none needed in English; the contrast between 'kill' and 'make alive' at this point suffices. 'I wound' — again no separate nominative, and no emphasis on 'I' this time permissible. But then finally, when bringing in the climax 'I heal' there is a triumphant stress to be laid on the 'I'. The translator protests that, while he does real homage to the elocutionary instinct which is common to all men, and is well trained in most educated men, he considers it very unlikely that such instinct could ever unaided have divined the existence of such authoritatively indicated variations as these; of which, indeed, familiarity with the original idiom can alone give trustworthy information".

"I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand" — That being the power and ability of Yahweh, how important that Israel heed the One they worship. Recognising this, how important to respond as implied in Psa. 18:24-27. See Psa. 147:1-7.

Israel To Be Ultimately Redeemed — vv. 40-43

Yahweh swears that despite the faithlessness of His people, He will remain true to His promises. The sword will swing into action and devour the flesh of their adversaries. Israel will be delivered and elevated to the first of the nations, and all others will be brought into subjection to her power.

VERSE 40

"For I lift up My hand to heaven" — This gesture denotes the taking of an oath, as extending the hand to perform it. In this case, the oath endorses that made with Abraham (Gen. 22:16) and David (Psa. 89:35), recalled at the birth of the Lord (Luke 1:68-75); and confirmed by his death and resurrection (Rom. 15:8). This oath guarantees the national redemption of Israel, for "the gifts and calling of God (in relation thereto) are without repentance", or change of mind as the word signifies (Rom. 11:29). In the Hebrew, the word "heaven" is in the plural, upon which Brother Thomas comments in *Eureka* Vol. 1, pp. 143-145:

"Heavens is used for the constituents of governments, or administrations; as the sun, moon, constellations, and individual stars, in the celestial world *shahmuyim*, 'heavens', comes from *shahmah* 'to be

high'. Hence, a body of persons exalted to a high position over 'kindreds, tongues, people, nations' are heavens which rule. Thus the Spirit in speaking of the overthrow of the political system in Idumea, says in Isa. 34:4, 'All the host of the heavens shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling from the fig tree; for My sword shall be bathed in the heavens; behold it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse to judgment'. In this the phrase 'the heavens' is interpreted to signify 'the people of Yahweh's curse' who ruled Idumea, and were destined for a great slaughter in Botzra of that land Isa. 63:1; Rev. 19:17-21".

"And say, I live for ever" — Brother Thomas renders this, "I am the Living One of the Olahm" or Millennium. In other words, the reality of the living God will then be apparent. "Yahweh liveth" was a common formula in taking an oath (Num. 14:21; 1 Sam. 14:39,45), and is expressive of the fact that as Yahweh lives what is proposed will be accomplished.

VERSE 41

"If I whet My glittering sword" — To "whet" a sword is to sharpen it. But this is no ordinary sword. The Hebrew word *baraq* signifies not "glittering" but *lightning*, and therefore, Yahweh's sword is the Sword of the Spirit: a Sword of Divine Fire, or a Flaming Sword (Gen. 3:24). Habakkuk, in recording the coming conquests of Christ by which the world will be subdued, made reference to the arrows of light and the spear of lightning (Hab. 3:11). Christ and the glorified saints will wield the sword of the spirit in executing "the judgments written" (Psa. 149:5-9), and no nation will have the ability to resist that power.

"And Mine hand take hold on judgment" — The "hand" of Yahweh extended for judgment will be manifested through Christ and the saints as it was through the *Elohim* in past ages (Isa. 41:20; 59:1; 63:5).

"I will render vengeance to Mine enemies, and will reward them that hate Me" — He will perform this through the agency of His saints (Psa. 149:5-9).

VERSE 42

"I will make Mine arrows drunk with blood" — This is a frightening expression,

indicative of the widespread judgments to be poured out upon those who refuse to acknowledge Yahweh's right. This will be at the time of trouble such as never was (Dan. 12:1), when "the slain of Yahweh will be from one end of the earth to the other" (Jer. 25:33), and "the nation and kingdom that will not serve Him shall perish" (Isa. 60:12). Such slaughter is quite unnecessary, but will be brought about by the stubborn refusal of flesh to accept discipline and seek the mercy of God. "He willet not the death of any, but that all should come unto Him and live". But for Yahweh to ignore the refusal of flesh to submit would be to allow wickedness and sin to triumph, which would be disastrous for humanity, including the righteous. In this work of subduing the nations Israel will also be used as the human agency of conquest (Zech. 9:13-15; 10:5-7).

"And My sword shall devour flesh" — In His judgment on Israel, Nebuchadnezzar is described as Yahweh's sword (Jer. 47:6-7; Ezek. 21:3); and in the coming judgments on the nations, Yahweh will again "call for a sword against Gog" (Ezek. 38:21), and through His saints will wield it effectively against those nations that refuse to submit (Rev. 17:14). The sword "will devour flesh". The edge of it is described as its "mouth" because it is said to "devour flesh".

"And that with the blood of the slain and of the captives" — There will be only two categories of people throughout the earth: the slain and the captives. There will be none that will escape, for the conquests and victories shall extend to all nations, bringing all into subjection to Him. The Truth or the Sword will be the alternative facing the Gentiles in that day (Isa. 60:12; Dan. 2:44; 7:27 etc.).

"From the beginning of revenges upon the enemy" — According to Hebraists, this rendition is unsatisfactory. The *Interlinear Hebrew-English Old Testament* gives it literally as "from head of leaders of being enemy". The word "beginning" is *rosh* in Hebrew. The word "revenges" is *paroth* and has nothing to do with "revenges". It is from a root signifying *long dishevelled hair*. It will be recalled that this was a distinguishing mark of Esau who was born "hairy all over". See note Gen. 25:25.

VERSE 43

"Rejoice, O ye nations, with His

people" — These words are quoted by Paul as prophetic of the conversion of Gentiles (Rom. 15:10). But what is not done by preaching now will be accomplished by war and conquest at the Lord's return; and to this the statement also relates. Ultimately, through Christ's victories the whole world will have cause to rejoice (Isa. 2:2-4).

"For He will avenge the blood of His servants" — Reference to this promise is made in Rev. 6:10 in the question of those "slain for the word of God", "How long, O Lord, holy and true dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" The answer is given in the next verse, and the fulfilment predicted in Rev. 19:2.

"And will render vengeance to His adversaries" — That "day of vengeance" is coming (see Isa. 61:2), causing the saints to "rejoice" (Psa. 58:10; 149:5). The words "vengeance" and "avenge" is from a common Hebrew root signifying both *avenge* and *punish*.

"And will be merciful unto His land, and to His people" — Both land and people will be viewed with favour by Yahweh in the day of vengeance and glory. Thus the song concludes with a summons to all nations to rejoice in Yahweh's righteous intervention. The saving of Israel is a cause for universal rejoicing, for through her all nations of the earth shall be blessed (Zech. 8:13). The occasion of rejoicing will be in *first*, the manifestation of justice and discipline; and in *second*, the exercise of mercy. The word "merciful" is from the Hebrew *kaphar*, and signifies to "make atonement". Christ will not only punish sin, but will forgive and cleanse it. See Zech. 13:1-4.

"Let all the angels of God worship him" — This clause is inserted here by *The Septuagint* Version. It is cited in Heb. 1:6, and linked with a similar statement found in Psa. 97:7. Such a concluding statement is appropriate to this *Song of Witness* — particularly the manner in which the Apostle uses it. He applies it to the second coming of the Lord, and based on the R.V. declared: "When He shall *again* bring the firstborn into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship him". There will be opportunity for this when the Temple is completed, and all mankind shall be united in worship. The Scriptures imply that at that time there will be an inaugural ceremony, as there

was when the Tabernacle was reared up, and the Temple of Solomon opened for service. Representatives of all the nations will be present (Psa. 45:12; Psa. 72:10-11); Israel will be present (Psa. 118:21-26; Matt. 23:29), and, of course, those of the immortalised saints who will be called together for that purpose. In addition, some of heaven's host will likewise gather for the occasion (Luke 12:8). The voice of Yahweh will again be heard proclaiming the status of His Son (Psa. 2:6-7), as it was at his baptism (Matt. 3:17), and at his typical glorification on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:5). This will be followed by anthems of praise, led by the saints (Rev. 5:9-10), followed by the angelic host (Rev. 5:11-12), and completed by representatives of the mortals there gathered together (Rev. 5:13). This refrain will be taken up by others, until the whole earth will be encircled with singing and made glad with praise. The birth of Messiah was announced by a small company of angels appearing to a few shepherds on the slopes adjacent to Bethlehem, but the Millennium is to be ushered in by singing on the part of an august company gathered from all nations, and from heaven itself; whilst the refrain will be taken up by all the world of humanity. Then will the words of the angels find their fulfilment: "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace and goodwill towards men". They shall worship him as the saints will be worshipped as described in Rev. 3:9 — by being paid the obeisance or "reverence due to his and their high status" (see Zeph. 3:19).

Sequel To The Song — vv. 44-58

As indicated in Deut. 31:14,19, Joshua assists Moses in both writing the song and teaching it to Israel. It is supplemented by a powerful exhortation on the part of Moses; these being among the last recorded words spoken by him. At their conclusion he is instructed to prepare for death.

VERSE 44

"And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he and Hoshea the son of Nun" — Hoshea is Joshua, an abbreviated form of Yehoshuah, *Yah shall save* (Num. 13:8,16; Deut. 31:3,7,14,23). Joshua the son of Nun signifies *Yah will bring salvation for perpetuity* or always.

VERSE 45

"And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel" — Faithfully,

the great leader passed on to the people the full counsel of Yahweh. Cp. also Paul's method (Acts 20:26-27).

VERSE 46

"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" — See Deut. 6:7; 11:19. This exhortation is similar to the one given by Barnabas to the believers in Antioch: "With purpose of heart cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:23). Both exhortations warn that believers cannot drift into the Kingdom of God. They need to set the attaining of it as the great objective of life. Everything should be governed by that ambition. Without that in view life remains an aimless wandering towards death, but with it, life is a purposeful pilgrimage towards a clearly defined objective: life eternal in the Kingdom of God.

VERSE 47

"For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life" — The words Moses had proclaimed were not to be treated lightly; they introduced Israel to Yahweh who is the life of all who believe. See Deut. 30:20; Prov. 3:1,2,18,22. On the other hand, Israel suffered and were destroyed "through lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4:6; 6:6). Yahweh has magnified His word above all his Name (Psa. 138:2), and therefore it must be treated with the utmost respect and care.

"And through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it" — Continued tenancy of the land by Israel was subject to the nation's obedience to the Divine will.

VERSE 48

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying" — On the day on which Moses rehearsed this song in the hearing of the people, his death was announced to him by God (see Num. 27:12-14).

VERSE 49

"Get thee up into this mountain Abarim" — Abarim is a long ridge of frightfully rocky, precipitous hills which act as a barrier along the eastern coast of the Dead Sea. The word is from a root signifying *Passages*.

"Unto Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho" —

Nebo signifies *Elevation*. It is a mountain among the range of hills and mountains that form Abarim. Pisgah (Deut. 34:1) is a peak of Nebo.

"And behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession" — See notes Deut. 34:1-4. In viewing the land in that manner, Moses typed those "who died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth" (Heb. 11:13). He represented the Law, whereas Joshua represented salvation through grace. Moses as representing the Law led the people, as it were, in this life to sight of the Promise Land; entrance into which he was barred by death. Joshua (Jesus) took them into it. The Law could not provide access to the inheritance of faith because of the weakness of flesh (Rom. 8:3).

VERSE 50

"And die in the mount whither thou goest up" — The Law was related to death (Rom. 7:9) because of the weakness of the flesh, and therefore it was impossible for fallen man to obey it in its fulness; it needed the appearance of a New Man bearing the nature of flesh in all its weakness, yet strengthened in mind by God to conquer.

"And be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in the mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people" — See notes Num. 20:24-28.

VERSE 51

"Because ye trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin" — See notes Num. 13:21; 20:11-13. Meribah-Kadesh signifies *Strife at the Sanctuary*. In the midst of strife, Moses temporarily forgot the honour due to Yahweh and "spake unadvisedly with his lips" (Psa. 106:33). The incident illus-

trates the weakness of flesh, for Moses had no peer in his standing with God (Deut. 34:10-12). His death was a lesson and an exhortation to all Israel to look for the redeemer who should come (Gal. 3:24). What care should be exercised in the midst of strife at the Sanctuary lest in the heat of the moment, even when pressing for the things of God, we do speak unadvisedly! What a powerful lesson this marvellous leader of Israel presents! All his words of instruction and exhortation were emphasised by the manner of his death, and the wise action of Yahweh in denying him entrance into the land at that time.

"Because ye sanctified Me not in the midst of the children of Israel" — To sanctify Yahweh, to set Him apart in all His majesty and goodness in the midst of the greatest provocations of life, will help to secure for those wise enough to control themselves, a place in His kingdom. Moses' lapse was a temporary one, but even so, it emphasised the failure of the Law through the weakness of the flesh to secure a future inheritance. Forgiveness, through the Redeemer to come, was required, and, in faith, Moses looked to his coming (Deut. 18:15-18).

VERSE 52

"Yet thou shalt see the land before thee" — See Deut. 3:27; 34:1-4 and cp. Heb. 11:13.

