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**COMMENTARY**

**Barnes' Notes on the Bible**  
**Volume 2 -**  
**Deuteronomy**

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*To the Students of the Words, Works and Ways of God:*

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# DEUTERONOMY

## INTRODUCTION

The ordinary name of the book is derived, through the Septuagint and Vulgate from that sometimes employed by the Jews, “repetition of the Law,” and indicates correctly enough the character and contents of the book.

(The contents of Deuteronomy consist:

**(1)** of three addresses to the people delivered by Moses in the 11th month of the 40th year after the Exodus (Deuteronomy 1—30); and

**(2)** of certain final acts and words of Moses, namely, the solemn appointment of his successor (Deuteronomy 31), his song (Deuteronomy 32), and blessing (Deuteronomy 33), which together with the account of his death (Deuteronomy 34) form an appropriate conclusion to the book and to the whole Pentateuch. Part (2) was probably added to the rest by Joshua or some other duly-authorized prophet or leader of the people, after the death of Moses.)

The bulk of Deuteronomy consists of addresses spoken within the space of 40 days, and beginning on the first day of the 11th month in the 40th year.

The speeches exhibit an unity of style and character which is strikingly consistent with such circumstances. They are pervaded by the same vein of thought, the same tone and tenor of feeling, the same peculiarities of conception and expression. They exhibit matter which is neither documentary nor traditional, but conveyed in the speaker’s own words.

Their aim is strictly hortatory; their style is earnest, heart-stirring, and impressive. In some passages it is sublime, but rhetorical throughout. They keep constantly in view the circumstances present at that time and the crisis to which the fortunes of Israel had at last been brought through. Moses had before him not the men to whom by God’s command he delivered the law at Sinai, but the following generation which had grown up in the wilderness. Large portions of the Law necessarily 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, upon their entry into settled homes in Canaan a thorough discharge of the various obligations laid on them by the covenant would become 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. Sometimes little opportunity is taken of promulgating regulations which are supplementary or auxiliary to those of the preceding books; some few modifications arising out of different or altered circumstances are now made; and the whole Mosaic system is completed by the addition of several enactments in Deuteronomy 12—26 of a social, civil, and political nature. These would have been wholly superfluous during the nomadic life of the desert; but now that the permanent organization of Israel as a nation was to be accomplished, they could not be longer deferred. Accordingly, the legislator, at the command of God, completes his great work by supplying them. Thus, he provides civil institutions for his people accredited by the same divine sanctions as had been vouchsafed to their religious rites.

The preceding books displayed Moses principally in the capacity of legislator or annalist. Deuteronomy sets him before us in that of a prophet. And he not only warns and teaches with an authority and energy which the sublimest pages of the four greater prophets cannot surpass, but he delivers some of the most notable and incontrovertible predictions to be found in the Old Testament. The prophecy in ~~Genesis~~ Deuteronomy 18:18 had no doubt its partial verifications in successive ages, but its terms are satisfied in none of them. The prospect opened by it advances continually until it finds its rest in the Messiah, who stands alone as the only complete counterpart of Moses, and as the greater than he. Deuteronomy 28 and Deuteronomy 32 furnish other and no less manifest examples.

It is generally allowed that Deuteronomy must, in substance, have come from one hand. The book presents, the last four chapters excepted, an undeniable unity in style and treatment; it is cast, so to speak, in one mould; its literary characteristics are such that we cannot believe the composition of it to have been spread over any long period of time: and these facts are in full accord with the traditional view which ascribes the Book to Moses.

Assertions as to the spuriousness of Deuteronomy, though put forward very positively, appear when sifted to rest upon most insufficient arguments. The alleged anachronisms, discrepancies, and difficulties admit for the most part of easy and complete explanation; and no serious attempt has ever been made to meet the overwhelming presumption drawn from the unanimous and unwavering testimony of the ancient Jewish Church and nation that Moses is the author of this book.

(The older scholars of Germany unhesitatingly affirmed that Deuteronomy was written long after the rest of the Pentateuch was extant in its present shape. The newer school sees no less certainly in Deuteronomy the primaeval quarry out of which the writers concerned in the production of the preceding books drew their materials. Out of this conflict of opinions one inference may safely be drawn. The allegation so positively made that the very style of Deuteronomy betrays its late origin is arbitrary and baseless.)

Deuteronomy has in a singular manner the attestation of the apostles and of our Lord. Paul, in ~~608~~Romans 10:8; 15:11 argues from it at some length, and expressly quotes it as written by Moses; Peter and Stephen (~~482~~Acts 3:22; 7:37) refer to the promise of “a prophet like unto” Moses, and regard it as given, as it professes to be, by Moses himself; our Lord, wielding “the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God” against the open assaults of Satan, thrice resorts to Deuteronomy for the texts with which He repels the tempter, ~~4004~~Matthew 4:4-10. To urge in reply that the inspiration of the apostles, and even the indwelling of the Spirit “without measure” in the Saviour, would not necessarily preserve them from mistakes on such subjects as the authorship of ancient writings, or to fortify such assertions by remarking that our Lord as the Son of Man was Himself ignorant of some things, is to overlook the important distinction between ignorance and error. To be conscious that much truth lies beyond the range of the intelligence is compatible with the perfection of the creature: but to be deceived by the fraud of others and to fall into error, is not so. To assert then that He who is “the Truth” believed Deuteronomy to be the work of Moses and quoted it expressly as such, though it was in fact a forgery introduced into the world seven or eight centuries after the Exodus, is in effect, even though not in intention, to impeach the perfection and sinlessness of His nature, and seems thus to gainsay the first principles of Christianity.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 1

**Deuteronomy 1:1,2.** These verses are prefixed as a connecting link between the contents of the preceding books and that of Deuteronomy now to follow. The sense of the passage might be given thus: “The discourses of Moses to the people up to the eleventh month of the fortieth year” (compare <sup><0103></sup>Deuteronomy 1:3) “have now been recorded.” The proper names which follow seem to belong to places where “words” of remarkable importance were spoken. They are by the Jewish commentators referred to the spots which witnessed the more special sins of the people, and the mention of them here is construed as a pregnant rebuke. The Book of Deuteronomy is known among the Jews as “the book of reproofs.”

*On this side of Jordan* Rather, “beyond Jordan” (as in <sup><0103></sup>Deuteronomy 3:20,25). The phrase was a standing designation for the district east of Jordan, and at times, when Greek became commonly spoken in the country, was exactly represented by the proper name Peraea.

*In the wilderness, in the plain* The former term denotes the Desert of Arabia generally; the latter was the sterile tract (‘Arabah,’ <sup><0204></sup>Numbers 21:4’s note) which stretches along the lower Jordan to the Dead Sea, and is continued thence to the Gulf of Akaba.

*Over against the Red Sea* Render it: “over against Suph.” “Sea” is not in the original text. “Suph” is either the pass Es Sufah near Ain-el-Weibeh (<sup><0135></sup>Numbers 13:26 note), or the name of the alluvial district (the <sup><0214></sup>Numbers 21:14 note).

Tophel is identified with Tufileh, the Tafyle of Burckhardt, still a considerable place — some little distance southeast of the Dead Sea. Paran is probably “Mount Paran” (<sup><0302></sup>Deuteronomy 33:2); or a city of the same name near the mountain. Compare <sup><0146></sup>Genesis 14:6.

Laban is generally identified with Libnah (<sup><0430></sup>Numbers 33:20), and Hazeroth with Ain Hadherah (<sup><0134></sup>Numbers 11:34 note); but the position of Dizahab is uncertain.

**Deuteronomy 1:2.** For Kadesh see <sup><0135></sup>Numbers 13:26 note; and for Horeb see <sup><0101></sup>Exodus 3:1.

**Deuteronomy 1:4.** *Astaroth* On this place compare **Genesis 14:5** and note.

*In Edrei* These words should, to render the sense clear, come next after “slain.” The battle in which Sihon and Og were defeated took place at Edrei.

**Deuteronomy 1:5.** *In the land of Moab* This district had formerly been occupied by the Moabites, and retained its name from them: but had been conquered by the Amorites. Compare **Numbers 21:26; 22:4** notes.

*Declare* Render, explain the Law already declared.

**Deuteronomy 1:6.** The first and introductory address of Moses to the people is here commenced. It extends to **Deuteronomy 4:40**; and is divided from the second discourse by the **Deuteronomy 1:4:41-49**. A summary of the address is given in the chapter-headings usually found in English Bibles.

**Deuteronomy 1:7.** *To the mount of the Amorites* i.e. to the mountain district occupied by the Amorites, reaching into the Negeb, and part of the territory assigned to the tribe of Judah.

**Deuteronomy 1:9-15.** This appointment of the “captains” (compare **Exodus 18:21ff**) must not be confounded with that of the elders in **Numbers 11:16ff**. The former would number 78,600; the latter were 70 only.

A comparison between this passage and that in Exodus makes it obvious that Moses is only touching on certain parts of the whole history, without regard to order of time, but with a special purpose. This important arrangement for the good government of the people took place before they left Horeb to march direct to the promised land. This fact sets more clearly before us the perverseness and ingratitude of the people, to which the orator next passes; and shows, what he was anxious to impress, that the fault of the 40 years’ delay rested only with themselves!

**Deuteronomy 1:19.** *That great and terrible wilderness* Compare **Deuteronomy 8:15**. This language is such as people would employ after having passed with toil and suffering through the worst part of it, the southern half of the Arabah (see **Numbers 21:4** note); and more

especially when they had but recently rested from their marches in the plain of Shittim, the largest and richest oasis in the whole district on the Eastern bank near the mouth of the Jordan.

**Deuteronomy 1:22, 23.** The plan of sending the spies originated with the people; and, as in itself a reasonable one, it approved itself to Moses; it was submitted to God, sanctioned by Him, and carried out under special divine direction. The orator's purpose in this chapter is to bring before the people emphatically their own responsibilities and behavior. It is therefore important to remind them, that the sending of the spies, which led immediately to their complaining and rebellion, was their own suggestion.

The following verses to the end of the chapter give a condensed account, the fuller one being in Numbers 13—14, of the occurrences which led to the banishment of the people for 40 years into the wilderness.

**Deuteronomy 1:37.** The sentence on Moses was not passed when the people rebelled during their first encampment at Kadesh, but some 37 years later, when they had re-assembled in the same neighborhood at Meribah (see the Numbers 20:13 note). He alludes to it here as having happened not many months previously, bearing on the facts which were for his purpose in pricking the conscience of the people.

**Deuteronomy 1:41.** *Ye were ready to go up into the hill* Rather, perhaps, "ye made light of going up;" i.e. "ye were ready to attempt it as a trifling undertaking." Deuteronomy 1:43 shows the issue of this spirit in action; compare marginal references.

**Deuteronomy 1:44.** *The Amorites* In Numbers 14:45, it is "the Amalekites and the Canaanites" who are said to have discomfited them. The Amorites, as the most powerful nation of Canaan, lend their name here, as in other passages (eg. Deuteronomy 1:7) to the Canaanite tribes generally.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 2

**Deuteronomy 2:1-3.** Deuteronomy 2:1 seems to refer in general terms to the long years of wandering, the details of which were not for Moses' present purpose. The command of Deuteronomy 2:2,3 relates to their journey from Kadesh to Mount Hor (Numbers 20:22; 33:37), and directs their march around to the southern extremity of Mount Seir, so as to "compass the land of Edom" (Judges 11:18; Numbers 21:4), and so northward toward the Arnon, i.e., "by the way of the wilderness of Moab," (Deuteronomy 2:8). This circuitous path was followed because of the refusal of the Edomites to allow the people to pass through their territory.

