

"SO MOSES THE SERVANT OF GOD DIED."

– DEUT. 34:1-12. – *SEPTEMBER 21.* –

OUR LORD ALONE EXCEPTED, no character of history stands out before us so grandly and majestically as that of Moses, the great Apostle Paul, even, being overshadowed by him. If we think of him as a man, we see a sublime grandeur and nobility of character, combining strength with humility, wisdom with love and gentleness. If we consider him as the leader and deliverer of Israel, we find that he accomplished a greater work than any of the kind before or since. If we consider him as the lawgiver, we find in his code of laws justice, wisdom, mercy and an appreciation of human nature far superior to anything of his day, and the basis upon which the laws of Christendom in this twentieth century are built. If we consider him as a statesman, we find him wise, prudent, careful, yet broad. We see how he brought order out of confusion, and changed a disorganized rabble of over a million into a thoroughly organized and well ordered nation. But it is when we come to consider him as the servant of God that his character shines out most brilliantly. His faithfulness to God; his faithfulness to the trust committed to him as the Mediator for his people; his self-sacrificing spirit in connection with the entire work, indicating that he served not the god of fame or of ambition or of self-love, but the Lord of hosts.

The greatness of Moses would be incomprehensible to us from any other standpoint than that which the Scriptures set forth; viz., that he was under special divine direction as God's servant, and that, therefore, being naturally an able, efficient, humble, good man, had these manifold qualities of his character intensified by reason of the Lord's power working in him and through him for the effecting of the divine purposes.

Moses was now 120 years old; 40 years of his life had been spent as an Egyptian prince, in the court of Egypt, educated, trained, and in the public service as a general and a ruler. The second forty years of his life he was a shepherd in the wilderness, because of his love for the Lord, his appreciation of the divine promise, and his preference to share these with his brethren, the Israelites, rather than to continue in the favor of the Egyptians, their enemies and oppressors. We have already seen how this wilderness experience was probably valuable to him, enabling him to transform and transmute the knowledge and experiences already gained into a broad and deep philosophy, the foundation of which was faith in God and respect for his promises. Thus does God sometimes work by natural means to prepare the instruments for his service. The closing forty years of his life were devoted to the exercise of all the knowledge, experience and mental philosophy and faith previously gained, to the service of Israel as their leader, lawgiver, statesman – prophet, priest and king. And now his work was finished – the work which the Lord intended him to do. Another, Joshua, was to take up the work of leader, and he had already, by the Lord's direction, been formally and publicly ordained to this office, and Moses was ready to die.

In considering the fact that Moses was not permitted to go into the promised land, we are to bear in mind that he, as well as the nation of Israel, was being used of the Lord in a typical manner. We are not to go to the extreme of higher criticism, and to think of the deliverance from Egypt as an allegory. It was all true; the history of a series of facts; but truths and facts, under the Lord's guidance, may be so arranged as to be types of still higher facts, illustrations of still higher principles. One of the reasons mentioned why Moses was not permitted to lead Israel into the land of promise was the second smiting of the rock. The smiting the first time (Exod. 17:1-7) was by the Lord's direction, and the waters gushed forth, but the second time (Num. 20:2-12) the Lord said to Moses, "Speak unto the rock," but instead he smote the rock a second time.

In this he spoiled a type, while he made another type. Christ Jesus, the true Rock, was to be smitten but once for our sins, and as a result of that one smiting at Calvary the water of life would be obtained for all true Israelites to all time; and if for a season the flow was stopped it was only necessary that the Rock should be invoked in the name of the Lord, that the waters might again flow forth. Christ dieth no more; death has no dominion over him; therefore in the type the Rock should not have been smitten a second time. But the second smiting, nevertheless, made a new type, because as the Apostle explains, there are some now who crucify Christ afresh, and put him to an open shame – some of his professed followers denying or ignoring the value of the original sacrifice, denying the blood that bought them, are counted as committing the sin unto death – Second Death – and of these Moses became a type, and as a type of a class which would have to do with the antitype of the rock, he was debarred from Canaan. – Heb. 6:4-6.