"But thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel" — Possession of the land foreshadowed the Kingdom yet to come. This remains a vision to the people of God. Moses' death taught the lesson that something more than law is essential to life: even grace. Though the law was "ordained unto life" flesh in its weakness could not give satisfaction to the requirements of law. So Moses had to die. Nevertheless he died in hope, for the invitation to view the Land assures for him an eternal inheritance in the age to come (see Gen. 13:14).

Based on Deuteronomy 34:

Upon the Mount

" . . . For he endured as seeing Him Who is invisible" — Hebrews 11:27.

Moses came to Nebo tall,
He climed the lofty height
He looked beyond the valley small
The land was now in sight . . .

"Oh Israel I have longed to see
The Land so green and wide
But God decreed I must rest here
Not now to go inside;
But, you go on with Joshua
Your almost at the door
Faith must take you on dear ones,
Faith, and not the Law!
My time will come when brethren all
Will rise and gladly meet
I'll see my Lord, the Righteous One
Upon the Judgment Seat.
He'll wisely judge, he'll understand,
No secret there to keep
And then perhaps, He'll say to me
"Come Moses, lead My sheep"

G.M. (Yagoona)

Winston Churchill's Opinion of Moses

"We reject with scorn all those learned and labored myths that Moses was but a legendary figure upon whom the priesthood and the people hung their essential social, moral, and religious ordinances. We believe that the most scientific view, the most up-to-date and rational conception will find its fullest satisfaction in taking the Bible story literally. We may be sure that all these things happened just as they are set out according to Holy Writ. We may believe that they happened to people not so very different from ourselves, and that the impressions those people received were faithfully recorded, and have been transmitted across the centuries with far more accuracy than many of the telegraphed accounts we read of goings on of today. In the words of a forgotten work of Mr. Gladstone, we rest with assurance upon 'The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture'. Let men of science and learning expand their knowledge, and probe with their researches, every detail of the records which have been preserved to us from those dim ages. All they will do is to fortify the grand simplicity and essential accuracy of these recorded truths which have so far lighted the pilgrimage of man."

DEUTERONOMY:

DIVINE FAITHFULNESS
IN DISCIPLINING AND DELIVERING

Discourse Eight:

***BLESSING —
FUTURE GLORY
OF THE
TRIBES
Ch. 33:1-29***

MOSES' BLESSINGS OF THE TRIBES

The blessing of the tribes is Moses' last public act, and parallels with the blessing by Jacob of his sons before his death (Gen. 49). There are two significant links that connect this with the Song of Witness, and act as introductory to the tribal blessings. First: Moses and Joshua unite in reciting the Song of Witness, so that in this important service in bringing home to the people of Israel their privileges, responsibilities and weaknesses, the old leader and the new (representing the Old Covenant and the New) are shown to be in harmony (Deut. 32:44-47). Second: then the impending death of Moses is recorded (Deut. 32:48-52) foreshadowing, in type, the death of the Mosaic Order in A. D. 70. But the blessings take us into the future and we see, as it were, Moses viewing the tribes in millennial glory; Moses typically risen from the dead to supervise the completion of his labours under the splendour of Messiah's reign (Rev. 15:3). In conformity with this, the introduction to the blessings (vv. 1-5) depicts the march of the multitudinous Christ from Sinai to Jerusalem; the blessings (vv. 6-25) describe conditions that await the re-establishment of the Kingdom; the conclusion (vv. 26-29) gives praise to the God of Israel through Whom, alone, the fulfilment is possible. The final words celebrate the triumph of Divine goodness for Israel, before which all enemies will be helpless and defeated. It pronounces a benediction upon the people who are the subjects of such a national salvation. It stresses the incomparable glory of the God of Jeshurun who will provide both help and refuge to His people. What a glorious finale to the work of Moses, and introduction to the labours of Joshua. It gives assurance that whatever glory Israel had in the past, the fulness of it awaits the future when the vision will become the reality.

Before ascending Mount Nebo, to view the land he was not then permitted to enter, and then to die, Moses pronounces a blessing upon the people he had so long guided and ruled. Each tribe is mentioned in order with the exception of Simeon who is not mentioned. The Chapter provides an Introduction (vv. 1-5), the Blessings (vv. 6-25), and a Conclusion (vv. 26-29). The first reveals the channel of future blessings: the appearance of the multitudinous Christ from Sinai as the Sun of Righteousness, the King in Jeshurun. The second reveals the form the blessings shall take: Reuben shall live (v. 6); Judah shall conquer (v. 7); Levi shall teach (vv. 8-11); Benjamin shall dwell in safety (v. 12); Joseph shall triumph (vv. 13-17); Zebulun shall minister in righteousness (vv. 18-19); Gad shall administer justice (vv. 20-21); Dan shall judge in strength (v. 22); Naphtali shall experience satisfaction and blessing (v. 23); Asher shall be blessed with a numerous progeny (vv. 24-25). The third division of the Chapter provides a Summary acknowledging the Source of the blessings (vv. 26-29). He is the God of Jeshurun (vv. 26-27), and Jeshurun is the Israel of the future (vv. 28-29). Why no mention of Simeon? In the past it was scattered in Israel (Gen. 49:7) so it did not have an independent tribal inheritance, though it is given one in the future (Ezek. 48:24-25). Why not mentioned here? Perhaps because of that past scattering, but also because the vision of this chapter takes in the future when hearing (Simeon) shall give way to seeing (Reuben), and in the presence of the Messiah, the hearing of hope will give place to the realisation of faith.

Introduction — vv. 1-5

The fulfilment of Moses' blessings awaits the appearance of the Sun of Righteousness who will arise (vv. 1-3) to be King in Jeshurun (vv. 4-5). The true Israel of God will ascend from Sinai to take its place in the Land of Promise then to be made glorious. The sun, shining in its strength, will destroy the darkness of Gentile night, permitting the glory of the future to be revealed in all its majesty.

VERSE 1

"And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death" — The appellation *Man of God* is applied to Moses only here and in Josh. 14:6, and to the heading of Psalm 90. It implies one favoured with Divine communications, and employed as Yahweh's messenger to men (cp. 1 Sam. 9:6; 1 Kings 12:22). It reveals Moses as a prophet, a type of Christ

(Deut. 18:15). Moses proclaimed the blessings, but Christ will perform them. The instruction is given in the third person, and may reveal the influence of Joshua, who was associated with Moses in these last services to the people (Deut. 32:44).

VERSE 2

"And he said" — Joshua records that which follows as being the words of Moses.

"Yahweh came from Sinai" — Though the Hebrew is couched in the past tense, the words are prophetic and should be aligned with Habakkuk 3 which, in the Hebrew, is in the future tense. Therefore these words proclaim what shall take place in the future though based upon what took place in the past. The name Yahweh is prophetic of the Divine purpose. It points to what *He will be*. He was not properly manifested in the company of people who left Sinai under Moses, for that generation perished in the wilderness (contrast v. 3), but He will be fully manifested in the multitudinous and glorified Christ who will leave Sinai in the future. The purpose of the Gospel is to "take out of the Gentiles a people for His name" (Acts 15:14). Such a people are "in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2), and of Divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). Upon those of their number who "overcome" there will be pronounced the name of God (Rev. 3:12). As the full manifestation of Yahweh, they shall move from Sinai, ascending to Jerusalem to take up their positions of glory and authority over Israel and the whole world.

But why "from Sinai"? Because, it would appear to be the site of the Judgment. When Christ returns, the responsible dead will be raised and with living believers will be taken to the presence of Christ (Psa. 50:5; 2 Thess. 2:1). There they will be judged and granted the reward according to their striving. That Sinai is the place set aside for this purpose, seems obvious from the various Scriptures that follow:

Deut. 33:1. It is clearly obvious that these blessings are Millennial, and therefore the Israel referred to is not that after the flesh, but the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16) clothed upon with immortality. To come "from Sinai" the members thereof must first go there; and as the vision outlined shows their introduction to the world, it seems obvious that the judgment seat will be set up there. From there they will emerge to establish Christ's rule on

earth. As such they will comprise the "little Stone" cut out of the mountains without hands, which will become a mountain filling the whole earth (Dan. 2:34-35,44).

Psalms 50:3-4. This depicts the judgment of Yahweh's people as described in Moses' *Song of Witness*. It includes the words: "Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice" (v. 5). This teaches a gathering of saints to the Lord at his return for the purpose of Judgment. Whilst it does not specifically state the place where the gathering shall take place, other passages quoted strongly suggest that it will be Sinai.

The topography of Sinai is ideal for the purpose of Judgment. It is a mountainous region (Mt. Sinai is some 7,500 ft., 2700m above sea level) mainly of barren red granite, intersected by deep and wide valleys in which countless people could shelter without being observed. It is surrounded by a harsh, barren wilderness sparsely populated by Bedouin (see Deut. 1:19; 8:15; Jer. 2:6). The Mount itself is a precipitous peak on a plateau about three miles long. It rises suddenly like a huge altar of red granite. Another peak on the same plateau is Horeb, before which is a wide plain, terminating two very long and deep valleys. Doubtless these valleys will accommodate the people to be judged, whilst the wide plain would provide scope for the two final companies: the accepted and rejected to come before their Judge to receive the final decision (Matt. 25:31-46). Today there is some activity in the area, and a tourist hotel is being built. But Yahweh will have no problem in clearing the area if His purpose requires it; nor, by the means at His disposal, of blocking out the activity in gathering the responsible together from the prying eyes of aerial observation by enclosing it with impenetrable cloud. This He did in the past; the cloud was a shelter to the people from the sun, and doubtless will be needed again in the future for that purpose (Psa. 105:39).

When Moses declared that "Yahweh came from Sinai" he meant that He did so in manifestation. Divine glory, nature and authority will be granted the elected (Rom. 5:2; 2 Pet. 1:4; Rev. 3:12), and equipped with Spirit-power (Zech. 4:6) they will go forth as "pillars of smoke" (Song 3:6) to conquer the world. The past tense was used by Moses, because the emergence of Israel from Sinai under his leadership typed the future emergence of the glorious saints to be led by Christ.

Psalms 68:17: "The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place". The use of so many words in italics in the A.V. indicates that the translators are not satisfied with the rendering. The *Companion Bible* suggests: "Yahweh among them (the angels and chariots) hath come from Sinai into His Sanctuary". Brother Thomas agrees with this. Rotherham, quoting Ginsburg has "The Lord hath come from Sinai into His sanctuary". The Psalm describes the coming judgment of the household and of the world, and this statement appears as a general summary. As Brother Thomas observes, if the Lord is to come from Sinai, he must first go there! And so must also his elect for they are with him. For what purpose would he take them there, but for the purpose of judgment? Paul taught that living and resurrected saints will be taken to the presence of the Lord for that purpose (2 Thess. 2:1).

Song of Solomon 3:6-11: The multitudinous Christ is described as emerging from the wilderness to be received with royal acclaim in Zion. This supplements the previous references.

Habakkuk 3:3: This prophecy repeats the description of Deuteronomy 33:1-2. However, in the Hebrew, the words are in the future tense: "Eloah will come in from Teman . . ." The R.V. gives all the verbs in the future and so supplies support to Bro. Thomas' rendering in *Eureka*. Teman is to the south of Jerusalem, adjacent to Sinai. The Psalm of Habakkuk pictures the gathering of Christ and the saints, and the emergence of the Divine army against the enemies of Yahweh, its resounding conquests, and the establishment of the Kingdom in righteousness.

"And rose up from Seir unto them" — The analogy is of the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2; 2 Sam. 23:4; 2 Pet. 3:8) shining in strength in the political heavens on the Millennial Day. The verb "rose up" is from the Hebrew *zarach*, to break forth as light. The "them" relates to Israel after the flesh. In belligerent manifestation Christ in company with the saints, after first conquering Egypt (Isa. 19:1) will make his way to Jerusalem to counter the invasion of Gog and to destroy the nations gathered there for war (Zech. 14:1-9). Thus he will come for the "help of his people". It will be a time of intense spiritual darkness, but in the midst of it, Zion's light shall shine forth (Isa. 60:1-2), and the Sun of Righteousness will be revealed to destroy the deep gloom. Seir is

east of the southern portion of the Land, and is identified with Edom (Isa. 63:1-6).

"He shined forth from mount Paran" — These are areas that were known to Moses as he led the people towards the Promised Land (see Num. 10:12); and via this route the militant representatives of the multitudinous Christ will make their way in belligerent manifestation, to relieve the besieged city of Jerusalem. "Shined forth" is from the Hebrew *yapha'*, "to shine forth in glory as the sun".

"And he came" — This expression is still based upon the analogy of the rising sun, as its penetrating and beaming rays spread further and further, effectively destroying the darkness. The Hebrew is *'athar*, and it signifies to burst forth speedily, unexpectedly and suddenly. It describes the action of the early morning sun as it suddenly makes its appearance above the eastern horizon.

"With ten thousands of saints" — This is a representative gathering, and does not necessarily indicate a mere ten thousand. The number ten is frequently used to define a large, unspecified number, and therefore signifies the whole, whatever that may be (see 1 Sam. 29:5; Psa. 3:6; Song 5:10; 1 Cor. 4:15; 14:19). Christ will not need every glorified saint for the purpose of conquest. Armed with Spirit power, comparatively few will be required for that. But those few will be representative of the whole. For those that remain there will be many duties to perform including education, supervision, administration, caring, and so forth. A few of the warriors of the past: Moses, Gideon, David and others would be all-sufficient for actual conquest: yet they would represent all.