**Deuteronomy 2:4.** Compare the marginal reference. Though the Edomites resisted the passage through the midst of their land, they did not, and probably could not, oppose the "passing through the coast" or along their eastern frontier.

**Deuteronomy 2:5.** *I have given mount Seir to Esau* Though the descendants of Esau were conquered by David (2 Samuel 8:14), yet they were not dispossessed of their land, and in the reign of Jehoshaphat they regained their independence (2 Kings 8:20-22).

**Deuteronomy 2:8.** Elath (Akaba) is at the northern extremity of the eastern arm of the Red Sea, and gives to that arm the name of the Elanitic Gulf. The name means "trees;" and is still justified by the grove of palm-trees at Akaba.

**Deuteronomy 2:9.** The Moabites and the Ammonites (Deuteronomy 2:19) being descended from Lot, the nephew of Abraham (Genesis 19:30-38), were, like the Edomites, kinsmen of the Israelites.

**Deuteronomy 2:10-12.** For the Emims, Horims, and Anakims, see the marginal references. These verses are either parenthetical or the insertion of a later hand.

**Deuteronomy 2:13.** The words, "said I," are not in the Hebrew. The words "rise up, and get you over the brook Zered" (Numbers



21:12 note) connect themselves with <sup><0109></sup>Deuteronomy 2:9, and form the conclusion of what God said to Moses.

<sup><0120></sup>**Deuteronomy 2:20-23.** These verses, like <sup><0120></sup>Deuteronomy 2:10-12, are in all likelihood an addition made by a later reviser.

<sup><0120></sup>**Deuteronomy 2:20.** *Zamzummims* A giant race usually identified with the Zuzims of <sup><0145></sup>Genesis 14:5.

<sup><0123></sup>**Deuteronomy 2:23.** *The Avims which dwelt in Hazerim, even unto Azzah* Read (Gaza, of which Azzah is the Hebrew form. “Hazerim” is not strictly a proper name, but means “villages,” or “enclosures,” probably such as are still common in the East. The Avims are no doubt identical with the Avites of <sup><0133></sup>Joshua 13:3, and were doubtless a scattered remnant of a people conquered by the Caphtorim (<sup><0104></sup>Genesis 10:14 note) and living in their “enclosures” in the neighborhood of Gerar. The word, which means “ruins,” seems itself expressive of their fallen state.

<sup><0125></sup>**Deuteronomy 2:26.** *Kedemoth* literally, “Easternmost parts;” the name of a town afterward assigned to the Reubenites, and given out of that tribe to the Levites. Compare <sup><0138></sup>Joshua 13:18; <sup><0169></sup>1 Chronicles 6:79.

<sup><0134></sup>**Deuteronomy 2:34.** *Utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city* Render, laid under ban (compare <sup><0128></sup>Leviticus 27:28 note) every inhabited city, both women and children: these last words being added by way of fuller explanation.

<sup><0135></sup>**Deuteronomy 2:36.** *Aroer, which is by the brink of the river of Arnon* Aroer stood on the north bank of the river, and was assigned (<sup><0139></sup>Joshua 13:9,16) to the tribe of Reuben, of which it formed the most southerly city. The valley of the Arnon is here deep, and the descent to it abrupt. In Roman times it was spanned by a viaduct, the ruins of which still remain, and which was probably built on the lines of the original structure of Mesha (<sup><0100></sup>2 Kings 3:5). Aroer here must not be confounded with “Aroer, which is before Rabbah” (<sup><0125></sup>Joshua 13:25). This latter place was “built,” “i.e.” rebuilt, by the Gadites (<sup><0134></sup>Numbers 32:34); it belonged to that tribe, and was consequently far to the north of the Arnon. A third Aroer in the tribe of Judah is mentioned in <sup><0118></sup>1 Samuel 30:28.

“The city that is by the river,” literally, “in the midst of the river” (compare <sup><0139></sup>Joshua 13:9,16) is Ar Moab (compare <sup><0115></sup>Numbers 21:15 note).

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 3

**Deuteronomy 3:4.** *Threescore cities* Probably the cities of Jair in Bashan described in **Deuteronomy 3:14** as Bashan-havoth-jair.

*All the region of Argob* The Hebrew word here rendered “region,” means literally “rope” or “cable”; and though undoubtedly used elsewhere in a general topographical sense for portion or district (e.g. **Joshua 17:5**), has a special propriety in reference to Argob (mod. Lejah). The name Argob means “stone-heap,” and is paraphrased by the Targums, Trachonitis (**Luke 3:1**), or “the rough country;” titles designating the more striking features of the district. Its borders are compared to a rugged shore-line; hence, its description in the text as “the girdle of the stony country,” would seem especially appropriate. (Others identify Argob with the east quarter of the Hauran.)

**Deuteronomy 3:5.** *Gates, and bars* literally, “Double gates and a bar.” The stone doors of Bashan, their height pointing to a race of great stature, and the numerous cities (deserted) exist to illustrate the statements of these verses.

**Deuteronomy 3:9.** Hermon, the southern and culminating point of the range of Lebanon, was also the religious center of primaeval Syria. Its Baal sanctuaries not only existed but gave it a name before the Exodus. Hence, the careful specification of the various names by which the mountain was known. The Sidonian name of it might easily have become known to Moses through the constant traffic which had gone on from the most ancient times between Sidon and Egypt.

**Deuteronomy 3:10.** *Salchah* Compare **Joshua 12:5**; **1 Chronicles 5:11**, where it is named as belonging to the tribe of Gad. It lies seven hours’ journey to the southeast of Bostra or Bozrah of Moab. As the eastern border city of the kingdom of Bashan it was no doubt strongly fortified.

*Edrei* Compare **Numbers 21:33** note.

**Deuteronomy 3:11.** *Giants* Or Rephaim: see the marginal reference note.

*A bedstead of iron* The “iron” was probably the black basalt of the country, which not only contains a large proportion, about 20 percent, of iron, but was actually called “iron,” and is still so regarded by the Arabians. Iron was indeed both known and used, principally for tools (see e.g.

<sup><5815></sup>Deuteronomy 19:5 and compare <sup><0022></sup>Genesis 4:22 note), at the date in question by the Semitic people of Palestine and the adjoining countries; but bronze was the ordinary metal of which weapons, articles of furniture, etc., were made.

The word translated “bedstead” is derived from a root signifying “to unite” or “bind together,” and so “to arch” or “cover with a vault.” The word may then certainly mean “bier,” and perhaps does so in this passage. Modern travelers have discovered in the territories of Og sarcophagi as well as many other articles made of the black basalt of the country.

*Is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon?* Probably after the defeat and death of Og at Edrei the remnant of his army fled into the territory of the friendly Ammonites, and carried with them the corpse of the giant king.

*After the cubit of a man* i.e. after the usual and ordinary cubit, counted as people are accustomed to count. Taking 18 inches to the cubit, the bedstead or sarcophagus would thus be from thirteen to fourteen feet long.

<sup><8814></sup>**Deuteronomy 3:14.** These Geshurites held territory adjoining, if not included within, Bashan. They are not to be confounded with those mentioned in <sup><832></sup>Joshua 13:2, who were neighbors of the Philistines (<sup><078></sup>1 Samuel 17:8).

The exact position of Maachah like that of Geshur cannot be ascertained; but it was no doubt among the fastnesses which lay between Bashan and the kingdom of Damascus, and on the skirts of Mount Hermon.

*Unto this day* This expression, like our “until now,” does not, as used in the Bible, necessarily imply that the time spoken of as elapsed is long. It may here denote the duration to the time then present of that which had been already some months accomplished.

<sup><8816></sup>**Deuteronomy 3:16.** The sense is that the Reubenites and Gadites were to possess the district from the Jabbok on the north to the Arnon on the south, including the middle part of the valley of the Arnon, and the territory (“coast” or “border”) thereto pertaining.

**Deuteronomy 3:25.** *That goodly mountain* i.e., that mountainous district. The fiat districts of the East are generally scorched, destitute of water, and therefore sterile: the hilly ones, on the contrary, are of more tempered climate, and fertilized by the streams from the high grounds. Compare **Deuteronomy 11:11**.

The whole of this prayer of Moses is very characteristic. The longing to witness further manifestations of God's goodness and glory, and the reluctance to leave unfinished an undertaking which he had been permitted to commence, are striking traits in his character: compare **Exodus 32:32ff; 33:12,18ff; Numbers 14:12ff**.

**Deuteronomy 3:26.** *The LORD was wroth with me for your sakes* Here, as in **Deuteronomy 1:37; 4:21**; the sin of the people is stated to be the ground on which Moses' prayer is denied. In **Deuteronomy 32:51**; and in **Numbers 27:14**; the transgression of Moses and Aaron themselves is assigned as the cause of their punishment. The reason why one side of the transaction is put forward in this place, and the other elsewhere, is evident. Here Moses is addressing the people, and mentions the punishment of their leaders as a most impressive warning to them, whose principal fault it was. In **Deuteronomy 32** and **Numbers 27**, God is addressing Moses, and visits on him, as is fitting, not the sin of the people but his own.

**Deuteronomy 3:29.** Beth-peor, i.e., the house of Peor, no doubt derived its name from a temple of the Moabite god Peor which was there situated. It was no doubt near to Mount Peor (**Numbers 23:28**), and also to the valley of the Jordan perhaps in the Wady Heshban.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 4

**Deuteronomy 4.** The general entreaty contained in this chapter is pointed by special mention and enforcement of the fundamental principles of the whole covenant (<sup><R4B></sup>Deuteronomy 4:9-40), the spiritual nature of the Deity, His exclusive right to their allegiance, His abhorrence of idolatry in every form, His choice of them for His elect people. Compare further Moses' third and last address, Deuteronomy 27—30.

<sup><R4B></sup>**Deuteronomy 4:9-11.** A full stop should end <sup><R4B></sup>Deuteronomy 4:9; and <sup><R4D></sup>Deuteronomy 4:10 begin, At the time that thou stoodest, etc. (<sup><R4E></sup>Deuteronomy 4:11) then ye came near, etc. Moses, exhorting to heedful observance of the Law, strives to renew the impressions of that tremendous scene which attended its promulgation at Sinai.

<sup><R4E></sup>**Deuteronomy 4:12ff.** Hero worship exhibited itself in the practice of setting up images of human form as household gods (Penates, compare <sup><R4E></sup>Genesis 31:19; 35:2), or as local and civic divinities: a practice forbidden by <sup><R4E></sup>Deuteronomy 4:16. Nature worship in its baser shapes is seen in the Egyptian idolatry of animals and animal figures, and is condemned in <sup><R4E></sup>Deuteronomy 4:17,18: while its less ignoble flight, the worship of the sun, moon, and stars, is forbidden in <sup><R4E></sup>Deuteronomy 4:19. The great legislator may be regarded as taking in the passage before us a complete and comprehensive survey of the various forms of idolatrous and corrupt worship practiced by the surrounding Oriental nations, and as particularly and successively forbidding them every one.

<sup><R4E></sup>**Deuteronomy 4:19.** *Divided* i.e., “whose light God has distributed to the nations for their use and benefit, and which therefore being creatures ministering to man's convenience must not be worshipped as man's lords.”

<sup><R4E></sup>**Deuteronomy 4:25-28.** Compare with these verses <sup><R4E></sup>Leviticus 26:33-40, and <sup><R4E></sup>Deuteronomy 28:64ff.

<sup><R4E></sup>**Deuteronomy 4:29-40.** Unwilling, as it might seem, to close his discourse with words of terror, Moses makes a last appeal to them in these verses in a different strain.

