

[R4053 : page 266]

## "THE SERVANT OF THE LORD DIED"

- DEUT. 34:1-12. - SEPTEMBER 22. -

**Golden Text:** – "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." – Psalm 116:15.

MOSES had faithfully fulfilled the work of the Lord committed to his care down to and including his orations, mentioned in our last lesson, in which he urged upon Israel faithfulness to God similar to that which he had illustrated in himself. The Lord's time had come for a change in Israel's leadership, and Moses was instructed to go up into the mountain called Nebo, whose culminating peak is Pisgah – about nine miles east of the northern end of the Dead Sea. There God gave him a vision, a view of the glorious land where the people he had loved – and in whose interests he had sacrificed the honors and dignities and luxuries of the Egyptian Court – were to have their home as the people of the Lord, under the terms of the Covenant which he had mediated at Mount Sinai. In the clear atmosphere of that country any eye may see much of the land of promise, but under divine blessing and assistance, as in Moses' case, we can readily realize that the vision, the view, could be a very comprehensive one. It was a part of this great leader's reward, which doubtless greatly comforted his heart, enabling him to see that his labor for the Lord had not been in vain, but was destined finally to bring forth great fruitage.

The mental vision of Moses probably took in more than was visible to his natural sight. He understood that the Lord's blessing upon the nation, including that upon himself, was all a part of the great Abrahamic promise. He understood that the coming of Israel into this land which God had given to them was merely one step in the development of the divine plan. He understood that Israel was to become very great in the world, and ultimately be used as

the Lord's instrumentality in guiding and instructing all the other nations. He understood that ere this would be accomplished a greater teacher than himself would come, a greater lawyer, a greater leader, a commander of the people – the Messiah. He could see in the promise made to Abraham – "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" – the ultimate results, but he could not see, we may be sure, the intermediate steps of divine providence as they are now open and plain before the eyes of those who are guided by the Lord's Word and Spirit to an understanding of the "deep things of God," which other eyes have not seen nor ears heard.

### **"THE HIDDEN MYSTERY"**

The Apostle tells us that the riches of God's grace revealed during this Gospel Age were mysteries hidden from past ages and dispensations. (Col. 1:26.) Due time for their revealment had not come. Nor were they ever intended to be understood except by the Elect – To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom, but to outsiders these things are spoken in parables and dark sayings. – Mark 4:11.

The mystery of the divine plan, which Moses saw not, but which we now see through the apostolic explanation provided by the holy Spirit, is that the natural seed of Abraham, though it will have a part in the blessing of all the families of the earth, will not have the chief part except as it is represented by Jesus and the apostles and members of the early Church, who according to the flesh were of the natural seed of Abraham, but according to the spirit were the spiritual Seed – the true heirs. Neither did Moses nor others of his time see that to this spiritual Seed, which originally was of the Jews, would be added members gathered out of every nation, people, kindred and tongue during this Gospel Age. Nor was it necessary that Moses should see or understand or appreciate more than he did. Greater knowledge would have been

confusing to him instead of favorable. Thus, "God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform." And again, as the poet declares: **[R4054 : page 266]**

"Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never-failing skill,  
He treasures up his bright designs,  
And works his sovereign will."

As we in mental picture see the great Moses looking over the land of Canaan and feasting upon the gracious promises of God to Israel – as we note his faithfulness in his long and arduous service and his peaceful resignation of his life into the hands of the Lord at its close, in full confidence of the fulfilment of the Oath-Bound Covenant, it points a lesson for us. We similarly are standing at the close of a great epoch. The antitypical Moses, Christ the Head and the Church his Body, has arisen amongst men, and for eighteen centuries has been leading onward in the direction of the **[R4054 : page 267]** Millennial Kingdom. The journey is almost concluded.

By the Lord's direction the living representatives of the Body of Christ, the antitypical Moses, are already on Mount Pisgah, and, looking beyond, are getting the antitypical vision of the glories of the age to come – of all the blessings that shall come to the world of mankind during the Millennial reign of Christ. With the eye of faith we perceive the blessing of all the families of the earth through the faithful ones of Spiritual Israel and the Ancient Worthies. We see gathering to their leadership and instruction, not only Israel, but all the families of the earth. We perceive the blessing of the light of the glory of the Lord as it shall fill the whole earth and make it no longer necessary for each to tell his neighbor and his brother, Know thou the Lord, because all shall know him. We perceive the fall of Babylon, the antitypical Jericho, and the rescue at the time of the Great Company of the

Lord's true people who there were represented by Rahab. With the eye of faith we perceive the victory after victory which the people will gain over their various foes under the Spiritual Joshua, the Christ of glory. We perceive that ultimately, with still continued victories, even the last enemy shall be destroyed, and the whole groaning creation brought to the glorious place where there shall be no more sighing, no more dying, no more crying, because all the former things of sin and condemnation shall have passed away. This is our present vision from Mount Pisgah, and surely it is glorious and heart-inspiring. Soon in our changed condition beyond the veil we shall be members of the great Joshua, leading all the families of the earth to the victories and blessings promised through faith and obedience.