"From his right hand went a fiery law for them" — The word "law" is *dath* signifying an imperial mandate. It is described as "fiery" or a fire shining forth, because it will be designed to purge and purify. It answers to the "fiery sword" of the Cherubim of Genesis 3:24. This "fiery law" will brook no disobedience. The imperial mandate will call upon the assembled armies to submit or be destroyed; and after the destruction of Gog, an ultimatum will be issued to the world to do likewise (Psa. 2:10-12; Isa. 14:32; Rev. 10:11; 14:6-10). Those nations that refuse will be compelled by force to submit (cp. Isa. 60:12).

VERSE 3

"Yea, he loved the people" — This ob-

viously does not relate to the generation that left Egypt, for it perished in the wilderness. It will relate to those who inherit immortality in the age to come.

“All His saints are in thy hand; and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words” — Other renditions (see RSV) give the pronouns in the third person: *His* hand, feet and words; in doing so they relate them to Yahweh. They denote that the people were under Yahweh’s protection (hand), guidance (feet), and motivation (receive His words). Moses was the medium of the Divine revelation to the people. Accepting the AV “His saints” relates to Yahweh, and “thy” hand etc., to Christ, of whom Moses was a type.

VERSE 4

“Moses commanded us a law” — All that Moses taught came from Yahweh; it is heard and seen in its perfection in the teaching and example of the Lord whom he typified.

“Even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob” — The word *even* is in italics. This indicates that there is no comparable word in Hebrew. It is better omitted. The words are in apposition to “law”, and indicate that the Law which Moses commanded the people was to remain with them as the inheritance of the congregation.

VERSE 5

“And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together” — At no time was Moses acknowledged as king in Israel. The RV mg. renders: “There was a King in Jeshurun . . .” This is supported by the RSV and other renditions. The King was Yahweh, and the nation, on entering into covenant relation with Him was constituted the Kingdom of God (Exod. 19:6). The verse signifies that Yahweh was acknowledged as King by the assembled representatives of the people (see 1 Sam. 8:7). He was King in Jeshurun: a title that signifies *Upright One*. It relates to the nation in righteousness. See its use in Isa. 44:2.

Blessing On Reuben — v. 6

Reuben is blessed first as is the case with Jacob’s blessings (Gen. 49:3-4). There he represents Israel after the flesh. His sin is brought into prominence, and he is deposed from his position as firstborn. In the blessing of Moses he still represents Israel

after the flesh, and the promise is now that he shall live and not die.

VERSE 6

“Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few” — The name Reuben signifies *See a Son!* It was given to him at his birth to commemorate the joy of Jacob at the appearance of his firstborn. But Reuben proved disobedient and earned the rebuke and punishment of his father. Reuben as the deposed firstborn, represents Israel after the flesh (Exod. 4:22), supplanted by the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16). But this blessing denotes that though Reuben, as representative of Israel after the flesh, will be sadly depleted, he will not be entirely consumed (Jer. 30:11; Zech. 13:9), but will be restored, and his seed made numerous (Rom. 11:25-26).

There is no mention of Simeon. Why? One reason could be because, in the land, Simeon’s territory was incorporated within that of Judah (Gen. 48:5-7; Josh. 19:1-9). Some, however, do place Simeon in the middle of this verse. It is said that the Alexandrian mss. of the Septuagint, rated the oldest and most valuable extant, attributes this latter part of the verse to Simeon: “Let not his men be few”. There was a dramatic decrease in the number of the tribe during the wilderness wanderings (Num. 1:22-23 cp Num. 26:14), and this could be a prayer for increase. But the Hebrew does not mention Simeon. And even that is appropriate for these blessings in view of the interpretation that sees in them a picture of the Kingdom. For Simeon signifies *Hearing*; and when the blessings are experienced by the tribes, hearing will give place to reality; the promise to the substance. It should be recognised that whereas Simeon jointly with Levi was condemned by Jacob (Gen. 49:5-7), the latter tribe vindicated its higher status by its action in support of Moses in protest at the worship of the golden calf.

The Blessing on Judah Under Shiloh — v. 7

This promise anticipates the future union of Judah with the rest of the tribes in the presence of Shiloh. See Gen. 49:10.

VERSE 7

“And this is the blessing of Judah” — Judah signifies *Praise*.

“And he said, Hear, Yahweh, the voice of Judah” — This anticipates a time when

Judah in deep distress shall plead his cause with Yahweh through the aid of a mediator (Rom. 11:26). It looks forward to the time when Judah and Jerusalem shall be in deep distress through the attack of Gog (Zech. 14:1-2), and the Saviour shall appear to “save the tents of Judah first” (Zech. 12:7). This will be the “time of Jacob’s trouble” out of which he will be saved (Jer. 30:5-9).

“And bring him unto his people” — Who is the “him” of this statement? A comparison with the blessing of Jacob will reveal that it is Shiloh or the Messiah (Gen. 49:8-9). He will constitute the promised Ensign to which the people will be gathered (see Isa. 11:11-14; Ezek. 37:15-22; Hos. 1:11).

“Let his hands be sufficient for him; and be Thou an help to him from his enemies”

— This predicts the ability of the Lord to guide and guard the people, and strengthen them to defeat their enemies (see Zech. 10:6-7; 12:3-5; 14:3-4,14). They shall “look on Me whom they have pierced”, declared Yahweh through the prophet, “and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son” (Zech. 12:10). Israel after the flesh not only will have to acknowledge that they crucified the Lord Jesus, their Messiah, but they will be compelled to recognise the truth that they repudiated 1900 years ago, namely, that the one whom they crucified was Yahweh manifested in flesh (cp. Matt. 1:23; 10:40; Josh. 5:23; 13:20).

Blessing On Levi: To Teach The People — vv. 8-11

The Levites, raised to the priestly tribe, were keepers of the Thummim and Urim. These symbols anticipated Christ as the Fulness and Lights of Yahweh’s manifestation. The loyalty of Levi at the foot of Horeb, and in other ways vindicating His honour, are recalled; and the promise is made that the true Israel of God as royal priests of the Age to come will successfully educate the people in ways of righteousness.

VERSE 8

“And of Levi he said” — Levi signifies *joining, or fellowship*.

“Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one” — The titles are in the plural and signify *Fulnesses* and *Lights*. These point forward to Christ in multiplicity, for the one body in glory will represent all the fulnesses of the Divine Majesty

(Thummim — see John 1:16; Col. 1:19); and will shine forth as lights (*Urim*); for “the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13:43). Even now, they are expected to shine forth as lights in the midst of the spiritual darkness in which they walk (see Isa. 24:15, see Heb.; Phil. 2:15-16).

Thummim and Urim, therefore, relate to the physical, mental and moral fulness of the Divine glory. It was through the Thummim and Urim, the gems in the breastplate of the High Priest, that the revelation was made by Yahweh to the nation (Exod. 28:30). This was lacking the High Priest following the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians, so that Nehemiah could not with certainty ascertain the true priesthood, though he recognised that in due time one would arise with Urim and Thummim (Neh. 7:65). That one is Christ, High Priest after the order of Melchizedek who will establish a true priesthood (Rev. 5:9-10). Concerning this Bro. Thomas wrote in *Eureka*: “The next remarkable place where the Urim and Thummim are named is in Deut. 33:8. There Moses speaks of them prophetically. He addresses the tribe of Levi, whose chief pontiff wore the ornament, or as it is allusively termed by Paul, ‘the breastplate of righteousness,’ and saith, ‘Thy Thummim and thy Urim be of the Man thy Holy One, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah’. In Exod. 17 the particulars of this strife are recorded. The question in debate was ‘Is Yahweh among us, or not?’ This was affirmatively proved by His saying to Moses, ‘I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink;’ and by his doing what He said. Now, in all this there was a *mystery hidden*, which they did not see into, nor Moses, nor the Elohim themselves; but which we may discern: for, in ‘the revelation of the mystery’ taught by Paul, referring to this strife in 1 Cor. 10:4, he says: ‘They did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ’. The Holy Man, *ish khasid*, with whom they strove, stood upon the rock, and thus, in a figure, made the rock a part of himself; and representative of something afterwards to be smitten by certain, who, like Moses, should speak unadvisedly with their lips. In this way, it became a ‘spiritual rock’. Paul says, ‘the

Rock was Christ; that is, it was representative of him. The Holy Man upon the rock was the Elohist representative of the Deity dwelling in light whom no man hath, or can see (1 Tim. 6:16). He spoke the words of the Invisible One, by whose power, placed at his disposal, water was made to flow. Hence, Eternal and Almighty Power pervaded the rock in Horeb so long as the water gushed forth and followed them in their wanderings. The Holy Man himself was an embodiment of this power; and as the same power was afterwards to be manifested in the nature of Abraham, and thus become his Seed, the Rock became highly typical of Christ. Hence, the Power, of which the Holy Man on the rock was an expression, was Yahweh, or 'He who shall be,' first in Christ Personal, or Jesus; and afterwards, in Christ Mystical, or the Square of Twelve.

"In Moses' prophecy of Levi, he says: 'They have observed thy word, and will keep thy covenant'. The second generation of Levi in the wilderness had observed the Divine word, but the covenant referred to they have not yet kept. Levi after the flesh has been in apostasy for ages, and will continue to be so until 'Yahweh, the Messenger of the Covenant', shall come. When the time appointed arrives, he will suddenly come in, and proceed to the work of purifying the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto Yahweh an offering in righteousness (Mal. 3:1-4). From this future time, 'they will keep the covenant,' even the New Covenant, of which Jesus, not Moses, is the Mediator. Then, when Yahweh-Christ, the Branch of Righteousness, shall sit upon the throne of his father David, and execute judgment and righteousness in the land of Israel, 'the priests the Levites shall not want a man before me,' saith the Spirit by Jeremiah, 'to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually' (ch. 33:15-18).

"When Levi, then, is in this purified condition contemporary with the reign of the Lamb and the 144,000, Levi's Urim and Thummim will be, as Moses testifies, 'of the Holy Man,' who will then be their High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. He will not need to wear on his breast such Urim and Thummim as Aaron wore. The Lights and Fulnesses will be of himself, he being Deity Incarnately Manifested; for 'it pleased the Father that in him all fulness dwell' (Col. 1:19)".

In *Eureka*, Brother Thomas renders the

words as: "Thy Thummim and thy Urim be of the Man thy holy one . . ." That man is the Lord Jesus Christ (John 8:12; Col. 1:19). Priestly ministrations in the age to come will be given into the hands of the saints, who under Christ, "the Man thy holy one" will comprise the antitypical Levi; proclaiming the means from whence mortal man can be joined in fellowship with Yahweh.

"**Whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah**" — There were two places given these titles: the first at Rephidim, the second at Kadesh. The controversy on both occasions was basically the same: "Is Yahweh among us or not?" (Exod. 17:1-7). On the first occasion, Moses was called upon to smite the rock (*tzur*) and water would be provided. This took place, anticipating the water of life that the smitten Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ, provides. The supply of water proved that Yahweh was among them; even as, 1900 years ago, the resurrection of the Lord, and the water of salvation thus provided, proved that Yahweh in manifestation had been in their midst (Rom. 1:1-4; 1 Cor. 10:4; 1 Tim. 6:14-16). On the second occasion, Moses was told merely to speak to the Rock and water would be provided. Instead, provoked by the people, he smote the rock the second time, and was forbidden entrance into the land (see Deut. 3:24-26). In Psa. 81:8 this later occasion is given the title of *Massah*, as a result of which the first generation out of Egypt was refused an entrance in the Land (vv. 10-11). These incidents show conclusively the fallibility of mortal man, even one of the spiritual stature of Moses (Deut. 34:10-12), and demonstrated that because of the weakness of the flesh, the Law could not give a title to life. Therefore, the condition of the blessing is "Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be of the Man" the Lord Jesus Christ. He, as High Priest, is set forth as Levi's Holy or Separate One from whom all Fulnesses and Lights come. The fulness of Divine glory both moral and physical is exhibited by Christ (Col. 1:19; 2:9), and will be manifested by the Redeemed in due course (Col. 2:10).

VERSE 9

"**Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him**" — The reference is to the "holy one" of the previous

verse, the High Priest to come, of whom Aaron, the chief of the tribe of Levi, was a type. He was separated from all Israel and dedicated completely to Yahweh's service. Because of his high and unique office he was called upon to ignore the normal requirements, natural to the flesh, such as mourning for father or mother etc. (see Lev. 21:11-12). In these, and other matters, he foreshadowed the Lord, for when necessary, Christ ignored the calls of nature, and saw "his friends" as the equivalent of his mother and brethren (see Matt. 12:46-50 — notice that the Lord excluded his Father). He likewise called upon those who would follow him unto the Kingdom to give their first consideration to Yahweh and His truth (Matt. 10:37; Mark 10:29-30; Lk. 14:26). However, in the ultimate, one best serves his own relations by giving Yahweh first place in his life. As far as Aaron was concerned, as best he could, he gave first priority to the things of God, and refused to answer the claims of nature when they affected his service to Yahweh (Lev. 10:2-7).

"**Neither did he acknowledge his brethren**" — At the time when Moses returned from the Mount and found Israel in apostasy celebrating and worshipping at the golden calf, it was Levi who voluntarily stood on Yahweh's side in the camp of Israel, and ignoring the "brotherly covenant" because the Father was set at nought, turned their swords against their own brethren, refusing to acknowledge them as such (see Exod. 32:26-29. See also Num. 25:5-8).