But even aside from the making of this type, Moses would not have gone into the land of Canaan; because, from another point of view, he was the type of the Law Covenant, which must end before the people can enter into their rest. As Moses was the representative of the Law Covenant, so Joshua became the representative or type of the New Covenant and of its mediator, Jesus, the Deliverer. "The Law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The Law was a pedagogue or guide to prepare and bring the Israelites along to the borders of Canaan, but the Law could never give them rest, could never take them into the land of promise. Christ, the antitype of Joshua, must do that. We are to remember, too, that Moses' error in smiting the Rock, did not involve him in the Second Death, nor will it work any injury to him as respects the future. It was comparatively a trivial matter, and taught him a valuable lesson which he evidently learned to the Lord's pleasement, and his failure to go into the land of promise, therefore, should not indicate a continuance of divine indignation against him, but merely a continuance of the divine purpose in making of him a type of a class who would have to do with

the antitypical [R3077 : page 283] Rock, the antitypical water, and the antitypical smiting.

We might remark here, too, that those who smote the Lord the first time, at Calvary, have the promise of full forgiveness. They shall look upon him whom they pierced, and shall mourn for him, and the Lord will pour out upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication, and they shall have full opportunity of recompense and reconciliation. (Zech. 12:10.) It is those who, with greater knowledge, and after they have become partakers of the holy spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the age to come, sin wilfully and count the blood of the covenant a common thing – these are they who commit the real sin unto death, and for whom the Scriptures suggest no hope, or further opportunity, because they have sinned wilfully.

MOUNT PISGAH VIEWS.

At this time the Israelites were in the land of Moab, at the northern end of the Dead Sea, opposite Jericho, and nearly in line with the city of Jerusalem. They awaited the Lord's direction, by the pillar of cloud, before crossing Jordan to take possession of Canaan. Here, Moses' work being accomplished, the Lord led him up to Mount Pisgah's top, a lofty peak 3,586 feet above the sea-level. From this point an extended panoramic view was possible – is possible today. Here Moses saw much with his natural eyes, but much more with the eye of faith, seeing the promises which God had made to the tribes of Israel, through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and by his own mouth. He saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied. We hear not a murmur respecting the transfer of leadership and the cessation of his own labors. If God had used him in his service to the extent that he was pleased to do, the servant was thankful and satisfied.

"So Moses, the servant of God, died" – not from weakness and infirmity of age, for "his eye was not dimmed nor his natural force abated"; – he died according to the word of the Lord. Throughout his [R3078 : page 283] life he had been the Lord's servant, used and

blessed as such, protected and kept by the power of God through the many vicissitudes of life, and he who thus kept him, buried him in one of the many little inaccessible valleys of this Mount Pisgah. The Lord not only hid Moses in the grave, but hid the grave, so that no man knoweth its place. This also illustrates the divine wisdom; for, (1) had the place of the grave been known it no doubt would have been an object of veneration amongst the Israelites, a Mecca, to which pilgrimages would have been made, and the man Moses would have been honored, rather than the God whom this man represented, and whose servant and mouthpiece he was. (2) Doubtless, also, the hiding of the grave was typical, and represented that the Law *Covenant*, which died and passed away, was not to be revived; that the New Covenant, not only displaced, but thoroughly replaced it, so that there would never more be need for the Law Covenant in connection with the bringing of Israel to all the precious promises of God.

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime;
And departing leave behind us
Footprints in the sands of time."

This great truth, so beautifully expressed by the poet, finds a grand illustration in Moses. His life and character are a noble example, not only for the Lord's saints, but also for natural men. No one can study the life of Moses, and note its purity, its lofty ideals, its humility, its obedience to the Lord, its faithfulness to his fellows, without being bettered, ennobled, by the contemplation. And each one thus bettered himself by contemplating this noble character, should in turn seek to leave noble and enduring footprints for others, that perchance "some forlorn or shipwrecked brother seeing may take heart again."