**Deuteronomy 4:34.** *Temptations* Compare Deuteronomy 7:18,19; 29:2,3; not, “i.e.” the tribulations and persecutions undergone by the Israelites, out the plagues miraculously inflicted on the Egyptians.

**Deuteronomy 4:37.** *He chose their seed after them* literally, “his seed after him.” Speaking of the love of God to their fathers in general, Moses has more especially in mind that one of them who was called “the Friend of God” (<sup>3122</sup>James 2:23).

*Brought thee out in his sight* literally, “by His face:” “i.e.” by the might of His personal presence. Compare <sup>1234</sup>Exodus 33:14; where God promises “My presence (literally ‘My face’) shall go with thee.”

**Deuteronomy 4:41-43.** These verses are inserted between two distinct and complete discourses for the reason to which they themselves call attention (“Then Moses severed three cities,” etc.); i.e., the fact narrated took place historically after Moses spoke the one discourse and before he delivered the other. In thus severing the three cities of refuge Moses carried out a previous command of God (see the marginal references); and so followed up his exhortations to obedience by setting a punctual example of it, as far as opportunity was given him.

**Deuteronomy 4:43.** *In the plain country* literally, “in the land of the Mishor.” The word means a level tract of land; but when used (<sup>1231</sup>Deuteronomy 3:10; <sup>1232</sup>Joshua 13:9, etc.) with the article, seems to be the proper name for the smooth downs of Moab, which reach from the Jordan eastward of Jericho far into the Desert of Arabia, and which form a striking contrast alike to the rugged country west of the river, and to the higher and remarkable districts belonging to Bashan northward.

Bezer is, with little certainty, identified with Bostra, or (1 Macc. 5:36) Bosor. Golan gave the name of Gaulonitis to a district of some extent east of the sea of Galilee and north of the Hieromax; but the exact site of the city is uncertain.

**Deuteronomy 4:44-49.** These verses would be more properly assigned to the next chapter. They are intended to serve as the announcement and introduction of the address now to be commenced.

<sup>1234</sup>Deuteronomy 4:44 gives a kind of general title to the whole of the weighty address, including in fact the central part and substance of the book, which now follows in 22 chapters, divided into two groups:

- (a) Deuteronomy 5—11,
- (b) Deuteronomy 12—26.

The address was delivered when they had already received the first-fruits of those promises (<sup><1946></sup>Deuteronomy 4:46), the full fruition of which was to be consequent on their fulfillment of that covenant now again about to be rehearsed to them in its leading features.

<sup><1948></sup>**Deuteronomy 4:48.** Sion (see the marginal reference and note) must not be confounded with Zion (compare <sup><1980></sup>Psalms 48:2.).

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 5

**Deuteronomy 5:3.** The “fathers” are, as in <sup><RB57></sup>Deuteronomy 4:37, the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. With them God did indeed make a covenant, but not the particular covenant now in question. The responsibilities of this later covenant, made at Sinai by the nation as a nation, attached in their day and generation to those whom Moses was addressing.

**Deuteronomy 5:6-21.** Compare Exodus 20 and notes.

Moses here adopts the Ten Words as a ground from which he may proceed to reprove, warn, and exhort; and repeats them, with a certain measure of freedom and adaptation. Our Lord (<sup><RB09></sup>Mark 10:19) and Paul (<sup><RB12></sup>Ephesians 6:2,3) deal similarly with the same subject. Speaker and hearers recognized, however, a statutory and authoritative form of the laws in question, which, because it was familiar to both parties, needed not to be reproduced with verbal fidelity.

**Deuteronomy 5:12-15.** The exhortation to observe the Sabbath and allow time of rest to servants (compare <sup><RB32></sup>Exodus 23:12) is pointed by reminding the people that they too were formerly servants themselves. The bondage in Egypt and the deliverance from it are not assigned as grounds for the institution of the Sabbath, which is of far older date (see <sup><RB18></sup>Genesis 2:3), but rather as suggesting motives for the religious observance of that institution. The Exodus was an entrance into rest from the toils of the house of bondage, and is thought actually to have occurred on the Sabbath day or “rest” day.

**Deuteronomy 5:16.** The blessing of general well-being here annexed to the keeping of the fifth commandment, is no real addition to the promise, but only an amplification of its expression.

**Deuteronomy 5:21.** The “field” is added to the list of objects specifically forbidden in the parallel passage (<sup><RB17></sup>Exodus 20:17). The addition seems very natural in one who was speaking with the partition of Canaan among his hearers directly in view.



**Deuteronomy 5:22.** *He added no more* i.e., He spoke no more with the great voice directly to the people, but addressed all other communications to them through Moses. This unique and sublime phenomenon, followed up by the inscription of the Ten Words on the two tables by the finger of God, marks not only the holiness of God's Law in general, but the special eminence and permanent obligation of the Ten Words themselves as compared with the rest of the Mosaic enactments. The giving of the two tables did not take place until Moses had been on the Mount 40 days and 40 nights, as appears from the fuller account of Deuteronomy 9:9-12.

**Deuteronomy 5:23-33.** These verses contain a much fuller narrative of the events briefly described in Exodus 20:18-21. Here it is important to call attention to the fact that it was on the entreaties of the people that Moses had taken on him to be the channel of communication between God and them. God approved (Deuteronomy 5:28) the request of the people, because it showed a feeling of their own unworthiness to enter into direct communion with God. The terrors of Sinai had done their work; they had awakened the consciousness of sin.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 6

**Deuteronomy 6:1** Moses proceeds to set forth more particularly and to enforce the cardinal and essential doctrines of the Decalogue, the nature and attributes of God, and the fitting mode of honoring and worshipping Him. Two objects are indicated (**Deuteronomy 6:2,3**), the glory of God and the welfare of man, as the grand aims that he has in view.

**Deuteronomy 6:3.** *In the land* Better: According as the Lord the God of thy fathers promised thee a land flowing with milk and honey.

**Deuteronomy 6:4.** These words form the beginning of what is termed the “Shema” (“Hear”) in the Jewish Services, and belong to the daily morning and evening office. They may be called “the creed of the Jews.”

This weighty text contains far more than a mere declaration of the unity of God as against polytheism; or of the sole authority of the revelation that He had made to Israel as against other pretended manifestations of His will and attributes. It asserts that the Lord God of Israel is absolutely God, and none other. He, and He alone, is Jehovah (Yahweh) the absolute, uncaused God; the One who had, by His election of them, made Himself known to Israel.

**Deuteronomy 6:5.** Since there is but One God, and that God is Israel’s God, so Israel must love God unreservedly and entirely. The “heart” is mentioned as the seat of the understanding; the “soul” as the center of will and personality; the “might” as representing the outgoings and energies of all the vital powers.

The New Testament itself requires no more than this total self-surrender of man’s being to his maker (**Matthew 22:37**). The Gospel differs from the Law not so much in replacing an external and carnal service of God by an inward and spiritual one, as in supplying new motives and special assistances for the attainment of that divine love which was, from the first and all along, enjoined as “the first and great commandment.”

**Deuteronomy 6:8,9.** By adopting and regulating customary usages (e.g. Egyptian) Moses provides at once a check on superstition and a

means of keeping the Divine Law in memory. On the “frontlets,” the “phylacteries” of the New Test. (<sup><4026></sup>Matthew 23:5), see <sup><0236></sup>Exodus 13:16 note. On <sup><0809></sup>Deuteronomy 6:9; 11:20 is based the Jewish usage of the mezuzah. This word denotes properly a door-post, as it is rendered here and in <sup><0227></sup>Exodus 12:7,22; 21:6 etc. Among the Jews however, it is the name given to the square piece of parchment, inscribed with <sup><0804></sup>Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21, which is rolled up in a small cylinder of wood or metal, and affixed to the right-hand post of every door in a Jewish house. The pious Jew touches the mezuzah on each occasion of passing, or kisses his finger, and speaks <sup><0208></sup>Psalms 121:8 in the Hebrew language.

<sup><0860></sup>**Deuteronomy 6:10-25.** The Israelites were at the point of quitting a normal, life for a fixed and settled abode in the midst of other nations; they were exchanging a condition of comparative poverty for great and goodly cities, houses and vineyards. There was therefore before them a double danger;

- (1) a God-forgetting worldliness, and
- (2) a false tolerance of the idolatries practiced by those about to become their neighbors.

The former error Moses strives to guard against in the verses before us; the latter in <sup><0808></sup>Deuteronomy 7:1-11.

<sup><0863></sup>**Deuteronomy 6:13.** The command “to swear by His Name” is not inconsistent with the Lord’s injunction (<sup><0854></sup>Matthew 5:34), “Swear not at all.” Moses refers to legal swearing, our Lord to swearing in common conversation. It is not the purpose of Moses to encourage the practice of taking oaths, but to forbid that, when taken, they should be taken in any other name than that of Israel’s God. The oath involves an invocation of Deity, and so a solemn recognition of Him whose Name is made use of in it. Hence, it comes especially within the scope of the commandment Moses is enforcing.

<sup><0863></sup>**Deuteronomy 6:25.** *It shall be our righteousness* i.e., God will esteem us as righteous and deal with us accordingly. From the very beginning made Moses the whole righteousness of the Law to depend entirely on a right state of the heart, in one word, upon faith.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 7

<R00> **Deuteronomy 7:1-11.** See <R60> Deuteronomy 6:10 note.

<R05> **Deuteronomy 7:5.** *Their groves* Render, their idols of wood: the reference is to the wooden trunk used as a representation of Ashtaroth; see <R03> Deuteronomy 7:13 and <Q343> Exodus 34:13 note.

<R00> **Deuteronomy 7:7.** *The fewest of all people* God chose for Himself Israel, when as yet but a single family, or rather a single person, Abraham; though there were already numerous nations and powerful kingdoms in the earth. Increase (<R00> Deuteronomy 1:10; 10:22) had taken place because of the very blessing of God spoken of in <R08> Deuteronomy 7:8.

<R00> **Deuteronomy 7:10.** *Repayeth them that hate him to their face* i.e., punishes His enemies in their own proper persons.

<R03> **Deuteronomy 7:13.** *Flocks of thy sheep* Render it instead: “the ewes of thy sheep.” The phrase is unique to Deuteronomy. The Hebrew word for “ewes” is the plural form of Ashtoreth, the well-known name of the “goddess of the Zidonians” (<1005> 1 Kings 11:5). This goddess, called by the Classical writers “Astarte,” and identified with “Venus,” represented the fruitfulness of nature.

<R05> **Deuteronomy 7:15.** There seems to be here not so much as a reference to the plagues inflicted miraculously by God on Egypt (compare <P156> Exodus 15:26), as to the terrible diseases with which, above other countries, Egypt was infested. Compare <R027> Deuteronomy 28:27,35. It is not without significance that Egypt, which represents in Scripture the world as contrasted with the Church, should thus above other lands lie under the power of disease and death.

<R025> **Deuteronomy 7:25.** *The silver or gold that is on them* The silver and gold with which the statues of the gods were overlaid. Paul is probably alluding to this command in <R022> Romans 2:22; and his accusation of the Jew thus shows that the prohibition of the text was very necessary.

*Lest thou be snared* As by the rich ephod made by Gideon: compare the marginal reference.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 8

**Deuteronomy 8:3.** *But by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD* literally, “every outgoing of the mouth of the Lord.” Compare <sup><BR35></sup>Deuteronomy 29:5,6. The term “word” is inserted by the King James Version after the Septuagint, which is followed by Matthew and Luke (see the marginal references). On the means of subsistence available to the people during the wandering, see <sup><BR31></sup>Numbers 20:1 note. The lesson was taught, that it is not nature which nourishes man, but God the Creator by and through nature: and generally that God is not tied to the particular channels (“bread only,” i.e. the ordinary means of earthly sustenance) through which He is usually pleased to work.