"**Nor knew his own children**" — Nadab and Abihu were cases in point (Lev. 10:1-7). In spite of the tragedy that destroyed them at the Tabernacle, their father was called upon to faithfully maintain his service to Yahweh on behalf of the people. These examples show that if one desires to become an immortal priest in the age to come, he must give first priority to Yahweh setting at nought the claims of nature if necessary.

"**For they have observed Thy word, and kept Thy covenant**" — See Mal. 2:5-7; 3:1-4. Yahweh's Word and Covenant motivated the actions of the priests and Levites in the incidents cited above. That, also, must be the case with those who hope to constitute the royal priesthood of the Age to come (Rev. 5:9-10; 20:6). Dedication to Yahweh must over-ride even family love (Mark 10:29-30).

VERSE 10

"**They shall teach Jacob Thy judgments, and Israel thy law**" — Priests in Israel were not merely ministers at the Tabernacle or Temple, but were called upon to teach the people (2 Chron. 15:3; Mal. 2:7). That will be the function of the royal priesthood of the Age to come. See Isa. 2:2-4; Jer. 3:15; 16:19-21; Rev. 10:11. Through their ministry the Law shall go forth from Zion and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem. As in Deuteronomy minor changes to the Law were introduced to provide for the altered conditions in the Land, so, in the future, whilst the Law of Moses will be re-introduced (Mal. 4:4) on a basis of grace (Jer. 31:31-34), there will be modifications introduced to provide for the changed conditions of a universal worship. The whole world will be as the Outer Court of the Temple (Num. 14:21); the Promised Land as the Holy Place thereof; and Jerusalem as the Most Holy (Zech. 14:20-21 — See *The Mystery of the Covenant of the Holy Land Explained* p. 31-33). Accordingly, as outlined in Ezekiel's prophecy of the Temple (Chps. 40-48), changes are made to the sacrifices etc., as will be required for a world service and worship in Jerusalem; and prayer centres will be established throughout the world (Mal. 1:11). The Law that shall go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-4; Mic. 4:1-4) will change the moral and social conditions of humanity.

"**They shall put incense before thee**" — Incense symbolised prayer (Psa. 141:2; Luke 1:9-10; Rev. 5:8 mg.). Whilst sacrifice will be offered only in Jerusalem in the Age to come (Deut. 12:13-14; Isa. 60:7; Ezek. 43:7), prayer centres and centres for instruction will be established throughout the world for the local worship and guidance of the people. These will be ministered by the immortal saints, the Sons of Zadok of the future age (Ezek. 44:15-16; Mal. 1:11).

"**And whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar**" — Both mortal and immortal Levites will co-operate in the performance of this ministry in the Age to come (Psa. 99:6; Jer. 33:15-22; Ezek. 44:10-16; Rev. 1:6; 5:9-10; 20:6).

VERSE 11

"**Bless, Yahweh, His substance and accept the work of his hands**" — This prayer and benediction for the work of the antitypical Levi of the future shows that the success of their labours will be through co-

operation with Yahweh. The Levites of the past received no tribal inheritance, but they rejoiced in the tithes of the people which, though considered as Yahweh's substance, were given for their use. The word *chayil* rendered substance is not the usual word for that purpose. Its basic meaning is "strength" or "efficiency", and so *service*. The service rendered by the Levites of the future will be to bring mankind before Yahweh. On this a blessing is pronounced, this being "the work of his hands". One individual is referred to: a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ as High Priest of the Millennium.

"Smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again" — Before the world of mankind is brought before Yahweh in a common worship, the peoples must be subdued by conquest. This will be accomplished by the saints (Psa. 149:5-9), the royal priesthood of the Age to come. Though conscientious objectors today, they will be warriors then. Like Phineas of old with sword in hand, or Samuel facing Agag the Amalekite, they will go forth to destroy those who, rejecting Christ's offer of mercy (Rev. 14:6-10), will rise against him (Psa. 2:1-3), in hatred (Psa. 2:1-3; Rev. 14:6-10). The saints will be successful in their conquests, so that during the Millennium there will be none to rise against him.

The Blessing of Benjamin — To Dwell In Safety — v. 12

Benjamin signifies Son of My Right Hand. As such he typed Christ. In the blessing he is represented as dwelling in safety under the shadow of the Divine pleasure.

VERSE 12

"And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of Yahweh shall dwell in safety by him" — Yedidiah, or *Beloved of Yahweh* was a name given to Solomon, concerning whom it is said that Yahweh loved him (2 Sam. 12:24-25). As Prince of Peace, and builder of the Temple, he foreshadowed the future glory of the Lord after his enemies have been subdued (see previous verse). The *Beloved of Yahweh* is also a title given to the Lord, for at his baptism the Voice of Heaven was heard: "This is My son the Beloved in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17 *Diaglott*). There will be safety or security for the antitypical Benjamin (the saints in glory) in that age, and a position of privilege and promi-

nence for the restored tribe. Portion of Jerusalem, where the Temple of the future Age will be erected, was in Benjamin, for the city bordered on both Judah and Benjamin (Josh. 15:8; 18:10-16). In the Age to come, the tribal inheritance of Benjamin will be adjacent to the area of the Holy Oblation, reserved for the use of the Prince, the Lord Jesus Christ (Ezek. 48:22).

"And Yahweh shall cover him all the day long" — The first words are in italics and are unnecessary. The subject of the statement is the *Beloved of Yahweh*, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he, as representative and manifestation of Yahweh will afford the protection and support to which the verse alludes. The word "cover" signifies to *shield* or *protect*.

"And he shall dwell between his shoulders" — The "shoulders" of Benjamin primarily related to the two peaks of Zion and Moriah between which was located the Temple. However to support one between the shoulders is to carry one in that position, that is, to provide support as a burden bearer. This, indeed, the Lord was, is and will be (Matt. 8:19). The Temple, erected in Jerusalem, shall incorporate the area where previously the two peaks were found. Though they will not remain when the contour of the country, is changed, the principles for which they stood will be recalled. The area prescribed will take in the eastern precincts of the Temple, reserved for the Prince (Ezek. 44:1-3). There he shall "eat bread before Yahweh" (Ezek. 44:3), and from there he shall emerge to preside over particular forms of worship at appropriate times (Ezek. 46:2-3). Among these there will be the national induction service that will confirm the covenant of grace with Israel (see Ezek. 43:1-12, 25-27). The eastern precincts of the Temple will be the abode of the Lord during the Millennial day.

The Blessing of Joseph: He is to Triumph — vv. 13-17

The most extended blessing is reserved for Joseph, the favoured son of Jacob, whose life is recorded in detail in Genesis because it provides such a complete type of the Lord. For him is reserved a very rich blessing, the fulfilment of which awaits the future.

VERSE 13

"And of Joseph he said, Blessed of Yahweh be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the

deep that coucheth beneath" — Joseph signifies *Increase*. His name is indicative of the Increase that will be experienced by the Lord, as exhibited by the multitudinous Christ (Rev. 7:9). The precious things of heaven are the sunshine and rain in their seasons ensuring a bountiful harvest (cp. Matt. 13:18-23). The dew gives refreshment in times of heat (see note Deut. 32:2), whilst the deep that coucheth beneath describes the subterranean springs that gush up from below the ground's surface, providing outstanding supplies of fresh, pure, sparkling water in all circumstances. See Gen. 49:25. The rain of heaven fructifies the soil; the dew provides refreshing moisture in the heat of summer, and both result in bountiful harvests. But, of course, the terms are used figuratively of the blessing of heaven on the endeavours of the antitypical Joseph and his companions (see Isa. 55:10-11). In regard to the symbol of the "deep that coucheth beneath", or the wells of water that provide refreshment for man or beast, the comments of the Lord at the well of Jacob are significantly illustrative (John 4:13-14; 7:38).

VERSE 14

"And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun" — When Yahweh "shines" upon His servants they enjoy His beneficial warmth (Num. 6:25; Psa. 80:1). Sunshine as well as rain is required to bring fruit to maturity and perfect it for use. But too much heat can dry up and wither. So it is with Yahweh when He is angry. From that heat shelter is needed, and Christ can provide it (see Rev. 7:16). The "precious fruits" referred to are the "fruit of the Spirit" as listed by Paul (Gal. 5:22-26). They will be brought forth to perfection (Luke 8:14) "by the sun"; a symbol of the influence of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness (2 Sam. 23:4; Mal. 4:2). These precious fruits are figuratively described in Song 4:13-16; 7:11-13, the only other places in Scripture where the description "precious things, or fruits" is used. The word *meget* rendered "precious" signifies *eminent* or *distinguished*. It is used five times (the number of grace) in this Chapter (vv. 13, 14, 15, 16).

"And for the precious things put forth by the moon" — The moon, in conjunction with the sun, governs the seasons, and so determines times of planting and reaping. But in these verses, the natural and physical must give place to the figurative

and spiritual. Whereas the sun relates to the civil administration under Christ, the moon symbolises the ecclesiastical order of the Millennium, centred in the Temple. The pleasant things or fruits of the Song of Solomon will be revealed only when the Bridegroom and Bride, the Sun and Moon, the Government and Ecclesiastical system are in conjunction and co-operation with each other, as they will be in the Millennium (Isa. 30:26; see Song 4:12-15; 7:10-13). In the Song, the Bride is likened to the Moon (Song 6:10), and multitudinously represents the royal priesthood of the coming Age, whose ministration will bring forth pleasant things (Rev. 5:9-10; 14:4-5). The moon was used for "signs, seasons, days, and years" (Gen. 1:14). The Jewish year was a lunar year, governed by the moon; the Law saw in the new moon a new beginning, and sacrifices were appointed accordingly (Num. 10:10; 1 Sam. 20:5). On the other hand, Passover, implying the application of spiritual principles was held at the time of the full moon.

VERSE 15

"And for the chief things of the ancient mountains" — Throughout Scripture mountains are frequently used to symbolise empires (see Jer. 51:25; Dan. 2:35, 45); the Kingdom of God itself is symbolised as a "mountain filling the whole earth" (Dan. 2:44). The "chief things" of such mountains are its rulers. They are the "desirable things" selected of Yahweh to rule His Kingdom (Hag. 2:9; Rev. 5:9-10; Isa. 32:1). Taken out of the Gentiles, to rule as the Israel of God in the Age to come, they will elevate the Mountain of the Kingdom above all other mountains both ancient and modern (see Psa. 68:33-35; Isa. 2:2-4; Hab. 3:6). In the meantime, the "chief things" as seen by Yahweh and His Son are esteemed despised and of no account by their contemporaries.

The Hebrew, however, is *Rosh*, "head" or "principal"; and being in the singular number would relate in a physical sense to the chief peak of the mountains; but figuratively, to the Lord Jesus, the principal ruler of the age to come.

"And for the precious things of the last-
ing hills" — The "precious things" denote the produce or fruit of the hills referred to. The term describes a lower eminence than "mountains" where, of course the products are different. Mountains produce forests, whereas hills are more susceptible

to cultivation, and the production of edible fruits. That seems to be the idea expressed here. The Hebrew is *olam gibath*. The former word, in this context, relates to the Millennium, the latter word is in the feminine gender, appropriate to the production of fruits. The Rosh, or principal peak of the Mountain dominates the landscape as ruler, whilst the lower, feminine hills produce fruits to the glory of the Creator. John in Patmos was shown "a great and high mountain" (Rev. 21:10), on the lower slopes of which was displayed a wood of trees producing fruit for the benefit of the nations (Rev. 22:2). The symbol expresses the work of the saints in the Age to come. Therefore the "hills of the Olam" referred to in the verse before us point to the work of the saints (the Bride of Christ) in the national organisations to be incorporated in the Kingdom of the future which they shall control. Whereas "the mountain of Yahweh's House shall be elevated in the top (*Rosh*) of the mountains" (Isa. 2:2), there will be national organisation of lower political eminence that will form part of the millennium Kingdom (see Dan. 7:11-12). The "precious things", will be the fruits of righteousness that shall spring forth as the result of the administration of the saints, hence the feminine use of the word "hills". The immortalised saints will be sent back into the countries of their nativity from whence the Truth has called them, to educate and govern mortals, teaching and directing them in the principles of righteousness (See Zeph. 3:19; Cp. Rev. 10:11 with 5:9).

VERSE 16

"And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof" — The blessing has both a literal and figurative application. In relation to the former, it applies to the fruits of the earth, but in regard to the latter, it denotes those "taken out of the nations" and constituted the true "Israel of God" reflecting glory and honour to His name which they bear. In that light, the parable of the Lord is relevant, for he likened the world to a field into which good seed has been sown to produce a harvest to the praise of the sower (Matt. 13:3-9). The "fulness thereof" relates to the full ripeness of the harvest produced, and in the light of Paul's analogy, points forward to life eternal (1 Cor. 15:36-38): the full manifestation of the Divine purpose (Num. 14:21).

Frequently in the symbology of the

Bible, *Eretz* relates primarily to the Land of Promise, *Eretz Israel*, as a contrast to the "sea" which applies to Gentiles (Isa. 57:20). For example, "heavens and earth" of Hag. 2:6 symbolise the government and people of Israel, whereas "the sea and dry land" — desert) point to the Gentiles. Paul, in quoting Haggai, observed this distinction. In citing the passage to indicate the impending fall of the Government and Nation of Judah, he referred to the heavens and earth, but not to the sea and dry land. The former were overthrown in A.D. 70; the latter Gentile powers will be overwhelmed at Christ's coming (Hag. 2:22). In the light of this treatment of *Eretz* or "Earth", the blessing of Joseph referring to "the earth and fulness thereof" relate to the complete restoration of the twelve tribes in the land, and the fruits that will accrue therefrom (see Jer. 33:8-11).