The prophecy of Baalim might properly be considered as the sentiment of Moses, as, looking down into the future he endeavored to discern the shadowy outlines of the coming blessings of God's Covenant, namely:

"I see him, but not now;  
I behold him, but not nigh:  
There shall come forth a Star out of Jacob,  
And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel."

"So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died...according to the word of the Lord: This is the land which he sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither." As we look into the beauties of the Millennial epoch, the Lord tells us that we shall not go over to possess it, but that it shall be for mankind. But he tells us more, namely, that he has "provided some better thing for us." (Heb. 11:40.) He tells us that we must die, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." (I Cor. 15:50.) The glorious vision shown us is merely for

our comfort and strengthening in connection with the closing scenes of this age.

In the Hebrew language the expression, "according to the word of the Lord," would literally be, "by the mouth of the Lord," and Jewish rabbis have given this a poetic turn and say, "by the kiss of the Lord." It is a beautiful thought, for while Moses was about to pass to the extreme limit of the curse – death – he was recognized of the Lord and dealt with as a faithful servant; and in view of the fact that the divine plan had arranged for his redemption from sheol, the grave (Hosea 13:14), his death is appropriately described as a sleep. And thus we have the picture of a father kissing his child to sleep, and the other picture of the glorious morning of the resurrection in which the antitypical Moses, as the Father's representative, will awaken him to the blessings and eternal rewards which are his in the divine plan because of his faithfulness.

### **"THE DEATH OF HIS SAINTS"**

This is the signification of the Golden Text, "Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his holy ones." In a prominent sense our Lord was the Holy One of God, and his death was in the sight of the Father very precious, and his soul was not left in sheol, in hades, in the state of death. He was "raised again from the dead on the third day." And through him not only the faith and obedience of the Church are counted for righteousness, but likewise the faith and obedience of Moses and the Ancient Worthies. It is on this account that these may be called saints, holy ones, because in the divine plan the merit of the Redeemer is imputed to them, and through him all these are now in divine favor. Consequently, precious in Jehovah's sight was the death of all such; and of all now walking by faith and seeking to do his will.

From this standpoint we may understand that the death of our dear Redeemer, like that of all of God's consecrated ones who have died, and much more so, was precious in the Father's sight, and that even though he died as the sinner, crying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," nevertheless he died with the Father's kiss. So may it be with all those consecrated to walk in the footsteps of their Redeemer. Covered with his robe of righteousness they are all precious to the Father, and their death under whatever circumstances will really not be accidental, but a kiss of divine approval and seal of the coming blessing in the First Resurrection.

### **THE HIDDEN SEPULCHRE**

The Lord himself buried Moses, hiding the place of his sepulchre. The primary reason for this probably was to hinder the Israelites from carrying his corpse as a mummy, which in after time might have become a temptation to idolatry. The passage in Jude 9, which mentions Michael contending with Satan concerning the body of Moses, is a hint along this line, that Satan desired to have the corpse to use it for the further misleading of the people, but that the Lord through Michael the archangel hindered, prevented this, and kept the burial-place a secret from the Israelites.

But there is another view of this matter which is interesting because it relates to Spiritual Israel. Jesus and the Church unitedly constitute the antitypical, or greater Moses – the Spiritual. Their inheritance is not **[R4054 : page 268]** to be earthly but heavenly, and a grave is a symbol of hope as respects an earthly resurrection. Hence it was appropriate that the type should not show an earthly grave since the antitype has no hope in that connection. Our hopes are not fleshly, not restitutional hopes, but hopes as New Creatures of glory, honor and immortality in joint-heirship with our glorious Head.

## THE MEEKEST AND THE GREATEST

The Scriptures write down Moses as the meekest man, and history has written him down as one of the greatest of men. Our Lord and the apostles and others of the Church are not introduced in this comparison because their greatness is not as men but as New Creatures. They sacrificed earthly occupations, etc., that they might preach the Gospel of the Kingdom and suffer therefor.

When one hundred and twenty years old Moses' eye was not dim, his vigor had not fled! This is a remarkable statement in whatever light we view it. Forty years was he schooled in all the learning of the Egyptians, a member of the Court and a general. Forty years more he was hidden from view in the desert region as a herder of sheep, learning, we may be sure, lessons of patience, endurance, self-control and humility. And now, finally, the last forty years of his life he was used mightily of God, and yet maintained humility and exemplified the wonderful qualities of a judge and lawgiver, and later a general, a prophet, a priest, a teacher. The poet has said of him: –

"This was the truest warrior  
That ever buckled sword;  
This the most gifted poet  
That ever breathed a word.  
And never earth's philosopher  
Traced with his golden pen  
On the deathless page, truths half so sage  
As he wrote down for men.

"And had he not high honor?  
The hillside for his pall,  
To lie in state, while angels wait  
With stars for tapers tall;  
And the dark rock pines, like tossing plumes,

Over his bier to wave,  
And God's own hand, in that lonely land,  
To lay him in the grave."