**Deuteronomy 8:4.** They had clothes, it would seem, in abundance (compare <sup><BR34></sup>Exodus 12:34,35) at the beginning of the 40 years; and during those years they had many sheep and oxen, and so must have had much material for clothing always at command. No doubt also they carried on a traffic in these, as in other commodities, with the Moabites and the nomadic tribes of the desert. Such ordinary supplies must not be shut out of consideration, even if they were on occasions supplemented by extraordinary providences of God, as was undoubtedly the case with their food.

**Deuteronomy 8:7-9.** See <sup><BR33></sup>Exodus 3:8 note, and the contrast expressed in <sup><BR10></sup>Deuteronomy 11:10,11, between Palestine and Egypt.

The physical characteristics and advantages of a country like Palestine must have been quite strange to Israel at the time Moses was speaking: compare <sup><BR25></sup>Deuteronomy 3:25 note. To have praised the fertility and excellence of the promised land at an earlier period would have increased the murmurings and impatience of the people at being detained in the wilderness: whereas now it encouraged them to encounter with more cheerfulness the opposition that they would meet from the inhabitants of Canaan.

**Deuteronomy 8:8.** *Vines* The abundance of wine in Syria and Palestine is dwelt upon in the Egyptian records of the campaigns of Thotmosis III. Only a little wine is produced in Egypt itself. The

production of wine has in later times gradually ceased in Palestine (circa 1880's).

**Deuteronomy 8:9.** For brass read copper (<sup><01042></sup>Genesis 4:22 note); and compare the description of mining operations in <sup><03301></sup>Job 28:1-11. Mining does not seem to have been extensively carried on by the Jews, though it certainly was by the Canaanite peoples displaced by them. Traces of iron and copper works have been discovered by modern travelers in Lebanon and many parts of the country; e.g., the district of Argob (see <sup><01014></sup>Deuteronomy 3:4 notes) contains iron-stone in abundance.

**Deuteronomy 8:15.** Render: "Who brought thee through that great and terrible wilderness, the fiery serpent and the scorpion, and the dry land where are no waters." On the fiery serpents see <sup><02106></sup>Numbers 21:6 note.

**Deuteronomy 8:16.** *To do thee good at thy latter end* This is presented as the result of God's dealings.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 9

**Deuteronomy 9:1** The lesson of this chapter is exactly that of Ephesians 2:8, “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”

In referring to their various rebellions, Moses here, as elsewhere, has regard not so much for the order of time as to that of subject. (Compare Deuteronomy 1:9-15 note.) Such reasons as convenience and fitness to his argument sufficiently explain the variations observable when the statements of this chapter are minutely compared with those of Exodus 32—34. In these variations we have simply such treatment of facts as is usual and warrantable between parties personally acquainted with the matters.

**Deuteronomy 9:3.** *So shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly* This is not inconsistent with Deuteronomy 7:22, in which instant annihilation is not to be expected for the reasons assigned. Here Moses urges the people to trust in God’s covenanted aid; since He would then make no delay in so destroying the nations attacked by them as to put them into enjoyment of the promises, and in doing so as fast as was for the well-being of Israel itself.

**Deuteronomy 9:8.** *Also in Horeb* Rather, “even in Horeb.” The time and circumstances made the apostasy at Horeb particularly inexcusable.

**Deuteronomy 9:18.** *I fell down before the LORD, as at the first* Moses interceded for the people before he came down from the mountain the first time (Exodus 32:11-13). This intercession is only briefly alluded to in this verse. Afterward he spent another 40 days on the mountain in fasting and prayer to obtain a complete restitution of the covenant (Exodus 34:28). It is this second forty days, and the intercession of Moses made therein (compare Exodus 34:9), that is more particularly brought forward here and in Deuteronomy 9:25-29.

**Deuteronomy 9:20.** Israel could not even boast that its heads and representatives continued, faithful. Aaron had been already designated for the high priestly functions; but he fell away with the rest of the people. It was due therefore solely to the grace of God and the intercession of Moses

that Aaron himself and his promised priesthood with him were not cut off; just as at a later time, when Aaron had actually to die for a new sin Israel owed it still to the same causes that Eleazar was substituted and the High Priesthood perpetuated (compare <sup><51016></sup>Deuteronomy 10:6; <sup><04124></sup>Numbers 20:24-26).

<sup><81022></sup>**Deuteronomy 9:22.** See the marginal reference. Taberah was the name of a spot in or near the station of Kibroth-hattaavah, and accordingly is not named in the list of encampments given in <sup><04316></sup>Numbers 33:16. The separate mention of the two is, however, appropriate here, for each place and each name was a memorial of an act of rebellion. The instances in this and the next verse are not given in order of occurrence. The speaker for his own purposes advances from the slighter to the more heinous proofs of guilt.



## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 10

**Deuteronomy 10:1-11.** These verses are closely connected with the preceding chapter, and state very briefly the results of the intercession of Moses recorded in <sup><8925></sup>Deuteronomy 9:25-29. The people are reminded that all their blessings and privileges, forfeited by apostasy as soon as bestowed, were only now their own by a new and most unmerited act of grace on the part of God, won from Him by the self-sacrificing mediation of Moses himself (<sup><5000></sup>Deuteronomy 10:10).

**Deuteronomy 10:1-5.** The order for making the ark and tabernacle was evidently given before the apostasy of the people (Exodus 25ff); but the tables were not put in the ark until the completion and dedication of the tabernacle (Exodus 40). But here as elsewhere (compare the <sup><8901></sup>Deuteronomy 9:1 note) Moses connects transactions closely related to each other and to his purpose without regard to the order of occurrence.

**Deuteronomy 10:6.** *There Aaron died* i.e., while the people were encamped in Mosera or Moseroth. In <sup><6323></sup>Deuteronomy 32:50; as well as in <sup><8925></sup>Numbers 20:25ff Mount Hor is assigned as the place of Aaron's death. It is plain then that Moserah was in the neighborhood of Mount Hor. The appointment of Eleazar to minister in place of Aaron, is referred to as a proof of the completeness and fulness of the reconciliation effected between God and the people by Moses. Though Aaron was sentenced to die in the wilderness for his sin at Meribah, yet God provided for the perpetuation of the high priesthood, so that the people would not suffer. Compare <sup><8921></sup>Deuteronomy 9:20 and note.

**Deuteronomy 10:8.** *At that time* i.e., that of the encampment at Sinai, as the words also import in <sup><5001></sup>Deuteronomy 10:1. Throughout the passage the time of the important events at Sinai is kept in view; it is reverted to as each incident is brought forward by Moses, alluded to sufficiently for his purpose, and dismissed.

Moses is evidently here speaking of the election by God of the tribe of Levi at large, priests and others also, for His own service.

**Deuteronomy 10:12ff.** After these emphatic warnings against self-righteousness the principal topic is resumed from Deuteronomy 6, and this

division of the discourse is drawn to a conclusion in the next two chapters by a series of direct and positive exhortations to a careful fulfillment of the duties prescribed in the first two of the Ten “Words.”

**Deuteronomy 10:12.** *What doth the LORD thy God require ...* A noteworthy demand. God has in the Mosaic law positively commanded many things. However, these relate to external observances, which if need be can be enforced. But love and veneration cannot be enforced, even by God himself. They must be spontaneous. Hence, even under the law of ordinances where so much was peremptorily laid down, and omnipotence was ready to compel obedience, those sentiments, which are the spirit and life of the whole, have to be, as they here are, invited and solicited.

**Deuteronomy 10:16.** On “circumcision” see **Genesis 17:10**. This verse points to the spiritual import of circumcision. Man is by nature “very far gone from original righteousness,” and in a state of enmity to God; by circumcision, as the sacrament of admission to the privileges of the chosen people, this opposition must be taken away ere man could enter into covenant with God. It was through the flesh that man first sinned; as it is also in the flesh, its functions, lusts, etc., that man’s rebellion against God chiefly manifests itself still. It was fitting therefore that the symbol which should denote the removal of this estrangement from God should be worked in the body. Moses then fitly follows up the command “to circumcise the heart,” with the warning “to be no more stiff-necked.” His meaning is that they should lay aside that obduracy and perverseness toward God for which he had been reproofing them, which had led them into so many transgressions of the covenant and revolts from God, and which was especially the very contrary of that love and fear of God required by the first two of the Ten Commandments. The language associated with circumcision in the Bible distinguishes the use made of this rite in the Jewish religion from that found among certain pagan nations. Circumcision was practiced by some of them as a religious rite, designed (e.g.) to appease the deity of death who was supposed to delight in human suffering; but not by any, the Egyptians probably excepted, at all in the Jewish sense and meaning.

The grounds on which circumcision was imposed as essential by the Law are the same as those on which Baptism is required in the Gospel. The latter in the New Testament is strictly analogous to the former under the Old; compare **Colossians 2:11,12**.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 11

**Deuteronomy 11:2.** *And know ...* Render it: And own ye this day (for I have not to do with your children which have not known and which have not seen) the chastisement of the Lord, his greatness, etc.

The “chastisement” consisted in the many mighty acts, both of punishment and mercy, through which God had guided them from Egypt to the borders of the promised land.

**Deuteronomy 11:6.** See the margin. literally, “every living thing at their feet.” The expression does not mean their goods, which would be included in their “households and tents,” but their followers (**Numbers 16:32**).

**Deuteronomy 11:10.** Another motive for fidelity is added, namely, the entire dependence of the promised land upon God for its fertility. It was “a land flowing with milk and honey;” yet this its richness was not, as was that of Egypt, the reward of truman skill and labor, but was, on the contrary, the gift of God simply and entirely; the effect of “the former and the latter rains” sent by Him. The spiritual significance of these and many other such peculiarities of the promised land must not be overlooked.

Egypt and Canaan are distinguished in this and the following verses, by certain of their most remarkable physical traits. Canaan as a mountainous country (compare **Deuteronomy 3:25** note) was well watered, but by the rains of heaven, on which it absolutely depended for its crops. Artificial irrigation could do nothing to remedy this dependence. Hence, it was a land on which, so long as God’s people were faithful and consequently prosperous, “the eyes of God” would always be: i.e., He would supply at each successive season (compare **Deuteronomy 11:14,15**) the useful conditions of productiveness. But Egypt, fit emblem here as elsewhere of the world of nature in distinction from the world of grace, though of course deriving its all ultimately from the Giver of all good things, yet directly and immediately owed its riches and plenty to human ingenuity and capital. It enjoyed no rain worth speaking of, but drew its water supply from the annum overflowing of the Nile. This only lasts about a hundred days; but is rendered available for agricultural purposes throughout the year by an elaborate and costly system of tanks, canals, forcing machines,

etc. To these mechanical appliances allusion is made in <sup><6110></sup>Deuteronomy 11:10. The inhabitants of Egypt probably watered “with the foot” in two ways, namely, by means of tread-wheels working sets of pumps, and by means of artificial channels connected with reservoirs, and opened, turned, or closed by the feet. Both methods are still in use in Egypt.

<sup><6114></sup>**Deuteronomy 11:14.** *The first rain and the latter rain* The former is the proper term for the autumn rain, falling about the time of sowing, and which may be named “the former,” as occurring in the early part of the Hebrew civil year, namely, in October and November. The other word is applied to the spring rain, which falls in March and April, because it fits the earth for the ingathering of harvest. Between these two wet periods, and except them, there was little or no rain in Canaan.

<sup><6121></sup>**Deuteronomy 11:21.** The sense is: “Keep the covenant faithfully, and so shall your own and your children’s days be multiplied as long as the heaven covers the earth.” The promise of Canaan to Israel was thus a perpetual promise, but also a conditional one.