"And for the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush" — On the eve of his death, Moses' mind turned to the wonderful theophany of Divine goodness he had witnessed when, as a shepherd in Midian, he was drawn to the burning bush, was taught the significance of the Divine name, and learned that the full blessing of present labour in the Lord must await the future. He was sent back to Egypt to deliver the people of God in the name of Yahweh. See note on Exodus 3. The burning bush is the symbol of Israel in the fire of affliction but preserved from destruction (Isa. 43:2). Israel's existence to this present moment in spite of persecution is a token of the power of that Name. The preservation of Israel is due solely to the presence of Yahweh, and because He knew that, despite the wickedness of the people, there was "a blessing in it" (Isa. 65:8-10). The expression of this verse, therefore, relates to the favour of the Great Deliverer of Israel, even Yahweh, whose name pronounces His intention to save the nation. For the significance of the Name Yahweh, see Hosea 12:2-6.

"Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren" — The word "separated" (*nazir* from whence comes *Nazarite*) denotes the status of Joseph among his brethren. He was a type of Christ who will fulfil all the blessings pronounced, and will give reality to every detail of the type, as set forth in the chapters in Genesis (Chps. 37-50). Joseph was separated from his brethren,

and given "a coat of many colours" which was a sacerdotal dress granted to princes and the appointed firstborn, and therefore indicative of their privileged status. The reference to "the top of the head" draws attention to the Nazarite vow (Num. 6) which made priests of laymen. Therefore, the joint description relating to the head and his consecration, or separation denotes the King-Priestly functions of the one typed: the Lord Jesus Christ. The verse reveals that the blessings pronounced upon Joseph, and the other tribes, will come from the one he symbolised and prophesied: the antitypical Joseph, or *Increase*. From his humble birth the Lord has increased to become the Son of God's Right Hand, and will ultimately continue to increase until He is Lord of the whole earth (Micah 4:13).

VERSE 17

"His glory is like the firstling of his bullock" — The firstling of an animal was devoted to Yahweh, and not permitted to perform any common work (Deut. 15:19-20). This, again, points forward to the Lord.

"And his horns" — The two horns of the bullock suggests the two tribes of Joseph established among the other tribes: Ephraim and Manasseh. As the appointed (though not literal) firstborn, Joseph received a "double portion of inheritance" (1 Chron. 5:1; Deut. 21:17), as was shown in the development of two tribes to one of each of the other sons of Jacob. Elsewhere horns are used to symbolise strength, glory and sovereignty (Num. 23:22; Psa. 75:10; 89:24; 112:9; Dan. 7:24; Luke 1:69).

"Are like the horns of unicorns" — The word *Re'em* denotes the aurochs, a magnificent animal the species of which ultimately became extinct. The word is derived from a root signifying to be high, and is figurative of Yahweh's towering strength and height, though literally it describes the uplifted horns of the now extinct aurochs. In *Animals of Bible Lands*, G. Cansdale writes:

"The splendid animal that masquerades in AV as the Unicorn is quite properly identified in RV and RSV as the Wild Ox or to give its more formal name, the Aurochs, *Bos primigenius*, ancestor of our domestic cattle. This is the beast that the Hebrews knew as *re'em*." The last recorded specimen of aurochs died in A.D. 1627 in a Polish park north of Warsaw,

where a herd had been enclosed for at least a century — possibly even two centuries. Adequate descriptions and several good pictures left by Continental naturalists tell us quite a lot about the aurochs. The bulls were enormous, over 6ft (2m) at the shoulder, with long, forward-pointing horns; the coat was very dark brown or black, with a white dorsal line, curly in winter and sleeker in summer.

"The aurochs is mentioned nine times in the OT in more-or-less figurative contexts all of which fully endorse this translation, and also give some useful information about this massive beast, though the metaphorical uses are varied. 'The strength of a wild ox' (Num. 23:22 RV). It was not only the most powerful hoofed animal they knew but it was also the largest apart from the hippopotamus and elephant. Deut. 33:17, associates it with a domestic bull and in Isa. 34:6,7 it is again grouped with 'lambs and goats' and 'young steers with the mighty bulls!' Job 39:10 contrasts the strong wild ox with the domestic oxen that pull the plough and thresh the grain. Its fierceness is the point in Psa. 22:21 (RSV) 'Save me . . . from the horns of the wild oxen'. On the other hand, in Psa. 29:6 Sirion is made to skip like a young wild ox, referring to the friskiness of calves, and in Psa. 82:10 (RSV) 'Thou hast exalted my horn like that of the wild ox', the strength and grandeur of the aurochs with its huge horns is in mind."

In the passage before us, the two large, powerful horns of the aurochs can be figuratively identified with the two tribes of Joseph. But the prophecy relates not to the past, but the future; and not to the historic Joseph but the antitypical one, the Lord Jesus Christ. In that regard, the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh represent the two peoples that will enjoy particular relationship to the Lord in the Age to come: Spiritual and Natural Israel. These will constitute the two fearsome horns that will be seen on this "firstling of the bullock" which is the subject of the verse, for they will be joined to him that day in a manner that will not apply to any other of the peoples in the Kingdom (Micah 4:8).

"With them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth" — The plural "peoples" relate this statement to the Gentiles. Accordingly the NIV renders: "With them he will gore the nations, even those at the ends of the earth". Christ will use both spiritual Israel and natural Israel to conquer the nations in the

Age to come (see Psa. 149:5-9; Zech. 9:13-17; 14:14).

“And they are the ten thousands of Ephraim” — These are the “ten thousands of saints” referred to in v. 2, a figurative number representing the whole, whatever number that might be. The Hebrew word for thousands both here and in v. 2 is *rebabath* and signifies myriads from a root expressive of abundance. This figurative number, therefore, denotes the “great multitude, which no man could number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues” who will “stand before the throne, and before the Lamb” in the day of his coming (Rev. 7:9). Ephraim signifies *Double fruit*, and as such denotes the inheritance of the firstborn. But Ephraim was not the literal firstborn. Manasseh was born before Ephraim, but when the blind Jacob blessed the two sons, he guided his hands wittingly, so as to place the hand of privilege upon the one for whom it was not naturally designed: and so Ephraim became the appointed firstborn (Gen. 48:13-19; Jer. 31:9). The appointment of a younger son as legal firstborn was a privilege given to parents in Israel, when in the case of extreme disobedience, it was desirable to replace the natural firstborn, with all the privileges attached to his position, by a younger brother. Thus Reuben’s privileges were cancelled out (Gen. 49:3-4; 1 Chron. 5:1), and given to others of his brothers: the Government to Judah, the Priesthood to Levi, and the Inheritance to Joseph. Because of this Divine law, the Lord Jesus is described as firstborn (1 Col. 1:15), for Yahweh had two sons: Adam and Christ (Luke 3:38), but the sin of Adam cancelled out the benefits that it was intended to bestow on him, and transferred them to Yahweh’s beloved son in whom He was well pleased. Jesus Christ became the “appointed” firstborn (Psa. 59:27) through whom alone there is approach to Yahweh. Those who embrace him in truth, baptism and obedience, become one with the firstborn, and share similar privileges (James 1:18; Rev. 14:4). Israel after the flesh will become the firstborn nation in the Age to come, with privileges attached (Mic. 4:8). All this is suggested in Moses’ blessing on Joseph.

“And they are the thousands of Manasseh” — Here the word for “thousands” is a different one. It is the plural of *‘eleph*, which is elsewhere used for families as derived from the chief. The word is actually

related to the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, representing in that way the chief or beginning. As denoting family, it is also connected with the idea of taming and of yoking; and therefore, whilst the term when applied to Manasseh signifies a great multitude gathered together, it also implies that they are related, tamed, and yoked as should be the members of a family! How appropriate to the requirements of the type and prophecy. The “thousands of Manasseh” whom the Lord will use to “gore the peoples of the earth” in conjunction with those of Ephraim, relate to the families of Manasseh or the tribes of Israel after the flesh. His name signifies *Forgetting*, and when the tribes will be gathered together as one nation under Messiah, the antitypical Joseph, they will “forget” their past, and rejoice in their King whom previously they denounced and dishonoured (Isa. 8:21; 9:6-7).

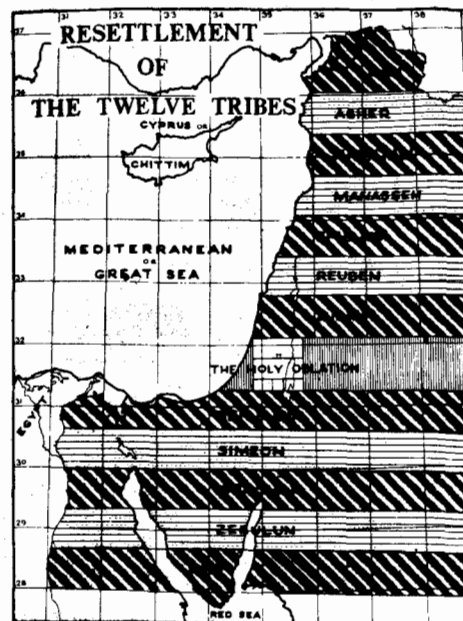
Blessings On Zebulun and Issachar — vv. 18-19

The blessing associates them together in a wonderful service in drawing mankind to the Mountain to worship. Therefore, as the previous blessing depicted the manner in which the nations will be brought into subjection, this one shows the subdued people united in a common worship centred in the Temple in Jerusalem.

VERSE 18

“And of Zebulun he said” — Zebulun signifies *Dwelling*.

“Rejoice Zebulun in thy going out” — This implies that Zebulun will provide access to the world outside. In the past, the territory of Zebulun never reached the sea though it extended towards it, but was land-locked (Josh. 19:10-16). In the blessing of Jacob, however, (Gen. 49:13), the tribe is represented as dwelling at the sea, and being a haven for ships. This has never been the case as yet, so the future must reveal it. In the allotment of tribal cantonnments set out in Ezekiel 48, and relating to the future, Zebulun and Issachar are not placed in the far north as before, but in the deep south (Ezek. 48:25-28). When the extent of territory promised Abraham is set out, these tribes will be found adjacent to the Gulf of Aqaba as depicted in *The Temple of Ezekiel’s Prophecy* by H. Sully. So Moses, speaking prophetically, anticipated that which Ezekiel later set forth in his prophecy of the future.



This division of the Land in the Age to Come is as described in Ezekiel 48. The 12 tribes are divided into 7 above the Holy Oblation (reserved for the use of the Prince — the Lord Jesus Christ) and 5 to the south of it. Twelve is the numerical symbol of proper government. It is here divided into 7×5 , the numbers of the Covenant and Grace, because the truly sound government of the future will provide a blend of Covenant and Grace. In this division of the tribes, Zebulun and Issachar straddle the Gulf of Aqaba providing a natural harbour of entrance for visiting pilgrims to land and move north to City and Temple of Jerusalem for the purpose of worship as described in Moses’ blessing on these two tribes.

“And Issachar, in thy tents” — Issachar signifies *Reward*. In the tents of Issachar, will be found the rewards of this service. The term “tents” is sometimes used poetically for *homes* (cp. *to thy tents O Israel!*). The blessing will reach to the homes of Israel in the Age to come. The *Septuagint* adds the comment: “They shall utterly destroy the nations”. Their energies will be fruitful to blessings which from abroad will bless the people of the land.

VERSE 19

“They shall call the people unto the mountain” — In the Hebrew, the word people is in the plural denoting the nations. The NIV renders: “They will summon peoples to the mountain”. What mountain? Moses knew nothing of Mount Zion as the centre of worship. He knew that a specific place would be appointed, but its identity was not revealed until the time of David (Deut. 12:11-12; Psalm 132:13-18). He had sung, in the moment of triumph at the Red Sea: “Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Yahweh, which Thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established” (Exod. 15:17), and those words, like the

blessing now before us, did not relate to the generation that came out of Egypt, which perished in the wilderness, but to a future generation of Israelites under the supervision and guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, he did not have sufficient knowledge to identify the mountain. Now he reveals that the purpose of Yahweh will be widened to call all nations to worship in the Mount of His Holiness. The Lord declared: “My house shall be called of all nations, the House of prayer” (Mark 11:17) and this is now anticipated by Moses. Granted the apposition of Zebulun and Issachar according to the apportionment of tribes listed in Ezekiel 48, and these two tribes in conjunction will be able to co-operate in receiving the peoples as they arrive in the land preparatory to moving north to worship at Jerusalem before the King (Isa. 33:17; Zech. 14:16).

“There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness” — Sacrifice is to be inaugurated in the Age to Come (see Isa. 56:7; 60:7; Ezek. 43:7, 18-27 etc.).

“For they shall suck of the abundance of the seas” — These tribes will apparently receive wealth that Gentiles shall bring in their pilgrimage to the land (see Psa. 72:10-11; Isa. 60:9). The cantonnments of

Zebulun and Issachar shall abut, and will straddle the Gulf of Aqaba (Ezek. 48:26), so that those visiting the land (Zech. 8:20-23; 8:20-23; 14:16) will probably disembark at Zebulun to move northwards for worship.