Our lesson says of him that there has risen no prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, because not only was his birth and development specially under divine blessing and guidance, but he fully submitted himself to the Lord in meekness, in humility, and was therefore specially used of him as a type or picture of **[R4055 : page 268]** the still greater Prophet – the Christ of glory. (Acts 3:22,23.) Let us use the words of others in describing this great servant of God: –

Moses, the Statesman: "Inspiration apart, Moses possessed all those endowments and qualities which form the consummate statesman and chief magistrate; an intellect of the highest order; perfect mastery of all the civil wisdom of the age; a penetrating, comprehensive and sagacious judgment; great promptness and energy in action; patriotism which neither ingratitude, ill treatment nor rebellion could quench or even cool; a commanding and persuasive eloquence; a hearty love of truth; an incorruptible virtue; an entire freedom from selfish ambition; an invincible hatred of tyranny and injustice; a patient endurance of toil; a courageous contempt of danger, and a greatness of soul in which he has never been surpassed by the most admired heroes of ancient or modern times. Comprehensiveness, grasp, force, sagacity, were the predominant characteristics of his mind; magnanimity, disinterestedness, an enthusiastic devotion to liberty and an ardent but rational piety, were the leading qualities of his heart."

As a General: "Moses delivered his people from the most powerful nation on earth; maintained them amid the perils of the desert for forty years, and led them in confidence against a country settled by fierce tribes, which they conquered."



As a Lawgiver: "However much may have been added by the development of the people, like the amendments to the Constitution and laws of the United States, yet through Moses was instituted the great system of civil and religious law."

As a Poet: "The two songs in Deut. 32 and 33 and Psalm 90."

As an Orator: "The great orations in Deuteronomy stand among the few greatest masterpieces of eloquence in the world's history, if not at their head."

### **"WHOM THE LORD KNEW FACE TO FACE"**

To others of the prophets the Lord usually manifested himself through visions or dreams or by angels in human form, but seemingly Moses was granted a still closer approach to the divine presence. When thinking of the expression, "face to face," we should understand it to signify that Moses enjoyed a closeness of fellowship and favor with the Lord rather than that he really looked into the face of Jehovah, concerning which it is written, "No man can see my face and live" (Ex. 33:20); and again, "Whom no man hath seen or can see." (I Tim. 6:16.) It may be that our Lord Jesus as Michael especially represented the Father with Moses, as it was he who prevented the Adversary from having Moses' body after death. But in any event, applying the matter antitypically to the Christ, we see that in a special sense the antitypical Moses in the flesh throughout this Gospel Age has had a favor in connection with the divine presence not enjoyed by any others of previous times.

We see the Lord's face with the eye of faith, for we have seen our Lord Jesus, who represents the Father, and who declares that whosoever hath seen him hath seen the Father – has enjoyed the best possible revelation of the Father whom no man hath seen. Again he declares respecting the Church, his Body, "Their angels [messengers] do always have access to the face of my Father," as

though he would tell us that all of our interests and affairs are brought directly to the Father's attention, so that there is no danger of any delay and any peradventure that all things will work together for good to them who love him. Again we see the Father's face in the sense that we see his love, which is displayed to us through a knowledge of the Truth by the holy Spirit granted to us. Not merely divine [R4055 : page 269] power do we see, not merely divine wisdom do we see, not merely divine justice do we see – but God himself is love, and he has shown us his love. We who with the eyes of our understanding have seen our Redeemer and come to a knowledge of him have seen the Father and become acquainted with him proportionately, for all things are of the Father and all things are by the Son. "Let me die the death of the righteous – let my last end be like his." – Numbers 23:10.

Our Lord Jesus was the Righteous One, and when we think of death we are to think of him and his death, and to remember that as he laid down his life we also ought to lay down our lives on behalf of the brethren. As he sacrificed earthly interests and advantages and privileges and pleasures that he might die the sacrificial death in accord with the divine plan, so let us remember that we have covenanted similarly to be "dead with him." For if we be dead with him we shall also live with him; if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him. Our hope of participation with him in his resurrection to glory, honor and immortality, is based upon our faithfulness in participating with him in his death, which means also a share with him in the sufferings of this present time. But standing as we do with the Pisgah prospect before us, strengthened by might in the inner-man, why should either death or its attendant sufferings deter us? Nay, in all these things we will rejoice and triumph through our Lord and Redeemer, our Head!

### **"MEN OF LIKE PASSIONS WITH YOURSELVES"**

These were the words of the Apostle Paul, and his humble statement respecting himself and his companions is true also of

Moses and all the Ancient Worthies, and is in full harmony with the Scriptural declaration, "There is none righteous [perfect], no not one." We here quote the words of another respecting the blemishes of Moses' career: –

"Two or three items to his fault are attributed to Moses, as every saint has failed in some point at some time. There is no garden but has some weeds. But the most unjust thing we can do is to measure its value by its weeds and not by its fruits. 'By their *fruits* ye shall know them.' Moses' few faults are such as will never be noticed at all by a worldly man. They are like a broken limb on a tree loaded with magnificent fruit. All God's works through men are done by imperfect instruments."

"There's a fleck of rust on a faultless blade –  
On the armor of price there is one.  
There's a mole on the cheek of the lovely maid;  
There are spots upon the sun."

-----