<sup><6129></sup>**Deuteronomy 11:29.** *Thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim* literally, thou shalt give, i.e., “give” utterance to it. On the ceremony see <sup><6274></sup>Deuteronomy 27:14ff.

Mount Gerizim, barren like Ebal, was probably selected as the hill of benediction because it was the southernmost of the two, the south being the region, according to Hebrew ideas, of light, and so of life and blessing. The situation of the mountains is described more accurately in

<sup><6133></sup>Deuteronomy 11:30. The words “by the way where the sun goeth down,” should run, beyond the road of the west; i.e., on the further side of the main track which ran from Syria and Damascus to Jerusalem and Egypt through the center of Palestine. This is called “the way of the west” in contrast to the ether main route from Damascus to the south which passed through the district east of Jordan. The further specifications “Gilgal” and “the plains (rather, the oaks, compare <sup><0126></sup>Genesis 12:6 note) of Moreh,” are added to define more particularly the section of Canaanites intended.

This Gilgal is perhaps to be found in Jiljilia, a large village about twelve miles south of Gerizim.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 12

**Deuteronomy 12:1** Moses now passes on to apply (Deuteronomy 12—26) the leading principles of the Decalogue to the ecclesiastical, civil, and social life of the people. Particulars will be noticed which are unique to the Law as given in Deuteronomy; and even in laws repeated from the earlier books various new circumstances and details are introduced. This is only natural. The Sinaitic legislation was nearly 40 years old and had been given under conditions of time, place, and circumstance different and distant from those now present. Yet the Sinaitic system, far from being set aside or in any way abrogated, is on the contrary throughout presupposed and assumed. Its existence and authority are taken as the starting-point for what is here prescribed, and an accurate acquaintance with it on the part of the people is taken for granted.

**Deuteronomy 12:3.** *Their groves* Render their idols of wood: and see the **Deuteronomy 7:5** note.

**Deuteronomy 12:4.** i.e., “The idolaters set up their altars and images on any high hill, and under every green tree at their pleasure, but ye shall not do so; the Lord Himself shall determine the spot for your worship, and there only shall ye seek Him.” The religion of the Canaanites was human; its modes of worship were of man’s devising. It fixed its holy places on the hills in the vain thought of being nearer heaven, or in deep groves where the silence and gloom might overawe the worshipper. But such superstitious appliances were not worthy of the true religion. God had revealed Himself to people in it, and manifested among them His immediate presence and power. He would Himself assign the sanctuary and the ritual of His own service.

**Deuteronomy 12:5.** “To put his name there” means to manifest to men His divine presence. The Targumists rightly refer to the Shechinah; but the expression comprehends all the various modes in which God vouchsafed to reveal Himself and His attributes to men.

The purpose of the command of the text is to secure the unity, and through unity the purity of the worship of God. That there should be one national center for the religion of the people was obviously essential to the great ends of the whole dispensation. Corruption began as soon as the precepts

of the text were relaxed or neglected: Compare the case of Gideon, <sup><1182></sup>Judges 8:27; of Micah, Judges 18; of Jeroboam, <sup><1126></sup>1 Kings 12:26ff.

The words “the place which the LORD shall choose to put His Name there” suggest Jerusalem and Solomon’s temple to our minds. But though spoken as they were by a prophet, and interpreted as they are by the Psalms (e.g. <sup><978></sup>Psalms 78:67-69), they have a proper application to the temple, yet they must not be referred exclusively to it. The text does not import that God would always from the first choose one and the same locality “to put His Name there,” but that there would always be a locality so chosen by Him; and that there the people must bring their sacrifices, and not offer them at their pleasure or convenience elsewhere. Neither does the text forbid the offering of sacrifices to God at other places than the one chosen by Him “to put His Name there” on proper occasions and by proper authority (compare <sup><1275></sup>Deuteronomy 27:5,6; <sup><1164></sup>Judges 6:24; 13:16; <sup><1104></sup>1 Kings 3:4; 18:31). The text simply prohibits sacrifices at any other locality than that which should be appointed or permitted by God for the purpose.

<sup><6126></sup>**Deuteronomy 12:6.** Some have objected that this command cannot possibly have been ever carried out, at all events until in later (lays the territory which owed obedience to it was narrowed to the little kingdom of Judah. But in these and in other precepts Moses doubtless takes much for granted. He is here, as elsewhere, regulating and defining more precisely institutions which had long been in existence, as to many details of which custom superseded the necessity of specific enactment. No doubt the people well understood what Maimonides expressly tells us in reference to the matter, namely, that where immediate payment could not be made, the debt to God was to be reserved until the next great Feast, and then duly discharged. The thing especially to be observed was that no kind of sacrifice was to be offered except at the sacred spot fixed by God for its acceptance.

<sup><6127></sup>**Deuteronomy 12:7.** An injunction that the feasts which accompanied certain offerings (not specified) were to be also held in the same place.

<sup><6128></sup>**Deuteronomy 12:8.** Moses points out that heretofore they had not observed the prescribed order in their worship, because during their migratory life in the wilderness it had been impossible to do so. During their wanderings there were doubtless times when the tabernacle was not

set up for days together, and when the daily sacrifice (<sup><0283></sup>Numbers 28:3), together with many other ordinances, were necessarily omitted (compare <sup><0185></sup>Joshua 5:5). This consideration must be carefully borne in mind throughout Deuteronomy. It illustrates the necessity for a repetition of very much of the Sinaitic legislation, and suggests the reason why some parts are so urgently reiterated and impressed, while others are left unnoticed. Moses now warns the people that as they were about to quit their unsettled mode of life, God's purpose of choosing for Himself a place to set His Name there would be executed, and the whole of the sacred ritual would consequently become obligatory. The "rest and safety" of Canaan is significantly laid down (<sup><6120></sup>Deuteronomy 12:10,11) as the indispensable condition and basis for an entire fulfillment of the Law: the perfection of righteousness coinciding thus with the cessation of wanderings, dangers, and toils.

<sup><6125></sup>**Deuteronomy 12:15.** While a stringent injunction is laid down that the old rule (compare <sup><0178></sup>Leviticus 17:3, etc.) must be adhered to as regards animals slain in sacrifice, yet permission is now given to slaughter at home what was necessary for the table. The ceremonial distinctions did not apply in such cases, anymore than to "the roebuck" (or gazelle) "and hart," animals allowed for food but not for sacrifice.

<sup><6122></sup>**Deuteronomy 12:21.** *If the place ...* Rather, "Because, or since, the place will be too far from thee." The permission given in <sup><6125></sup>Deuteronomy 12:15,16 is repeated, and the reason of it assigned.

<sup><6123></sup>**Deuteronomy 12:30.** This caution is based upon the notion generally entertained in the ancient pagan world, that each country had its own tutelary deities whom it would be perilous to neglect; compare <sup><1213></sup>1 Kings 20:23; <sup><1217></sup>2 Kings 17:26. Israel was to shun such superstitions as unworthy of the elect people of God.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 13

**Deuteronomy 13.** The admonition of the closing verse of the last chapter introduces a new series of warnings intended to serve as a further safeguard against violation of these duties. The true modes and forms of worship have been laid down: the next step is to legislate against the authors and abettors of false ones.

**Deuteronomy 13:1.** *A prophet, or a dreamer of dreams* Compare <sup><6131></sup>Numbers 12:6. The “prophet” received his revelations by vision or direct oral communication (<sup><6246></sup>Numbers 24:16; <sup><1074></sup>2 Samuel 7:4; <sup><7112></sup>2 Corinthians 12:2); “the dreamer of dreams” through the medium of a dream (<sup><1075></sup>1 Kings 3:5; <sup><4123></sup>Matthew 2:13).

**Deuteronomy 13:2.** The Lord had said, “Thou shalt have none other gods but Me.” A prophet is here supposed who invites the people “to go after other gods.” To such a one no credit is under any circumstances to be given, even should he show signs and wonders to authenticate his doctrine. The standing rule of faith and practice had been laid down once for all — that the people were to hold fast. The prophet who propounded another rule could only be an impostor.

A different case is considered in <sup><61818></sup>Deuteronomy 18:18, etc.

**Deuteronomy 13:5.** The context and parallel passages (compare <sup><6177></sup>Deuteronomy 17:7; <sup><6312></sup>Leviticus 20:2) indicate that there was to be a regular judicial procedure, and that the manner of the execution was to be by stoning. In this the community was to take its part in order to show its horror at the crime, and to clear itself of complicity therein.

**Deuteronomy 13:6.** The omissions in this enumeration seem to imply that no one was bound to impeach father, mother, or husband.

**Deuteronomy 13:12.** City was to keep jealous watch over city, as man over man. The clause “which the Lord thy God hath given thee to dwell in” significantly reminds them that the real ownership of their dwellings rested in the Lord (compare <sup><62523></sup>Leviticus 25:23), and that they, the mere tenants, must not allow His property to become a center of rebellion against His just authority.



<sup><613></sup>**Deuteronomy 13:13.** In <sup><615></sup>Deuteronomy 15:9 and in <sup><3411></sup>Nahum 1:11 the word “Belial” is rendered in our translation by the adjective “wicked.” The word means “worthlessness.”

<sup><616></sup>**Deuteronomy 13:16.** *Every whit, for the LORD thy God* Some prefer: “as a whole offering to the LORD thy God.”

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 14

**Deuteronomy 14.** The whole life and walk of the people were to be regulated by the principle “ye are the children of the Lord your God” (<sup><544></sup>Deuteronomy 14:1).

<sup><544></sup>**Deuteronomy 14:1.** *Make any baldness between your eyes* i.e. by shaving the forepart of the head and the eyebrows. The practices named in this verse were common among the pagan, and seem to be forbidden, not only because such wild excesses of grief (compare <sup><1183></sup>1 Kings 18:28) would be inconsistent in those who as children of a heavenly Father had prospects beyond this world, but also because these usages themselves arose out of idolatrous notions.

<sup><544></sup>**Deuteronomy 14:3-21.** Compare Leviticus 11. The variations here, whether omissions or additions, are probably to be explained by the time and circumstances of the speaker.

<sup><544></sup>**Deuteronomy 14:5.** The “pygarg” is a species of gazelle, and the “wild ox” and “chamois” are swift types of antelope.

<sup><542></sup>**Deuteronomy 14:21.** The prohibition is repeated from <sup><828></sup>Leviticus 22:8. The directions as to the disposal of the carcass are unique to Deuteronomy, and their motive is clear. To have forbidden the people either themselves to eat that which had died, or to allow any others to do so, would have involved loss of property, and consequent temptation to an infraction of the command. The permissions now for the first time granted would have been useless in the wilderness. During the 40 years’ wandering there could be but little opportunity of selling such carcasses; while non-Israelites living in the camp would in such a matter be bound by the same rules as the Israelites (<sup><875></sup>Leviticus 17:15; 24:22). Further, it would seem (compare <sup><875></sup>Leviticus 17:15) that greater stringency is here given to the requirement of abstinence from that which had died of itself. Probably on this, as on so many other points, allowance was made for the circumstances of the people. Flesh meat was no doubt often scarce in the desert. It would therefore have been a hardship to forbid entirely the use of that which had not been killed. However, now that the plenty of the promised land was before them, the modified toleration of this unholy food was withdrawn.

~~<5142>~~ **Deuteronomy 14:22.** These words recall in general terms the command of the earlier legislation respecting tithes (compare ~~<0270>~~ Leviticus 27:30; ~~<0480>~~ Numbers 18:26), but refer more particularly to the second or festival tithe, which was an exclusively vegetable one.