“And of treasures hid in the sand” — The Promised Land will become the Political, Religious and Economic centre of the Age to come (Isa. 23:18; Zech. 14:20-21). The *Septuagint* renders this phrase: “the marts of them that dwell by the sea-coast”, that is, of countries carrying on the limited international trade then permitted (see Isa. 60:5; Hag. 2:7-8).

Blessing on Gad: Administer of Justice — v. 20-21

Gad is to be enlarged, and will manifest the majesty and strength of a lion.

VERSE 20

“And of Gad he said” — Gad signifies a *Company* of people, another title for Israel, (Gen. 35:11).

“Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad” — The “he” points forward to the Lord Jesus Christ who will enlarge Gad, i.e. the Company of Israelites, both natural and spiritual. See Jer. 31:11; Isa. 49:20. Deliverance out of distress is termed “enlarging” (Psa. 4:1).

“He dwelleth as a lion” — A reference to Christ as the Lion of Judah (Rev. 5:5).

“And teareth the arm with the crown of the head” — The arm and head of the oppressor are to be destroyed by the Lion of Judah. Arm and head relate to power of action and authority, both of which will be destroyed by Christ, the *Enlarger* of Gad. The RSV renders “the arm and the crown of the head”.

VERSE 21

“And he provided the first part for himself” — The “he” of the blessing of Gad (the company of the Redeemed) is still the Lord Jesus Christ. In the inheritance of the Promised Land, the first portion will be allocated him as the Prince. It is given the title of the Holy Oblation (or portion — Ezek. 48:9-10).

“Because there, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated” — Gesenius renders this: “the portion of the lawgiver was reserved”. It is true of the future that portion of the land, the Holy Oblation will be reserved for the Prince; and it is also true of the future that the Lord as the Prince,

will be seated there as judge and ruler. This was never the case with Gad in the past, but, in fact, the Holy Oblation of the future will take in portion of the ancient territory of Gad. The future territory of that tribe will be located in a different place (see Ezek. 48:27). The RSV renders: “*He chose the best of the land for himself, for there a commander's portion was reserved; with Israel he executed the commands and just decrees of Yahweh*”.

“And he came with the heads of the people” — The heads of the people in the Age to come will comprise the glorified saints, who will be with Christ in his authority. The Twelve Apostles will reign over the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28), and other saints will occupy positions of administration in the Kingdom (Luke 19:17-19).

“He executed the justice of Yahweh, and his judgments with Israel” — There are to be “thrones of judgment” set up, and upon them will be seated the saints with the Lord, as the Judges of the future age (Psa. 122:5; Ezek. 44:14,23-24; Dan. 7:9-12).

The Blessing of Dan — vv. 22

Dan shall show strength in that day as Judge of all the earth.

VERSE 22

“And of Dan he said” — Dan signifies *Judge*, a title of Christ (John 5:27).

“Dan is a lion's whelp; he shall leap from Bashan” — See Gen. 49:9. As a lion's whelp he will be strong, vigorous and active. He is described as leaping from Bashan, because Bashan was much frequented by lions in ancient times. The description suggests the perfect warrior (Gen. 49:17), combining strategy and cunning with activity and strength. The young and active lion is depicted as leaping upon its prey from its lair in Bashan. The word “lion” is from a root signifying “to crush”, relating to the vigorous blows by which the enemy is attacked. In the analogy of the blessings it suggests the crushing of the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15).

Blessing of Naphtali — v. 23

Ancient Naphtali, situated in Galilee witnessed the main labours of Christ (Isa. 9:1; Matt. 4:13-16). The work then begun will be consummated in the Age to come.

VERSE 23

“And of Naphtali he said” — Naphtali

signifies *wrestling*. This Christ did at his first advent and will do again against the forces of evil at his second coming.

“O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of Yahweh” — As “the land of Naphtali” witnessed the wrestling of Christ against the forces of evil at his first advent (Matt. 4:15), it is appropriate that it should be related to the fullness of satisfaction and blessing that awaits the future in the Age to come.

“Possess thou the west and the south” — The term “west” is from the Hebrew *yam* which also signifies the *sea*. The territory of Naphtali will extend to the sea in the Age to come, situated south of Dan (see Ezek. 48:4). The gate of Naphtali also will be situated on the west of the City in that day (Ezek. 48:34).

Blessing of Asher — vv. 24-25

The blessing of Asher will extend to all Israel.

VERSE 24

“And of Asher he said” — Asher signifies *Blessing*; and as such typed the Lord who will provide blessings for Israel.

“Let Asher be blessed with children” — For the children of the Lord, then brought to maturity by the bestowal of life eternal, see Heb. 2:11-14. For “children” as applied to both natural and spiritual Israel in that day, see Isa. 66:7-10.

“Let him be acceptable to his brethren” — This clause treats Asher as an individual: the Blesser of his brethren. As such, he types Christ, as do the other tribes. Christ, of course, is the ideal and complete Israelite (Isa. 49:3-6). In this verse Asher is shown to be happy in his children and his brethren.

“And let him dip his foot in oil” — This expression suggests an abundance of oil, which is a sign of fertility and happiness (Job 29:6). Olive oil is obtained when the purple berries (the colour of God manifestation) are ripened to that colour by the sun, and then trodden under foot to extract the oil. The extract was then baptised in boiling water, which separated the golden oil from the refuse and so purified it. See Exod. 27:20; Mic. 6:15.

VERSE 25

“Thy shoes shall be iron and brass” — See Mic. 4:13. The hooves of animals used for threshing corn were shod with metal in order to crush the berries and extract the

oil. Iron and brass both represent the flesh which will be trodden underfoot to provide the oil (Mic. 4:13).

“And as thy days so shall thy strength be” — The power and security of the Kingdom will be enduring. “His days” will be “as the days of a tree” (Isa. 68:22), eternal and enduring.

The Eternal Refuge — vv. 26-29

Moses commenced his blessings by prophetically anticipating the dawning of the day of glory, and the manifestation of the Sun of Righteousness in the political heavens; he concludes by describing the power and beneficence that will be manifested by the God of Jeshurun when He appears as the eternal Refuge and saving Help of His people.

VERSE 26

“There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun” — The word God is *El* and denotes Divine might and power far exceeding that of flesh. The God of Jeshurun, therefore, denotes the *Strength of the Righteous One*; that Righteous One being the multitudinous Christ, who, in the Age to come, will exhibit the power of *El* in the conquest of the nations.

“Who rideth upon the heaven in thy help” — In *Eureka*, Bro. Thomas translates these verses thus: “There is none like the El of Jeshurun (the *Strength of Israel*) riding the heavens in thy help, and with His majesty the clouds. The Elohim of the East a refuge, and underneath the powers of Olahm. He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy! Then Israel shall dwell in safety alone. The fountain of Jacob shall be alone upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel. Who is like unto thee, O people saved by Yahweh, the Shield of thy help, and who is the Sword of thine exaltation. Also thine enemies shall be proved liars to thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places”. This rendition gives the correct sense of the Hebrew (which the AV does not), and is helpful to a better understanding of this important epilogue to the Blessings. We commend that *Eureka* be consulted at this place. See *Eureka* vol. 3 p. 420.

The “heavens” which the El of Jeshurun shall ride will comprise the “new heavens and new earth” to be set up at Christ's return (Isa. 65:17-18; 2 Pet. 3:13). Upon the rulers of the Age to come will be named

The Twelve Tribes

The blessings on the tribes concentrate upon one individual: the Lord Jesus Christ. He is seen in type both personal and multitudinous. Each tribe is referred to in the personal singular number, and each foreshadows an aspect of the Lord in the Kingdom he will set up on earth at his coming. Christ is set forth as the ideal Israelite (Isa. 49:3-6), and it will be he who will restore the tribes as required in the blessings of Moses.

The order of the tribes as set out in Deuteronomy 33 also proclaims the purpose of God: Reuben (*See a Son!*); Judah (*Praise*); Levi (*Join or Fellowship*); Benjamin (*Son of His right hand*); Joseph (*Adding*); Ephraim (*Double fruit*); Manasseh (*Forgetting*); Zebulun (*Dwelling*); Issachar (*Reward*); Gad (*a company*); Dan (*Judge*); Naphtali (*Wrestling*); Asher (*Blessing*). If Simeon is added *Hearing* should be inserted after *See a Son*. The sentence formed is *See a Son! Let those praise Yahweh who are in fellowship with the Son of His right hand. Increasing in faith they have received a harvest of double fruit, and now forgetting the past, and dwelling in the land, they enjoy their reward with a company judged worthy who after wrestling have received their blessing.*

the name of Yahweh (Rev. 3:12), which name will be published throughout the earth (Deut. 32:1-3). Moses addressed the "heavens and earth" of Israel (Deut. 32:1); but there will be a change in the constitution of them when these words are fulfilled. They will not be the mortal, imperfect rulers of the past; but the immortal saints manifesting the power, glory, nature and name of Yahweh (Rom. 5:2; 2 Pet. 1:4; Rev. 3:12). The God of Jeshurun, or the *Strength of the Righteous One* is Yahweh manifested in Christ and the saints. He will "ride" the heavens, because they constitute the Cherubim in glory (Ezek. 1:9,14,19). Of Him it is said that He "rode upon a cherub" (Psa. 18:10). The word "rode" is *rakab*, to ride as in a chariot. This is significant, and illustrative of the symbol. The Cherubim found their place in the Most Holy, and it was there that Yahweh manifested Himself in the midst of Israel (Exod. 25:20-22). And because he directed the affairs of Israel from that point, it is called "the chariot of the cherubim" (1 Chron. 28:18). It is from this word *rakab* that Bro. Thomas derives the significance of the word *Cherub* (see *Elpis Israel* pp. 148-152; *Phanerosis* p. 88-95). In Ezekiel 1, the Cherubim are depicted going forth upon their mission of conquest to establish a throne in the firmament. The one seated

thereon is described "as the appearance of a man", the man Christ Jesus (Ezek. 1:26). When the work of conquest is over, the Cherubim are depicted as having "let down their wings" (v. 24), and instead of war and judgment, there "is the appearance of the bow" encircling the throne, as in Rev. 4:3. Perfect peace will have come to this troubled world.

"**And in his excellency on the sky**" — The Hebrew *shackaqim* is better rendered "clouds". The NIV renders it in that way in common with Bro. Thomas and other renditions. These "clouds" are the clouds of witnesses (Heb. 12:1) then ascended in glory. "Behold," declared John, "he cometh with clouds" (Rev. 1:7). In doing so, he repeated the assurance of the Lord to the Apostles (Matt. 24:30). However, this promise does not relate to the Lord's descent from heaven, for it is not true that then "every eye shall see him" or that he will be openly manifest to the world in his actual descent. The statement "he cometh with clouds" denotes the belligerent manifestation of the multitudinous Christ moving from Sinai to Jerusalem. When the Lord descends from the throne of Yahweh he will do so "as a thief" — unexpectedly and secretly; but when he moves from Sinai to Jerusalem, as Moses depicts, he will do so openly, so that every eye shall see him. The clouds with him in that day

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

will be the resurrected and glorified saints. In them, will be seen his excellency, or *majesty* as Bro. Thomas words it. Paul taught that "he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day" (2 Thess. 1:19). They will partake of his majesty and glory, and a contingent of them will move with him in triumph to Jerusalem. David saw him in glory, accompanied by the elect, "riding through the deserts" (as the words should be rendered), in majesty manifesting "the name of Yah" (Psa. 68:4). He declared: "Ascribe ye strength unto Elohim: His excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the clouds" (Psa. 68:23). Again this term relates to the resurrected and glorified saints then elevated to positions of authority and majesty with Christ in the political heavens. For further excellent comments on this subject of "clouds" see *Eureka* vol. 1, pp. 139-144 under the sub-heading *He is coming with Clouds*.

VERSE 27

"**The eternal God is thy refuge**" — Again, this is an unfortunate rendition. The Hebrew word rendered "eternal" is *qedem* rendered "east" some 21 times, and literally signifying, *What is before in time or place* and so rendered "ancient" in v. 15. The term "eternal God" is translated by Bro. Thomas: "*The Elohim of the East a refuge*". Who are the Elohim of the East who are to provide Israel with a refuge? They are the "kings of the east" of Rev. 16:12. The words are literally rendered: "Kings who are out of a sun's rising", the Sun being, the "Sun of righteousness who shall arise with healing in his beams" (Mal. 4:2). They will comprise the Elohim (*Mighty Ones*) of the Age to come because they will then be "equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:35-36). It is significant that Moses should commence and conclude his blessings on the tribes by reference to the dawning of that Day when the Sun of Righteousness will be seen in light and glory. The expressions of the early verses of this chapter (vv. 2-3) are all those that describe the rising of the sun at dawn. As the Tabernacle and Temple always faced East, so Israelites were taught that their hope of the future was from the East, the dawning of the day when "the glory of Yahweh shall cover the earth as the waters do the sea" (Num. 14:21). The saints, resurrected, judged, and glorified will move from Sinai against a world in arms to destroy the power of flesh and provide a refuge for Israel in the Land of Promise.

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"**And underneath are the everlasting arms**" — The arms of the multitudinous body of Christ suggest the extension of his power to aid or defend. An arm outstretched is one extended to help. So Bro. Thomas in his translation, gives the significance of the term used. These are the arms of the Olahm or Millennium by which the rulers of the Government, or heavens of the Age will extend help to Israel and those nations that are prepared to submit to His control. Those arms extended will bring about the blessings of the tribes already described. See Isa. 59:16; 63:15.