The Book of Deuteronomy is chiefly composed of addresses by Moses to the Israelites, setting before them the various lessons they had received from the Lord, expounding to them the divine law, their duty to God and to man. It closes with the Song of Moses, and Moses'

blessing of the nation, two poems whose beauty and literary merit are acknowledged as being of the highest order. Jacob called his twelve sons when dying and pronounced over them certain blessings. So now Moses, as the father of the nation, in these poems, completes his admonitions respecting them, his warnings and encouragements; and in these prophecies, not only their trials and difficulties and failures are foretold, but also their final victories, as we believe these victories shall ultimately be attained by all the Israel of God – all who will become by faith the children of Abraham – the Jew first and also the Gentile, during the Millennial age. – Rom. 11:11,12,28-32.

This song of Moses was evidently not merely for Israel, but prophetic, and was referred to by our Lord (Rev. 15:3,4), long after that nation had been blinded and given up as respects the high calling of this Gospel age. This is the song of Moses and the Lamb, which the overcomers are to sing, those who, with Christ, shall be members of the body of the great Prophet who shall bless, not only the literal seed of Abraham, but all the true Israel of God; all who shall become Israelites according to the faith and obedience of Abraham. This song, after telling of trying experiences, ends with rejoicing, saying, "Rejoice, all ye nations with his people!" The poem of blessing, which applied most particularly to the tribes of Israel, tho doubtless also typical of the elect 144,000 ends with rejoicing, saying, "Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?" – Deut. 32 and 33.

The scribe who wrote the Book of Deuteronomy at Moses' dictation finished its account as a historian, describing the death and burial of Israel's great leader, and declaring the great honor in which he was esteemed, recounting his mighty works, and ascribing these as did Moses himself, not to Moses personally, but to the Lord, who sent him to do them.

JOSHUA THE NEW LEADER.

Joshua was now eighty years of age, and was accepted by the Israelites as Moses' successor without murmur. They had, doubtless, learned some valuable lessons in their wilderness discipline. Joshua, [R3078 : page 284] it will be remembered, was Moses' companion when he went up into the mountain, Sinai, and there received the Law, and indeed throughout the wilderness journey he seems to have been the one above all others upon whom Moses could thoroughly rely. He and Caleb were the two spies who brought the favorable report, declaring that by the help of the Lord Israel might go up and assuredly take possession. In the change of leadership Israel learned another great lesson; viz., that their confidence and trust must not be in man; that so long as they recognized the Lord as their Leader they might feel safe and confident; because, altho others might pass away, the Lord would abide faithful and could raise them up at any time just such leaders as he saw best.

There is a lesson in this matter for spiritual Israelites as well. We are not to put our trust in leaders, but in the Lord. This does not signify that we are not to trust leaders, and not to acknowledge leaders, for all the history of the Lord's dealings with his people, the typical as well as the antitypical, shows us that he is pleased to use human agencies as his representatives in the teaching and leading of his people from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge. The lesson to be learned is that the Lord is thoroughly competent to manage his own work, and that while we may look for his leading through human agencies our trust is not in them, their wisdom, their strength, but in the Lord's wisdom and strength, guiding them and us through them.

Another lesson here set forth is found in the words, "Israel hearkened unto him [Joshua] and did as the Lord commanded Moses." Joshua was to be followed only as the people could realize that he was following God's instructions, given through Moses – through the Law. In the antitype the great Deliverer Jesus, will be the commander of the

people, will bless the people during the Millennial age, and they must hear him and must obey him, but all that he will speak and all that he will order will be in full accord with the divine law, as represented by Moses. The Christ, during the Millennial Kingdom, will attempt nothing on behalf of mankind in violation of the laws of righteousness, the laws of God. But everything in the way of lifting mankind up, will be by magnifying the Law of God, and making it honorable, and assisting all to conform their lives thereto, but not by that Law Covenant which is forever dead.