~~<5148>~~ **Deuteronomy 14:28,29.** Compare the marginal references. The tithe thus directed in the third year to be dispensed in charity at home, was not paid in addition to that in other years bestowed on the sacred meals, but was substituted for it. The three years would count from the sabbatical year (see the next chapter), in which year there would of course be neither payment of tithe nor celebration of the feasts at the sanctuary. In the third year and sixth year of the septennial cycle the feasts would be superseded by the private hospitality enjoined in these verses.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 15

**Deuteronomy 15:1-11.** The year of release is no doubt identical with the sabbatical year of the earlier legislation (<sup><1230></sup>Exodus 23:10ff, and <sup><1870></sup>Leviticus 25:2ff), the command of the older legislation being here amplified. The release was probably for the year, not total and final, and had reference only to loans lent because of poverty (compare <sup><1674></sup>Deuteronomy 15:4,7). Yet even so the law was found to be too stringent for the avarice of the people, because it was one of those which the rabbis “made of none effect by their traditions.”

**Deuteronomy 15:2.** *Because it is called the LORD’s release* Render, because proclamation has been made of the Lord’s release. The verb is impersonal, and implies (compare <sup><1810></sup>Deuteronomy 31:10) that “the solemnity of the year of release” has been publicly announced.

**Deuteronomy 15:3.** The foreigner would not be bound by the restriction of the sabbatical year, and therefore would have no claim to its special remissions and privileges. He could earn his usual income in the seventh as in other years, and therefore is not exonerated from liability to discharge a debt anymore in the one than the others.

**Deuteronomy 15:4.** There is no inconsistency between this and <sup><1651></sup>Deuteronomy 15:11. The meaning seems simply to be, “Thou must release the debt for the year, except when there be no poor person concerned, a contingency which may happen, for the Lord shall greatly bless thee.” The general object of these precepts, as also of the year of Jubilee and the laws respecting inheritance, is to prevent the total ruin of a needy person, and his disappearance from the families of Israel by the sale of his patrimony.

**Deuteronomy 15:9.** literally: “Beware that there be not in thy heart a word which is worthlessness” (compare <sup><1633></sup>Deuteronomy 13:13 note).

**Deuteronomy 15:14.** *Thou shalt furnish him liberally* The verb in the Hebrew is remarkable. It means “thou shalt lay on his neck,” “adorn his neck with thy gifts.”

**Deuteronomy 15:12-18.** The commands here are repeated from <sup><P210></sup>Exodus 21:2-6, with amplifications relative to the maidservant (<sup><B512></sup>Deuteronomy 15:12) and to the making (<sup><B513></sup>Deuteronomy 15:13ff) liberal provision for launching the freedman on an independent course of life. The release of the servant is connected with the sabbatical principle though not with the sabbatical year. It is noteworthy also that the prospect of a gift of this sort, the amount of which was left to the master's discretion, would be likely to encourage diligence and faithfulness during the years of servitude.

**Deuteronomy 15:18.** *He hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years* "i.e." such a servant has earned twice as much as a common hired laborer would have done in the same time.

**Deuteronomy 15:19-23.** Compare <sup><P131></sup>Exodus 13:11ff. The directions of the preceding legislation (see <sup><O485></sup>Numbers 18:15ff) are here assumed, with the injunction added, that the animals thus set apart to God (<sup><B519></sup>Deuteronomy 15:19) were not to be used by their owners for their earthly purposes. It is further allowed that firstborn animals which had a blemish should be regarded as exceptions, and instead of being given to God might be used as food (<sup><B521></sup>Deuteronomy 15:21,22). The application of the firstborn of cattle is here directed as in <sup><B126></sup>Deuteronomy 12:6,17; 14:23: they are to be consumed in the sacred Feasts at the sanctuary.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 16

**Deuteronomy 16.** The cardinal point on which the whole of the prescriptions in this chapter turn, is evidently the same as has been so often insisted on in the previous chapters, namely, the concentration of the religious services of the people round one common sanctuary. The prohibition against observing the great Feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and tabernacle, the three annual epochs in the sacred year of the Jew, at home and in private, is reiterated in a variety of words no less than six times in the first sixteen verses of this chapter (<sup>(51612)</sup>Deuteronomy 16:2,6,7,11,15,16). Hence, it is easy to see why nothing is here said of the other holy days.

<sup>(51612)</sup>**Deuteronomy 16:1-8.** The Feast of Passover (<sup>(12121)</sup>Exodus 12:1-27; <sup>(4910)</sup>Numbers 9:1-14; <sup>(12201)</sup>Leviticus 23:1-8). A re-enforcement of this ordinance was the more necessary because its observance had clearly been intermitted for thirty-nine years (see <sup>(41610)</sup>Joshua 6:10). One Passover only had been kept in the wilderness, that recorded in Numbers 9, where see the notes.

<sup>(51612)</sup>**Deuteronomy 16:2.** *Sacrifice the passover* “i.e.” offer the sacrifices proper to the feast of the Passover, which lasted seven days. Compare a similar use of the word in a general sense in <sup>(51628)</sup>John 18:28. In the latter part of <sup>(51610)</sup>Deuteronomy 16:4 and in the following verses Moses passes, as the context again shows, into the narrower sense of the word Passover.

<sup>(51617)</sup>**Deuteronomy 16:7.** After the Paschal Supper in the courts or neighborhood of the sanctuary was over, they might disperse to their several “tents” or “dwellings” (<sup>(1086)</sup>1 Kings 8:66). These would of course be within a short distance of the sanctuary, because the other Paschal offerings were yet to be offered day by day for seven days and the people would remain to share them; and especially to take part in the holy convocation on the first and seventh of the days.

<sup>(51619)</sup>**Deuteronomy 16:9-12.** Feast of Weeks; and <sup>(51613)</sup>Deuteronomy 16:13-17, Feast of Tabernacles. Nothing is here added to the rules given in Leviticus and Numbers except the clauses so often recurring in Deuteronomy and so characteristic of it, which restrict the public

celebration of the festivals to the sanctuary, and enjoin that the enjoyments of them should be extended to the Levites, widows, orphans, etc.

**Deuteronomy 16:18-22.** These verses are closely connected in subject with the following chapter, and introduce certain directions for the administration of justice and the carrying on of the civil government of the people in Canaan. During the lifetime of Moses, he himself, especially inspired and guided by God, was sufficient, with the aid of the subordinate judges (compare **Exodus 18:13ff**), for the duties in question. But now that Moses was to be withdrawn, and the people would soon be scattered up and down the land of Canaan, regular and permanent provision must be made for civil and social order and good government.

**Deuteronomy 16:21.** *A grove ...* Render, Thou shalt not plant for thee any tree as an idol: literally as an Asherah," "i.e." an image of Astarte or Ashtaroth, the Phoenician goddess (compare **Deuteronomy 7:5** note, 13). The word is rendered "grove" by the King James Version also in **Deuteronomy 7:5; 12:3; Exodus 34:13; Judges 6:25**, but cannot be maintained, for the word is connected with various verbs which are quite inapplicable to a grove. The wooden idol in question was the stem of a tree, stripped of its boughs, set upright in the ground, and rudely carved with emblems.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 17

**Deuteronomy 17:1.** This verse belongs in subject to the last chapter. It prohibits once more (compare <sup><51521></sup>Deuteronomy 15:21) that form of insult to God which consists in offering to Him a blemished sacrifice.

*Any evil-favoredness* Render any evil thing. The reference is to the faults or maims enumerated in <sup><46222></sup>Leviticus 22:22-24.

**Deuteronomy 17:2-7.** Compare <sup><51301></sup>Deuteronomy 13:1ff. Here special reference is made to the legal forms to be adopted, <sup><51715></sup>Deuteronomy 17:5-7. The sentence was to be carried into effect at “the gates” (compare <sup><01901></sup>Genesis 19:1 note) of the town in which the crime was committed; because, as “all the people” were to take a part, an open space would be requisite for the execution. Note the typical and prophetic aspect of the injunction; compare <sup><44738></sup>Acts 7:58; <sup><58132></sup>Hebrews 13:12.

**Deuteronomy 17:8-13.** The cases in question are such as the inferior judges did not feel able to decide satisfactorily, and which accordingly they remitted to their superiors (compare <sup><01823></sup>Exodus 18:23-27).

The Supreme court (<sup><51709></sup>Deuteronomy 17:9) is referred to in very general terms as sitting at the sanctuary (<sup><51708></sup>Deuteronomy 17:8). “The judge” would no doubt usually be a layman, and thus the court would contain both an ecclesiastical and a civil element. Jehoshaphat (<sup><44904></sup>2 Chronicles 19:4-11) organized his judicial system very closely upon the lines here laid down.

**Deuteronomy 17:14.** No encouragement is given to the desire, natural in an Oriental people, for monarchical government; but neither is such desire blamed, as appears from the fact that conditions are immediately laid down upon which it may be satisfied. Compare the marginal references.

**Deuteronomy 17:15.** The king, like the judges and officers (compare <sup><51618></sup>Deuteronomy 16:18), is to be chosen by the people; but their choice is to be in accordance with the will of God, and to be made from



among “their brethren.” Compare <sup><0015></sup>1 Samuel 9:15; 10:24; 16:1; <sup><11916></sup>1 Kings 19:16.

*Thou mayest not set a stranger over thee* The Jews extended this prohibition to all offices whatsoever (compare <sup><3821></sup>Jeremiah 30:21); and naturally attached the greatest importance to it: from where the significance of the question proposed to our Lord, “Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar?” (<sup><4027></sup>Matthew 22:17). A Gentile head for the Jewish people, which it was a principal aim of the Law to keep special and distinct from others, was an anomaly.

<sup><5176></sup>**Deuteronomy 17:16.** The horse was not anciently used in the East for purposes of agriculture or traveling, but ordinarily for war only. He appears constantly in Scripture as the symbol and embodiment of fleshly strength and the might of the creature (compare <sup><4307></sup>Psalms 20:7; 33:16,17; 147:10; <sup><8399></sup>Job 39:19ff), and is sometimes significantly spoken of simply as “the strong one” (compare <sup><2486></sup>Jeremiah 8:16). The spirit of the prohibition therefore is that the king of Israel must not, like other earthly potentates, put his trust in costly and formidable preparations for war (compare <sup><3007></sup>Hosea 1:7).

Egypt was the principal source from where the nations of western Asia drew their supplies of this animal (compare <sup><0245></sup>Exodus 14:5ff; <sup><1108></sup>1 Kings 10:28,29; <sup><1206></sup>2 Kings 7:6); but contact, traffic, or alliance which would “cause the people to return to Egypt” would be to reverse that great and beneficent wonderwork of God which inaugurated the Mosaic covenant, the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt; and to bring about of set purpose that which God threatened (<sup><0528></sup>Deuteronomy 28:68) as the most severe punishment for Israel’s sin.

<sup><5177></sup>**Deuteronomy 17:17.** Multiplication of wives would lead to sensuality, and so to an apostasy no less fatal in effect than downright idolatry (compare <sup><0246></sup>Exodus 34:16). This rule, like the others, abridges to the ruler of Israel liberties usually enjoyed without stint by the kings of the East. The restriction was in the days of Moses unprecedented; and demanded a higher standard in the king of Israel than was looked for among his equals in other nations.

*Neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold* In this third prohibition, as in the other two, excess is forbidden. Vast accumulation of

treasure could hardly be effected without oppression; nor when effected fail to produce pride and a “trust in uncertain riches” (<sup>5067</sup>1 Timothy 6:17).