"**And he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them**" — The enemy that shall be destroyed by Christ comprises the Russian Gog then in possession of the Land, and, afterwards, the Catholic confederacy of Europe. The conquest of the former is set forth in Ezek. 38,39; Joel 3; Zech. 14 etc. and the latter in Rev. 17:14; 19:19-21. Christ, established in Jerusalem, shall "rebuke strong nations afar off". In order to do this, his forces must go forth from the cleansed land, to forcibly compel the subjection of those who still resist. In consequence, and because of the stubbornness of human folly, "the slain of Yahweh shall be from one end of the earth to the other" (Jer. 25:33), until all submit to him (Dan. 2:44).

VERSE 28

"**Israel then shall dwell in safety alone**" — See the Song of Triumph at the crossing of the Red Sea (Exod. 15:13-18). The separation of Israel from other nations has been the intention of Yahweh from the beginning. See Exod. 33:16; Num. 23:9; 2 Sam. 7:10; Zech. 14:11. The twelve tribes shall occupy the territory of the Promised Land as depicted in Ezekiel 48.

"**The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine**" — The fountain of Jacob is an expression denoting the life-giving truth of its waters. See the expression used in Psa. 68:26; Isa. 48:1, and applied to Israel. The land in which they will then dwell will reveal its first promise in abundance. It will be a land flowing with milk and honey; a land of peace and plenty. It is significant that the Lord discoursed upon these things with the woman of Samaria at the Well of Jacob (John 4:6-14).

"**Also his heavens shall drop down dew**" — See the expression use in Deut.

32:2. The "law that shall go forth of Zion and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem" will be as refreshing dew, fructifying the soil, and producing fruit to the glory of Yahweh. Today is a time of drought (see Amos 8:11-12), but that will not be the case when Isaiah 2:2-4 is fulfilled. Then "He shall come down as rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth" (Psa. 72:6).

VERSE 29

"Happy art thou, O Israel" — In the glorious blessings of the future age, Israel (both redeemed and restored) will have cause for the greatest happiness. Balaam's prophecy will be fulfilled (Num. 23:20-24; 24:5-9), for his attempted curses will turn into blessings. See also 2 Sam. 7:23; 1 Kings 10:7-8; Psa. 1:1; 132:12-13; Isa. 12:1-6.

"Who is like unto thee, O people saved by Yahweh" — Israel will be saved nationally, the saints individually: both will experience blessings overshadowing those granted to others. Notice the development in this verse: Israel saved (Isa. 12:2; 45:17; Jer. 31:28-40); protected by a shield (Psa. 3:3), and vindicated by a sword (Jud. 7:20; Psa. 7:12; 45:3; Isa. 27:1; 34:5-6; Jer. 12:12; 47:6; Ezek. 38:21).

"The shield of thy help" — The word is *magen*. The *magen* was a small shield, designed to turn the thrusts of the enemy,

and to be moved with dexterity to protect the various vulnerable parts of the body. Thus figuratively it denotes protection from the sudden and unexpected thrust of the enemy. David wrote: "But Thou, O Yahweh, art a shield (*magen*) for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head" (Psa. 3:3). The figure of the *magen* is frequently found in the Psalms.

"And who is the sword of thy excellency" — The Hebrew gives: "and that is. . . ." Yahweh is both shield and sword: a defence, and weapons of war. See Psa. 18:29-40; Psa. 149:6.

"And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee" — The boasts of Israel's enemies against them will prove false, and they shall be overthrown. See Psa. 18:44; 66:3; 81:15. The RV has "Thine enemies shall submit themselves unto thee"; others give "come to thee fawning" or "cringing". See the great reversal predicted by Isaiah (Isa. 51:22-52:6).

"And thou shalt tread upon their high places" — Israel shall completely subdue their enemies by overthrowing their high fortresses and inaccessible places of defence. See Deut. 32:12-13; Jer. 31:10-11; Psa. 46:9-11. Ultimately, in the end, under Messiah, Israel shall triumph over every foe, no matter how powerful he may be. All will be conquered, and compelled to pay obeisance unto Israel and its Messiah.



DEUTERONOMY:
DIVINE FAITHFULNESS
IN DISCIPLINING AND DELIVERING

**Discourse Nine:
EPITAPH —
DEATH:
YAHWEH BURIES
HIS WORKMAN
Ch. 34:1-12**

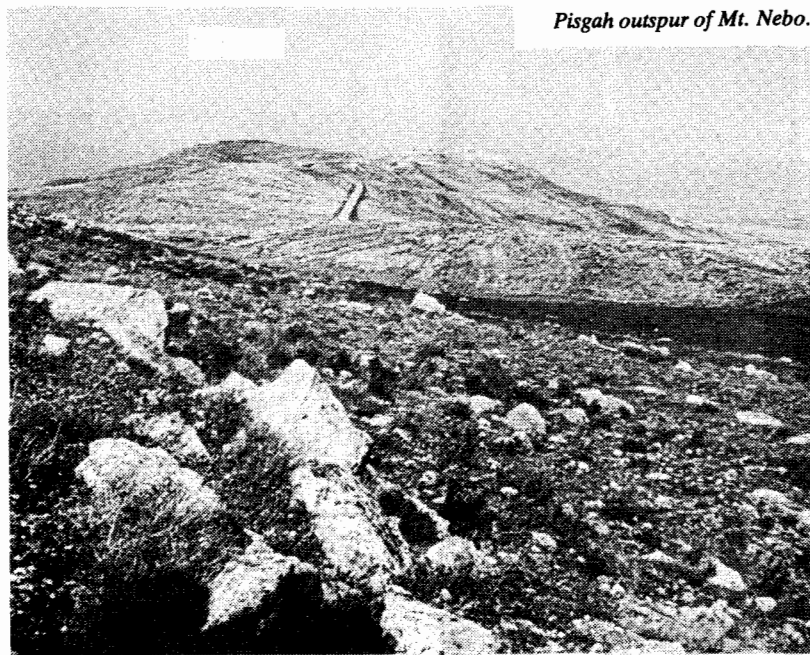
Moses' words are finished; his labours completed. They end on a sad note. He is told that after his death the people over which he has laboured so long and ardently will corrupt themselves. He dies with that knowledge (Deut. 31:29), though desperately he tries to arouse them to their individual and personal responsibilities (Deut. 32:46-47) realising that though the nation will fail, there will be individuals who will succeed. From a human viewpoint, therefore, it would appear that Moses' mission was a failure. For forty years he had gathered knowledge in the court of Pharaoh that could help equip him as a ruler; for forty years he had pondered the ways of Yahweh in the wilderness, learning the patience and skill necessary to shepherd the people; for forty years he had borne the complaining and failings of a people that did not properly appreciate his leadership. And now, at the conclusion of a life of 120 years, he is not permitted entrance in the land, and is told that the people will fail.

Depressing? Well life is like that! For men and women of faith the object of life must be the future, not the present. The present will witness a certain amount of success, but nothing permanent. Not even in the things of God. Even there we are bounded and limited by mortality. Therefore, a man of faith, a servant of God, must learn to look beyond the present to the glorious future. When life is lived like that, and labour is viewed from that standpoint, man might esteem both as failures, but it is not so viewed by God. It is character more than work accomplished that counts. In the days of Zerubbabel, Joshua and Haggai, when the people laboured to restore the Temple and worship of Yahweh, and succeeded in measure, they were invited to frankly consider it. Did it match that which had been erected originally (Hag. 2:3)? It did not, even though they had laboured hard, and in the face of great difficulties to accomplish what they did. With it Yahweh was well pleased, and poured upon them a blessing for their faith (v. 19). But there was nothing permanent in what they established! In a comparatively short time, all that was then accomplished would be shaken out of place (v. 6), and other hands would have to build and restore. So Zerubbabel and Joshua with Haggai and Zechariah had to learn the lesson that all those of faith throughout the ages must learn: the true results of labour will never be seen today, but must await the kingdom. The history of Israel

witnesses to reform and failure; to sunny peaks and shadowy valleys in its spiritual variations. Ecclesias are the same. They are formed, established, develop and die. The record of history testifies to this. The lesson of history teaches that only as individuals develop in faith, and are moulded by circumstances without and the power of the Word within, is anything of permanent value accomplished. Life is terminable and so are all the effects of man today — whether in the Truth or in the world.

So Moses is taken to the top of Nebo, and is shown the Land of Promise. In this he saw the "promise afar off" (Heb. 11:13). His eyes were not dim, we are told. He saw the land before him as Abram was shown it, and therefore in that very action was figuratively promised that one day he will possess his portion of it (cp. Gen. 13:14-15 with Deut. 34:1-3). He then died and was buried. The people mourned, but soon forgot! And Joshua officially took over his duties. The book concludes with a Divine estimate of Moses' character, labour and example: an outstanding epitaph written by the hand of God.

Pisgah outspur of Mt. Nebo.



CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

DEATH OF MOSES AND SUCCESSION OF JOSHUA

This chapter records the fulfilment by Moses of the command of Ch. 32:48-52, of which narrative it is the continuance. The key word is "death" (v. 5), but a dominant verse is v. 10. Though death claims Moses, he dies in hope. His work accomplished, he receives a vision of future glory that is reserved for him. He is buried in an unknown site. Nobody worships at that tomb. His decease underlines the fact that Law cannot give life because of the weakness of flesh, and so it is Joshua who takes up the reins of government. That is the experience of all in the Truth. From the Law comes the knowledge of sin, and relates us clearly with death; and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is needed to save us from the consequence of such, and lead us into the Kingdom which is seen "afar off" as Moses views it from Mt. Nebo. The Chapter is divisible into three parts: 1. The Vision of Moses vv. 1-8; 2. Joshua Assumes Control (v.9); 3. The Divine Epitaph of Moses (vv. 10-12).

The Vision of Moses — vv. 1-4

Moses ascends Mt. Nebo to view the Land of Promise. He is reminded of the Covenant made with Abraham by which the Land was granted him in faith. As Abraham was invited to view it in anticipation of a future possession, so Moses also now views it, and with eyes that are not dim but bright with hope he dies with a glorious vision of the future that he will one day enjoy (Psa. 99:6; Rev. 15:3).

VERSE 1

"And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah" — The narrative links with that of Deut. 32:48-52. The Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names gives the meaning of Nebo as His prophecy (derived from nabi to prophesy). It was near here that Balaam gave his prophecy, and the intended curse was turned into a blessing. Therefore, it was an appropriate site for Moses to visit prior to his death. The word Pisgah signifies a serrated ridge, or cleft, from a root, to cup up, to which Strong gives a figurative meaning to contemplate.

Rotherham renders the phrase, "the head of Pisgah", referring to the headland of the Pisgah or ridge, a dominant spur from which a panoramic view can be seen. From this place, on a clear day, most of the western Land of Promise is in sight. Unfortunately, in modern times it is often obscured by smog; but we may be sure that when Moses viewed the land, the greatest and clearest visibility was in evidence.

"That is over against Jericho" — From the top of Nebo, one looks almost directly below on the place of the crossing and Jericho. The winding, tortuous Jordan can be seen wending its way south from the far distant north.

"And Yahweh shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan" — Balaam had ascended to a similar point, and had seen below the people of Israel in their encampments. He had been compelled to utter words of blessing instead of the curse he was paid to proclaim (See Num. 24:2). Centuries later, Ezekiel was taken to an elevated place to see the glorious Temple

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

of the Age to come (Ezek. 40:2). And today, through the means granted in the Word, our spiritual vision can be enlightened with a glorious vista of the future (Rev. 21:10). Paul was motivated by such a vision (2 Cor. 4:18).

The statement "Yahweh shewed him" this land denotes that He gave him promise of an inheritance in it; even as He did previously by a similar gesture to Abram (Gen. 13:14-15). Therefore, Moses was permitted to see the Promise afar off. He died with the vision of a resurrection to certain glory (Heb. 11:13). Gilead is the mountainous area north of Nebo and east of Jordan. It was the section of the land occupied by Gad (Josh. 13:25), the half-tribe of Manasseh (Josh. 13:30-31), and Reuben (Deut. 3:12). There is a greater significance in this statement than the mere fact that Moses looked in that direction. He was shown this territory by Yahweh, for it will be included in the area to be occupied by the Tribes in the Age to Come (see Obad. 19). The area of Dan is not that which the tribe later acquired by conquest, but the original site west of Judah and reaching to the Mediterranean. "From Gilead to Dan", therefore, signifies from east to west.

VERSE 2

"And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh" — Naphtali was east of the Jordan and Ephraim was west. Manasseh had two sections, one east the other west.

"And all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea" — Judah lay directly west of Nebo, and "the utmost sea" relates to the Mediterranean (Num. 34:6).

VERSE 3

"And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar" — The bright eyes of Moses roved over the land, portion of which he will possess with other faithful men and women. In doing so, he joined the patriarch Abraham who likewise was told to "look northward, and southward, and eastward and westward, for all the land that thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed for ever" (Gen. 13:14-15). For the designation of Jericho as "city of palm trees" see Jud. 1:16; 3:13; 2 Chron. 28:15. To this day, Jericho is noted for its prolific growth of trees, including the date palm. In being shown this land, and accepting it, Moses assumed ownership of it on behalf of his

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people both in succeeding years, and those yet to come.

