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THE NEW HOME IN CANAAN.

– AUG. 18. – DEUT. 6:3-15. –

Golden Text – "Thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee." – Deut. 8:10.

AFTER the forty years' sojourn of Israel in the wilderness they were now again on the borders of the promised land and about to enter it. All the rebellious adult generation had died. Only Joshua and Caleb and Moses remained; and even Moses, though faithful and loyal to God to the highest degree, could not enter the land of promise, because in presumptuously and without authority smiting a second time the rock whence flowed the water of life, instead of merely speaking to the rock as he was directed, he committed a sin which typified the sin unto death. The rock represented Christ who was smitten once for the world's benefit; but those who would crucify the Son of God afresh and again put him to an open shame shall not enter into the Canaan of the heavenly rest. Moses did not really commit that sin, but his presumptuous act being a type of it, he could not enter into Canaan, but [R1849 : page 184] must die in the wilderness, though he had come to the very borders and in sight of the goodly heritage.

How solemn this lesson to the Church for whose instruction those types were made! Yes, we may come even to the borders of the glorious inheritance of the saints; and not only so, but we may also lead others there, and yet [R1850 : page 184] ourselves be castaways and die the second death, if we cease to recognize the one all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ our Redeemer and Lifegiver.

Probably Moses knew nothing of the typical significance of the penalty of his rash act; but without a word of complaint he accepted the chastening of the Lord and made diligent haste to accomplish the work of the Lord for Israel before he should lie down to rest. There is a

touching sweetness as well as a grandeur of nobility in the devotion of Moses to the Lord and to his work for Israel. When God bade him made ready to ascend the Mount to view the promised land and there to lie down and die alone, apart from all he had loved and labored for so long, Moses' only reply was an expression of deep concern for Israel – "And Moses spake unto the Lord, saying, Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, ...that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd." (Num. 27:12-17.) And God regarded his request and appointed Joshua to succeed his beloved servant Moses.

Then Moses diligently applied himself to the completion of his work, giving his fatherly counsel to his beloved people in whose interests he had sacrificed every earthly good and for whom he had endured hardness – incessant toil and care and privation and reproach and weariness and vexation of spirit for forty eventful years. How tender and wise his counsel! In it all there is no vaunting of self, no boasting of his own faithfulness; but there are strong and earnest words of exhortation, encouragement, instruction and advice, the account of which read in the entire book of Deuteronomy.

If we read these memorable words so full of wisdom and counsel, forgetful of their import to the Church also, the antitypes of fleshly Israel, and merely as items of Jewish history, we miss discerning the very object of their record. "They are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world [the present evil world] are come." (1 Cor. 10:11.) Consider a few of these comforting thoughts in the light in which they shine to us, the spiritual antitypical Israel of God, to whom the promises and exhortations spoken directly to fleshly Israel apply in a wider and fuller sense.

Deut. 4:23,24,30-40. – "Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God;... for the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. [See also Heb. 12:29; 10:31.] If thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice,...

he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them [the Abrahamic covenant, of which the Gospel Church, as the spiritual seed of Abraham, are the chief inheritors. – Rom. 9:8; Gal. 3:29]. For ask now of the days that are past, ...since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is [which God hath done for his spiritual Israel], or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire [out of the glorious manifestations of his adorable presence with the church] as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation by proofs, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm, and by great terrors like all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? [While in those days no wonders were greater than those wrought on behalf of fleshly Israel, they are eclipsed by the greater wonders wrought on behalf of spiritual Israel in their emancipation from the bondage of sin, and in their wonderful leading through all their wilderness way, beset as they have been by foes without and within, hotly pursued by Satan and tempted, tried and persecuted as they have been. What a miracle of grace is every child of God!]"

The text of this lesson is an exhortation to love and loyalty and obedience to God, and to steadfastness in his service. Let us ponder its propositions carefully, and let them sink deep into our hearts.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." It is not a mere passing sentiment of appreciation that the Lord desires of us: it is all-absorbing love that he desires – a love which delights in God, which meditates upon his law and strives patiently, and at the cost of any sacrifice, to please him. Such love is not natural to us: we must strive for it, pray for it and daily and hourly cultivate it.

Through Moses the Lord indicates how we should endeavor to cultivate this love. It is by meditating upon his just and holy law, his precepts and instructions which manifest to us the glory of his character. Hear him: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be *in thine heart*, and thou shalt *teach them diligently* unto thy children, 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*. And thou shalt bind them for a sign *upon thy hand*, and they shall be as frontlets *between thine eyes*. And thou shalt write them *upon the posts of thy house*, and *on thy gates*."

The Christian who abandons the daily reading of the Word of God and meditation upon its precepts is not a growing Christian. The precepts and promises of God are very rich; but they have no sweetness to the soul that does not keep them ever fresh before the mind and delight himself in them, and shape all his course in life in strict adherence to the principles therein set forth. Let us say with the Psalmist: "With *my whole heart* have I sought thee [Lord], O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." – Psa. 119:10,11.

Then let us weigh well the counsel of verses 10-12, as the principle applies to us with double force. "And it shall be when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers,...to give thee great and goodly cities which thou buildedst not, 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; *then beware lest thou forget the Lord* which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." Beloved, shall the goodness of God ever cause us ungratefully to forget him? Many indeed are the forgetful recipients of his favors. How much of the divine bounty in spiritual things has been accorded to the children of God; yet even these blessings misused may be turned into a curse. The light misused may turn to darkness, and then, how great is that darkness! (Matt. 6:23.) If

to serve the flesh we make merchandise of the truth received, ere long that inestimable blessing becomes our accuser before God and we are borne out of the light into the outer darkness. And those who thus go after other gods which their own perverse wills set up are liable to the penalty of verse 15 which, in its application to the reprobates from spiritual Israel, corresponds to the faithful warnings of the Apostle Paul in Heb. 6:4-8 and 10:26-31.