<sup>578</sup>**Deuteronomy 17:18.** It is in striking consistency with the dignity which everywhere throughout the Mosaic legislation surrounds the chosen people of God, that even if they will be “like as all the nations about” (<sup>574</sup>Deuteronomy 17:14), and be governed by a king, care should nevertheless be taken that he shall be no Oriental despot. He is to be of no royal caste, but “one from among thy brethren” (<sup>575</sup>Deuteronomy 17:15); he is to bear himself as a kind of “primus inter pares,” his heart “not being lifted up above his brethren” (<sup>570</sup>Deuteronomy 17:20); he is, like his subjects, to be bound by the fundamental laws and institutions of the nation, and obliged, as they were, to do his duty in his station of life with constant reference thereto. The spirit of the text is that of <sup>130</sup>Matthew 23:9.

*A copy of this law* The whole Pentateuch, or, at any rate, the legal portion of the Pentateuch.

*A book ... before the priests the Levites* Compare the marginal reference.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 18

**Deuteronomy 18:1.** Better, “there shall not be to the priests, the Levites, yea the whole tribe of Levi, any inheritance, etc.”

*And his inheritance* i.e., God’s inheritance, that which in making a grant to His people of the promised land with its earthly blessings He had reserved for Himself; more particularly the sacrifices and the holy gifts, such as tithes and first-fruits. These were God’s portion of the substance of Israel; and as the Levites were His portion of the persons of Israel, it was fitting that the Levites should be sustained from these. On the principle here laid down, compare <sup><40B></sup>1 Corinthians 9:13,14.

**Deuteronomy 18:3.** For “maw” read stomach, which was regarded as one of the richest and choicest parts. As the animal slain may be considered to consist of three principal parts, head, feet, and body, a portion of each is by the regulation in question to be given to the priest, thus representing the consecration of the whole; or, as some ancient commentators think, the dedication of the words, acts, and appetites of the worshipper to God.

The text probably refers to peace-offerings, and animals killed for the sacrificial meals held in connection with the peace-offerings.

**Deuteronomy 18:6-8.** These verses presuppose that part of the Levites only will be in residence and officiating at the place of the sanctuary, the others of course dwelling at their own homes in the Levitical cities, or “sojourning” elsewhere; compare the marginal references. But if any Levite out of love for the service of the sanctuary chose to resort to it when he might reside in his own home, he was to have his share in the maintenance which was provided for those ministering in the order of their course.

**Deuteronomy 18:8.** *Beside that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony* The Levites had indeed “no part nor inheritance with Israel,” but they might individually possess property, and in fact often did so (compare <sup><102B></sup>1 Kings 2:26; <sup><2637></sup>Jeremiah 32:7; <sup><406B></sup>Acts 4:36). The Levite who desired to settle at the place of the sanctuary would probably sell his patrimony when quitting his former home. The text directs that he should,

notwithstanding any such private resources, duly enjoy his share of the perquisites provided for the ministers at the sanctuary, and as he was “waiting at the altar” should be “partaker with the altar” (<sup><4913></sup>1 Corinthians 9:13).

<sup><5810></sup>**Deuteronomy 18:10.** *To pass through the fire* i.e., to Moloch; compare the <sup><6810></sup>Leviticus 20:2 note.

*That useth divination* Compare <sup><4223></sup>Numbers 23:23 note.

*Observer of times ... enchanter* Compare <sup><6826></sup>Leviticus 19:26 note.

*Witch* Rather “sorcerer,” compare the <sup><4071></sup>Exodus 7:11 note.

<sup><5811></sup>**Deuteronomy 18:11.** *A charmer* i.e., one who fascinates and subdues noxious animals or men, such as the famous serpent-charmers of the East (<sup><4804></sup>Psalms 58:4,5).

*A consulter with familiar spirits ... a wizard* Compare <sup><6831></sup>Leviticus 19:31 note.

*Recromancer* literally, “one who interrogates the dead.” The purpose of the text is obviously to group together all the known words belonging to the practices in question. Compare <sup><4836></sup>2 Chronicles 33:6.

<sup><5813></sup>**Deuteronomy 18:13.** *Perfect* As in <sup><4170></sup>Genesis 17:1; <sup><8001></sup>Job 1:1; <sup><4058></sup>Matthew 5:48. The sense is that Israel was to keep the worship of the true God wholly uncontaminated by idolatrous pollutions.

<sup><5815></sup>**Deuteronomy 18:15-19.** The ancient fathers of the Church and the generality of modern commentators have regarded our Lord as the prophet promised in these verses. It is evident from the New Testament alone that the Messianic was the accredited interpretation among the Jews at the beginning of the Christian era (compare the marginal references, and <sup><4025></sup>John 4:25); nor can our Lord Himself, when He declares that Moses “wrote of Him” (<sup><4055></sup>John 5:45-47), be supposed to have any other words more directly in view than these, the only words in which Moses, speaking in his own person, gives any prediction of the kind. But the verses seem to have a further, no less evident if subsidiary, reference to a prophetic order which should stand from time to time, as Moses had done, between God and the people; which should make known God’s will to the latter; which should by its presence render it unnecessary either that God should address

the people directly, as at Sinai (<sup><51816></sup>Deuteronomy 18:16; compare <sup><51825></sup>Deuteronomy 5:25ff), or that the people themselves in lack of counsel should resort to the superstitions of the pagan.

In fact, in the words before us, Moses gives promise both of a prophetic order, and of the Messiah in particular as its chief; of a line of prophets culminating in one eminent individual. And in proportion as we see in our Lord the characteristics of the prophet most perfectly exhibited, so must we regard the promise of Moses as in Him most completely accomplished.

<sup><51820></sup>**Deuteronomy 18:20.** Compare the marginal references.

<sup><51821></sup>**Deuteronomy 18:21.** *And if thou say in thine heart, How ...* The passage evidently assumes such an occasion for consulting the prophet as was usual among the pagan, e.g., an impending battle or other such crisis (compare <sup><1221></sup>1 Kings 22:11), in which his veracity would soon be put to the test. Failure of a prediction is set forth as a sure note of its being “presumptuous.” But from <sup><51812></sup>Deuteronomy 13:2ff we see that the fulfillment of a prediction would not decisively accredit him who uttered it: for the prophet or dreamer of dreams who endeavoured on the strength of miracles to seduce to idolatry was to be rejected and punished. Nothing therefore contrary to the revealed truth of God was to be accepted under any circumstances.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 19

**Deuteronomy 19.** This and the next two chapters contain enactments designed to protect human life, and to impress its sanctity on Israel.

<sup><590></sup>**Deuteronomy 19:1-13.** In these verses the directions respecting the preparation of the roads to the cities of refuge, the provision of additional cities in case of an extension of territory, and the intervention of the elders as representing the congregation, are unique to Deuteronomy and supplementary to the laws on the same subject given in the earlier books (compare the marginal reference).

<sup><590></sup>**Deuteronomy 19:1,2.** The three cities of refuge for the district east of Jordan had been already named. Moses now directs that when the territory on the west of Jordan had been conquered, a like allotment of three other cities in it should be made. This was accordingly done; compare <sup><631></sup>Joshua 20:1ff,

<sup><590></sup>**Deuteronomy 19:3.** *Thou shalt prepare thee a way* It was the duty of the Senate to repair the roads that led to the cities of refuge annually, and remove every obstruction. No hillock was left, no river over which there was not a bridge; and the road was at least 32 cubits broad. At cross-roads there were posts bearing the words Refuge, Refuge, to guide the fugitive in his flight. It seems as if in <sup><340></sup>Isaiah 40:3ff the imagery were borrowed from the preparation of the ways to the cities of refuge.

<sup><590></sup>**Deuteronomy 19:5.** *With the axe* literally, "with the iron." Note the employment of iron for tools, and compare <sup><681></sup>Deuteronomy 3:11 note.

<sup><590></sup>**Deuteronomy 19:8,9.** Provision is here made for the anticipated enlargement of the borders of Israel to the utmost limits promised by God, from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates (<sup><0158></sup>Genesis 15:18; <sup><0231></sup>Exodus 23:31; and notes). This promise, owing to the sins of the people, did not receive its fulfillment until after David had conquered the Philistines, Syrians, etc.; and this but a transient one, for many of the conquered peoples regained independence on the dissolution of Solomon's empire.

<sup><5694></sup>**Deuteronomy 19:14.** As a man's life is to be held sacred, so are his means of livelihood; and in this connection a prohibition is inserted against removing a neighbor's landmark: compare the marginal references.

<sup><5696></sup>**Deuteronomy 19:16.** *Testify against him that which is wrong* Margin, more literally, "a falling away." The word is used (<sup><6135></sup>Deuteronomy 13:5) to signify apostasy or revolt; here it is no doubt to be understood in the wider sense of any departure from the Law.

<sup><5697></sup>**Deuteronomy 19:17.** *Both the men, between whom the controversy is* Not the accused and the false witness, but the plaintiff and defendant (compare <sup><1231></sup>Exodus 23:1) who were summoned before the supreme court held, as provided in Deuteronomy 17, at the sanctuary. The judges acted as God's representative; to lie to them was to lie to Him.

<sup><5699></sup>**Deuteronomy 19:19,21.** See the marginal references.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 20

**Deuteronomy 20:1.** *Horses, and chariots* The most formidable elements of an Oriental host, which the Canaanites possessed in great numbers; compare <sup><6176></sup>Joshua 17:16; <sup><0708></sup>Judges 4:3; <sup><0935></sup>1 Samuel 13:5. Israel could not match these with corresponding forces (compare <sup><6176></sup>Deuteronomy 17:16 notes and references), but, having the God of battles on its side, was not to be dismayed by them; the assumption being that the war had the sanction of God, and was consequently just.

**Deuteronomy 20:2.** *The priest* Not the high priest, but one appointed for the purpose, and called, according to the rabbis, “the anointed of the war”: hence, perhaps the expression of <sup><2408></sup>Jeremiah 6:4, etc. “prepare ye” (literally consecrate) “war.” Thus, Phinehas went with the warriors to fight against Midian (<sup><0506></sup>Numbers 31:6; compare <sup><0904></sup>1 Samuel 4:4,11; <sup><4432></sup>2 Chronicles 13:12).

**Deuteronomy 20:5.** *The officers* See <sup><0156></sup>Exodus 5:6 note.

*Dedicated it* Compare the marginal references. The expression is appropriate, because various ceremonies of a religious kind were customary among the Jews on taking possession of a new house. The immunity conferred in this verse lasted, like that in <sup><0507></sup>Deuteronomy 20:7 (compare <sup><0545></sup>Deuteronomy 24:5), for one year.

**Deuteronomy 20:6.** See the margin and references. The fruit of newly-planted trees was set apart from common uses for four years.

**Deuteronomy 20:9.** The meaning is that the “officers” should then subdivide the levies, and appoint leaders of the smaller divisions thus constituted.

**Deuteronomy 20:10-20.** Directions intended to prevent wanton destruction of life and property in sieges.

**Deuteronomy 20:16.** Forbearance, however, was not to be shown toward the Canaanite nations, which were to be utterly exterminated (compare <sup><0501></sup>Deuteronomy 7:1-4). The command did not apply to beasts as well as men (compare <sup><0611></sup>Joshua 11:11,14).



~~(19)~~ **Deuteronomy 20:19.** The parenthesis may be more literally rendered “for man is a tree of the field,” i.e., has his life from the tree of the field, is supported in life by it (compare ~~(19)~~ Deuteronomy 24:6). The Egyptians seem invariably to have cut down the fruit-trees in war.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 21

**Deuteronomy 21:2.** The elders represented the citizens at large, the judges the magistracy: priests (<sup><1520></sup>Deuteronomy 21:5) from the nearest priestly town, were likewise to be at hand. Thus, all classes would be represented at the purging away of that blood-guiltiness which until removed attached to the whole community.