VERSE 4

"And Yahweh said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed" — The patriarchs were dead, as soon Moses would be; but Yahweh's words constituted for them a resurrection from the dead to obtain the glory and possess the land.

"I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither" — See Heb. 11:13. Moses was denied entrance to the land because of a sin that was his own, and yet had been occasioned by the sin of others (Deut. 3:24-29). This fact demonstrated that the Law could not give life, because it was beyond the ability of flesh to keep it (Rom. 8:3). Therefore, grace in forgiveness is necessary; and that is obtained, not through the Law, but in Christ whose labours the Law foreshadowed and typified.

Death of Moses — vv. 5-6

Moses' wonderful life of service to others comes temporarily to an end. He is to stand with the Lord Jesus Christ in glory in the Age to come (Psa. 99:6; Rev. 15:3).

VERSE 5

"So Moses the servant of Yahweh died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of Yahweh" — The title of Servant of Yahweh is a high one (see Josh. 1:1; Mal. 4:4), for it denotes that he performed the will of God. His successor, Joshua, is also afforded this high title in Josh. 24:29. But though a title of honour, it is subordinate to that of the Son of God. Paul contrasted the status of Moses as a servant in Yahweh's house, with that of Christ who is Son over the same house (Heb. 3:3-6). As Son, the Lord has precedence over Moses the servant. As servant, Moses ministered to the Son (Gal. 3:24). Note how that both Servant and Son will be associated together in the future glory (Rev. 15:3).

VERSE 6

"And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor" — Beth-peor signifies The House of the Gap, the "gap" being formed by a deep valley. It was earlier noted for idolatry (Deut. 3:29; 4:46; Num. 25:3), and was assigned to Reuben (Josh. 13:20). Both the failure of Israel at this place, and the burial of

Moses witnessed to the failure of the Law to give life. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is needed for that (Matt. 17:3).

“But no man knoweth his sepulchre unto this day” — Evidently it was purposely hidden from the knowledge of the Israelites, lest they use it as a shrine at which to worship. There is a contrast between the sepulchre of Moses, and that of the Lord. Whilst the former was hidden from public view, the latter was given great publicity, particularly through the efforts of the Jewish leaders, to cover the fact of his resurrection (Matt. 28:11-15). The body of Moses in the hidden tomb emphasised the hopelessness of Law to give life, whereas the empty tomb of the Lord testifies to resurrection and life eternal. The law was related to death; but Christ to life.

Moses' Age And Condition — v. 7

Moses was in full vigour of health at the time of his death.

VERSE 7

“And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died” — As such Moses was the youngest of all his kindred. Levi died at the age of 137; Kohath at 133; Amram, his father, was 137; Aaron 123; Miriam 126 or more. Moses died on his birthday; the first day of the eleventh month (Deut. 1:3; 31:2). Based on the religious year this would approximate to February; and Israel kept the Passover the following month. 120 years suggests a period of probation (3×40 s = complete probation). It was the period of probation given the people prior to the Flood (Gen. 6:3). Moses occupied 40 years in Egypt being trained as a Ruler (Acts 7:33), forty years in the wilderness being trained as a Shepherd (Acts 7:30), and forty years in active experience as Lawgiver and Leader. In view of his failure to enter the Land, his life and death have been summed up in the following terms: “To labour and not to see the end of our labours; to sow and not to reap; to be removed from the earthly scene before our work has been appreciated, and when it is still carried on not by ourselves but by others — is a law so common in the highest characters of history that none can be said altogether exempt from it.” It underlines the lesson that in all our endeavours we should seek to please God, looking to the future for the real fruits of labour and joy that stems from them.

“His eye was not dim” — We can be assured that this was both physically and figuratively. Contrast Gen. 27:1; 1 Sam. 3:2; 2 Kings 6:17-18. The vigorous, but elderly Caleb had similar strength (Josh. 14:10-11). Their keenness of vision took in the future glory, for which, indeed, they had laboured. The future vision had been the motivation of Moses' life (see Heb. 11:26-27).

“Nor his natural force abated” — The term “natural force” is *moisture* in Hebrew. Moses was still full-blooded, full of vigour, quite capable of leading the people across the Jordan. Instead, life was taken from him. This was because of his sin. It was a lesson to Israel that Yahweh demands total obedience and that the success of their entrance into the land depended upon their individual endorsement and application of His law.

The Mourning for Moses — v. 8

Now that Moses is dead the people recognise his greatness and mourn for him. During his life-time they had not hesitated to complain against him (Num. 21:5). After his death they soon forgot him.

VERSE 8

“And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days” — This was the same period occupied in mourning the death of Aaron (Num. 20:29). Thirty is compounded of three tens, and according to Bullinger's *Number In Scripture* it figuratively denotes “the perfection of divine order as marking the right moment”. Moses had revealed the Divine order to Israel, and the people appropriately mourned during that symbolic period.

“So the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended” — Yahweh buries His workmen, but the work must go on. Death is but a temporary sleep for the righteous, as refreshing for them as a good night's rest. So it was for Moses. He ended his days peacefully, and died without pain, in the certain hope of a resurrection to life eternal. What more could a man desire in this life? As Christ warned mourners as he made his way to the cross: they had greater cause to mourn and weep for themselves, than for him. So it was with Moses. The labour and probation of the people still remained to be worked out by them. As Isaiah stated on a later occasion “The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous

is taken away from the evil to come” (Isa. 57:1). However, despite the vigour of Moses, a younger man was needed to carry on the work.

Joshua Succeeds Moses — v. 9

Joshua takes up the gauntlet, and proves himself a worthy successor to Moses.

VERSE 9

“And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom” — Yahweh had blessed him in this respect, and he shared this quality with Moses (Num. 27:18-23).

“For Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as Yahweh commanded Moses” — The circumstances are recorded in Num. 27:18-23. Appointed by the authority of Yahweh, Joshua showed fearless resoluteness, and so commanded the instant respect of the people. He had already been recognised as a leader of exceptional ability (cp. Exod. 17:9).

The Status of Moses — vv. 10-12

Though Joshua was Moses' successor, he was not his equal; therefore, though he typed the Saviour who was to come, he was not the prophet promised (Deut. 18:18-22). The antitype of Moses was yet to appear among men.

VERSE 10

“And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses” — It is obvious that the chapter before us is by a later hand than that of Moses. It could have been added by Joshua. Nevertheless these words are important to the narrative, and

are not merely an assessment of the character of Moses. They signify that the promise of a prophet to come, the antitype of Moses (Deut. 18:15,18) was not fulfilled in Joshua: faithful Israelites had to wait for his coming (see John 1:21; Acts 3:22-23; Heb. 3:5-6).

“Whom Yahweh knew face to face” — There was a unique intimacy between Yahweh as manifested through the Angel of His presence (Isa. 63:9-13) and Israel's great leader (see Exod. 33:11; Num. 12:8) that was shared by nobody else to such a degree (see Jud. 6:22) apart from Yahweh's “only begotten son”, the “beloved in whom He was well pleased”. Moses knew Yahweh face to face, but Christ could say of himself: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9).

VERSE 11

“In all the signs and the wonders, which Yahweh sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to his servants, and to all his land” — This describes the intimacy existing between Moses and the Angel. Moses became the manifestation of Yahweh to Pharaoh and all Egypt (Exod. 4:15-16; 7:1; see Exod. 33:11; Num. 12:8; Deut. 4:14; 7:19; Isa. 63:11-13; Heb. 3:5-7).

VERSE 12

“And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel” — He exercised the Divine authority and power in the sight of Israel, in subduing Egypt. See Deut. 4:34. The hand is the organ of labour; the terror was induced by the plagues.

SUMMARY

In these terms the *Book of Deuteronomy* ends, and Moses' ministry is summed up. However, the Book does not end on a negative note of failure; but in a positive affirmation of faith. It anticipates the future. In looking back to Deuteronomy 18:15-19, and the promise of the coming of a prophet like unto Moses, to *whom the people will hearken*, there is the joyous anticipation of hope. It points to the coming of that one who would confirm Yahweh's covenant of grace in his own blood; who would first redeem a people for himself unto eternal life, ultimately successfully re-establish the nation in the Land under immortal leaders, and unite it in him (Jer. 3:15; 31:31-40). Then, again, Moses will take up the work that he laid down in full vigour of life. The song of Moses and the Lamb will be heard, the antitypical Joshua in like manner as the Song of Witness was presented to the people by Moses and Joshua (Deut. 34:44; Rev. 15:3). Moses and Aaron will be found among those ministering in the House of Prayer for all nations even as, in past ages “they called

upon Yahweh and He answered them" (Psa. 99:6).

Moses' work was to deliver the people from Egypt and bring them into the Land. Like Elijah he was taken away before the latter part was complete, but he will play a part in restoring the people to the Land in the age to come. The purpose of Yahweh requires this: "He brought us out from thence, that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He swore unto our fathers" (Deut. 6:23). Thanks be to God, that day is near at hand.

In summing up the character of Moses, J. Kitto wrote:

"As the mind tries to rest upon the prominent points of the character which his career evinces, we find ourselves unexpectedly baffled. All the great men of sacred, as well as of profane history, possessed some prominent virtue or quality, which stood out in bolder relief than their other excellences. We think of the faith of Abraham, of the conscientiousness of Joseph, of the contrition of David, of the generosity of Jonathon, of the zeal of Elijah — but what do we regard as the dominant quality of Moses? It is not to be found. The mind is perplexed in the attempt to fix on any. It is not firmness, it is not perseverance, it is not disinterestedness, it is not patriotism, it is not confidence in God, it is not meekness, it is not humility, it is not forgetfulness of self, that forms his distinguishing characteristic. It is not any one of these. It is *all* of them. His virtues, his graces, were all equal to each other; and it was their beautifully harmonious operation and development which constituted his noble and all but perfect character. This was the greatness of Moses — this was the glory of his character. It is a kind of character rare in any man — and in no man historically known has it been so completely manifested. When we reflect that Moses possessed all the learning of his age, and that he wanted none of the talents which constituted human greatness, we honour his humility more than his glory; and, above all, we venerate that Divine wisdom which raised up this extraordinary man, and called him forth at the moment when the world had need of him".

Moses rested in the grave at Beth-peor; but apparently he was resurrected, at least temporarily, to appear in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration with the Lord whom he typed (Luke 9:30-31). But the fulness of glory awaits him in the future when he will be seen side by side with his great antitype, and with eyes bright with sight, and a body manifesting immortal vigour and glory, he will be granted a place of honour in the Kingdom for which he looked so ardently, and in the cause of which he laboured so long and so honourably.

What a great man was Moses. No one to equal him, we are told by the Word (Deut. 34:10). Yet God removed him before Israel entered the Promised Land. He still retained the ability to lead: "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated". What a lesson! especially for those who have an undue estimate of their worth and importance. Anyone's services — useful as they may be — can easily be dispensed with. Those who are disposed to glory should remember that God is no more dependent upon them than He was dependent upon the Jews to furnish an Abrahamic seed: "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham". It is entirely of God's goodness that poor, erring mortals live. It is of His goodness that He utilises their services while they live. Moreover, Moses was told before his death, that the people whom he had led to that point of time would "corrupt themselves". How depressing, after 120 years of preparation and labour. Was his work a failure? No, individuals among the millions of Israel were moved by his teaching and example, and will be with him in the Kingdom. It is for that result we need to labour today; outside of it there is no permanence in the things we do and establish; whether it be in the world or in the Ecclesia. We need to see beyond the present and labour for God and for the future; the experience of Moses being witness.

emerge, such as can assist us in our walk of faith to the Kingdom. So, as the numbers appear, we look forward to hearing from you, and discussing with you features of this wonderfully absorbing book.

Meanwhile, we have expounded the last chapters of Deuteronomy in detail because of their importance, and the way in which they set forth the thoughts that must have dominated the mind of Moses, as he contemplated the past and future. It has given us pleasure to expound these portions of the Word, and we hope that you also have enjoyed it. Can we suggest that if you are finding *The Christadelphian Expositor* helpful you pass on that message to others? The commencement of our exposition of *The Book of Joshua* is a good time for non-readers to commence getting it.

Question

M.W. writes:

"Recently I was looking at Num. 19 and the Law of the Red Heifer, and became puzzled by the comments on vv. 17-19 (*Expositor* vol. 8, pp. 208-209). On p. 209 is listed three usages of water in the ritual of cleansing, and it reads as if a difference is made between the 'water of purification' and the 'living water' and that the ashes, or dust, of the heifer is mixed in the former, but not the latter. As I read Num. 19, the ashes were mixed with the living water (v. 17) in a vessel and thus became the 'water of purification'. This seems to be what Bre. Barling, and Roberts say in *Law and Grace* (p. 183) and *Law of Moses* (pp. 261-262), but not what the *Expositor* says. Would you like to comment?"

Answer

Firstly we apologise for the delay in replying to your letter, which was put on one side and overlooked. In *Law of Moses*, Bro. Roberts identifies the "water of separation" (v. 13) with the "running water" mixed with ashes. That is no doubt correct. However, as we note in *Expositor*, there appears to be three *usages* of water in the transaction. This is suggested by the instructions of v. 13 that the water must be *splashed* upon the unclean; whereas in vv. 17-18 the word "sprinkle" is a different word in the Hebrew. The Law also seems to discriminate between a person who physically took up a dead body, and those who were made unclean by their association with him. For example, those