**Deuteronomy 21:3.** The requirements as regards place and victim are symbolic. The heifer represented the murderer, so far at least as to die in his stead, since he himself could not be found. As hearing his guilt the heifer must therefore be one which was of full growth and strength, and had not yet been ceremonially profaned by human use. The Christian commentators find here a type of Christ and of His sacrifice for man: but the heifer was not strictly a sacrifice or sin-offering. The transaction was rather figurative, and was so ordered as to impress the lesson of <sup><1005></sup>Genesis 9:5.

**Deuteronomy 21:4.** *Eared* i.e., plowed; compare <sup><0486></sup>Genesis 45:6 note and references. The word is derived from the Latin, and is in frequent use by English writers of the fifteenth and two following centuries.

*Strike off the heifer's neck* Rather, "break its neck" (compare <sup><0233></sup>Exodus 13:13). The mode of killing the victim distinguishes this lustration from the sin-offering, in which there would be of course shedding and sprinkling of the blood.

**Deuteronomy 21:10ff.** The regulations which now follow in the rest of this and throughout the next chapter bring out the sanctity of various personal rights and relations fundamental to human life and society.

**Deuteronomy 21:10-14.** The war supposed here is one against the neighboring nations after Israel had utterly destroyed the Canaanites (compare <sup><0303></sup>Deuteronomy 7:3), and taken possession of their land.

**Deuteronomy 21:12.** The shaving the head (a customary sign of purification, <sup><0348></sup>Leviticus 14:8; <sup><0487></sup>Numbers 8:7), and the putting away "the garment of her captivity," were designed to signify the translation of the woman from the state of a pagan and a slave to that of a wife among

the covenant-people. Consistency required that she should “pare” (dress, compare <sup><10624></sup>2 Samuel 19:24), not “suffer to grow,” her nails; and thus, so far as possible, lay aside everything belonging to her condition as an alien.

<sup><6213></sup>**Deuteronomy 21:13.** *Bewail her father and her mother a full month* This is prescribed from motives of humanity, that the woman might have time and leisure to detach her affections from their natural ties, and prepare her mind for new ones.

<sup><6214></sup>**Deuteronomy 21:14.** *Thou shalt not make merchandise of her* Rather, thou shalt not constrain her: literally “treat her with constraint,” or “treat her as a slave.”

<sup><6215></sup>**Deuteronomy 21:15-17.** Moses did not originate the rights of primogeniture (compare <sup><0258></sup>Genesis 25:31), but recognized them, since he found them pre-existing in the general social system of the East. Paternal authority could set aside these rights on just grounds (<sup><0273></sup>Genesis 27:33), but it is forbidden here to do so from mere partiality.

<sup><6218></sup>**Deuteronomy 21:18-21.** The formal accusation of parents against a child was to be received without inquiry, as being its own proof. Thus the just authority of the parents is recognized and effectually upheld (compare <sup><0212></sup>Exodus 20:12; 21:15,17; <sup><0319></sup>Leviticus 20:9); but the extreme and irresponsible power of life and death, conceded by the law of Rome and other pagan nations, is withheld from the Israelite father. In this, as in the last law, provision is made against the abuses of a necessary authority.

<sup><6212></sup>**Deuteronomy 21:22.** There were four methods of execution in use among the ancient Jews; stoning (<sup><0274></sup>Exodus 17:4; <sup><0530></sup>Deuteronomy 13:10, etc.), burning (<sup><0314></sup>Leviticus 20:14; 21:9), the sword (<sup><0327></sup>Exodus 32:27), and strangulation. The latter, though not named in Scripture, is regarded by the rabbis as the most common, and the proper one to be adopted when no other is expressly enjoined by the Law. Suspension, whether from cross, stake, or gallows, was not used as a mode of taking life, but was sometimes added after death as an enhancement of punishment. Pharaoh’s chief baker (<sup><0409></sup>Genesis 40:19) was hanged after being put to death by the sword; and similarly Joshua appears (<sup><0616></sup>Joshua 10:26) to have dealt with the five kings who made war against Gibeon. Compare also <sup><0254></sup>Numbers 25:4.

<sup><622></sup>**Deuteronomy 21:23.** *He that is hanged is accursed of God* i.e.

“Bury him that is hanged out of the way before evening: his hanging body defiles the land; for God’s curse rests on it.” The curse of God is probably regarded as lying on the malefactor because, from the fact of his being hanged, he must have been guilty of a especially atrocious breach of God’s covenant. Such an offender could not remain on the face of the earth without defiling it (compare <sup><682></sup>Leviticus 18:25,28; <sup><683></sup>Numbers 35:34). Therefore after the penalty of his crime had been inflicted, and he had hung for a time as a public example, the holy land was to be at once and entirely delivered from his presence. See <sup><883></sup>Galatians 3:13 for Paul’s quotation of this text and his application of it.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 22

**Deuteronomy 22.** On the general character of the contents of this chapter see <sup><6210></sup>Deuteronomy 21:10 note.

<sup><6215></sup>**Deuteronomy 22:5.** *That which pertaineth unto a man* i.e. not only his dress but all that especially pertains distinctively to his sex; arms, domestic and other utensils, etc.

The distinction between the sexes is natural and divinely established, and cannot be neglected without indecorum and consequent danger to purity (compare <sup><4118></sup>1 Corinthians 11:3-15).

<sup><6216></sup>**Deuteronomy 22:6-8.** These precepts are designed to cultivate a spirit of humanity. Compare <sup><6204></sup>Deuteronomy 25:4; <sup><6228></sup>Leviticus 22:28; and <sup><4119></sup>1 Corinthians 9:9,10.

<sup><6218></sup>**Deuteronomy 22:8.** The roofs of houses in Palestine were flat and used for various purposes. Compare <sup><4116></sup>Joshua 2:6; <sup><4111></sup>2 Samuel 11:2; <sup><4119></sup>Acts 10:9, etc. A battlement was almost a necessary protection. It was to be, according to the rabbis, at least two cubits high (about 3 ft.).

<sup><6219></sup>**Deuteronomy 22:9-11.** Compare the marginal reference. The prohibition of <sup><6210></sup>Deuteronomy 22:10 was also dictated by humanity. The ox and the donkey being of such different size and strength, it would be cruel to the latter to yoke them together. These two animals are named as being those ordinarily employed in agriculture; compare <sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 32:20.

<sup><6212></sup>**Deuteronomy 22:12.** Compare <sup><4158></sup>Numbers 15:38 and its note.

<sup><6219></sup>**Deuteronomy 22:19.** The fine was to be paid to the father, because the slander was against him principally as the head of the wife's family. If the damsel were an orphan the fine reverted to herself. The fact that the penalties attached to bearing false witness against a wife are fixed and comparatively light indicates the low estimation and position of the woman at that time.

**Deuteronomy 23.** This chapter enjoins sanctity and purity in the congregation of Israel as a whole, and lays down certain rights and duties of citizenship.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 23

**Deuteronomy 23:1.** Compare <sup><48217></sup>Leviticus 21:17-24. Such persons, exhibiting a mutilation of that human nature which was made in God's image, were rejected from the covenant entirely. However, they could be proselytes (compare <sup><44827></sup>Acts 8:27). The Old Testament itself foretells (<sup><28418></sup>Isaiah 56:3-5) the removal of this ban when under the kingdom of Messiah the outward and emblematic perfection and sanctity of Israel should be fulfilled in their inner meaning by the covenanted presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

**Deuteronomy 23:2.** *A bastard* Probably, a child born of incest or adultery.

*Even to his tenth generation* i.e. (see the next verse and <sup><46318></sup>Nehemiah 13:1), forever. Ten is the number of perfection and completeness.

**Deuteronomy 23:3-5.** This law forbids only the naturalization of those against whom it is directed. It does not forbid their dwelling in the land; and seems to refer rather to the nations than to individuals. It was not understood at any rate to interdict marriage with a Moabitess; compare <sup><48004></sup>Ruth 1:4; 4:13. Ruth however, and her sister were doubtless proselytes.

**Deuteronomy 23:4.** Compare the marginal reference. The Moabites and the Ammonites are to be regarded as clans of the same stock rather than as two independent nations, and as acting together. Compare <sup><44100></sup>2 Chronicles 20:1.

**Deuteronomy 23:6.** i.e. "thou shalt not invite them robe on terms of amity with thee (compare <sup><48300></sup>Deuteronomy 20:10ff), nor make their welfare thy care": compare <sup><45912></sup>Ezra 9:12. There is no injunction to hatred or retaliation (compare <sup><48119></sup>Deuteronomy 2:9,19); but later history contains frequent record of hostility between Israel and these nations.

**Deuteronomy 23:7,8.** The Edomite, as descended from Esau the twin brother of Jacob (compare <sup><48114></sup>Deuteronomy 2:4), and the Egyptian, as of that nation which had for long shown hospitality to Joseph and his brethren, were not to be objects of abhorrence. The oppression of the Egyptians was perhaps regarded as the act of the Pharaohs rather than the

will of the people (<sup><2112></sup>Exodus 11:2,3); and at any rate was not to cancel the memory of preceding hospitality.

<sup><6218></sup>**Deuteronomy 23:8.** *In their third generation* i.e. the great grandchildren of the Edomite or Egyptian alien: compare the similar phrase in <sup><2215></sup>Exodus 20:5.

<sup><6219></sup>**Deuteronomy 23:9-14.** The whole passage refers not to the encampments of the nation while passing from Egypt through the wilderness, but to future warlike expeditions sent out from Canaan.

<sup><6215></sup>**Deuteronomy 23:15,16.** The case in question is that of a slave who fled from a pagan master to the holy land. It is of course assumed that the refugee was not fleeing from justice, but only from the tyranny of his lord.

<sup><6217></sup>**Deuteronomy 23:17.** Compare the marginal reference. Prostitution was a common part of religious observances among idolatrous nations, especially in the worship of Ashtoreth or Astarte. Compare <sup><3001></sup>Micah 1:7; Baruch 6:43.

<sup><6218></sup>**Deuteronomy 23:18.** Another Gentile practice, connected with the one alluded to in the preceding verse, is here forbidden. The word “dog” is figurative (compare <sup><6215></sup>Revelation 22:15), and equivalent to the “sodomite” of the verse preceding.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 24

**Deuteronomy 24.** In this and the next chapter certain particular rights and duties, domestic, social, and civil, are treated. The cases brought forward have often no definite connection, and seem selected in order to illustrate the application of the great principles of the Law in certain important events and circumstances.

**Deuteronomy 24:1-4.** These four verses contain only one sentence, and should be rendered thus: If a man hath taken a wife, etc., and given her a bill of divorcement and (<sup><f342></sup>Deuteronomy 24:2) if she has departed out of his house and become another man's wife; and (<sup><f343></sup>Deuteronomy 24:3) if the latter husband hates her, then (<sup><f344></sup>Deuteronomy 24:4) her former husband, etc.

Moses neither institutes nor enjoins divorce. The exact spirit of the passage is given in our Lord's words to the Jews', "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives" (<sup><f345></sup>Matthew 19:8). Not only does the original institution of marriage as recorded by Moses (<sup><f346></sup>Genesis 2:24) set forth the perpetuity of the bond, but the verses before us plainly intimate that divorce, while tolerated for the time, contravenes the order of nature and of God. The divorced woman who marries again is "defiled" (<sup><f347></sup>Deuteronomy 24:4), and is grouped in this particular with the adulteress (compare <sup><f348></sup>Leviticus 18:20). Our Lord then was speaking according to the spirit of the law of Moses when he declared, "Whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (<sup><f349></sup>Matthew 19:9). He was speaking too not less according to the mind of the prophets (compare <sup><f350></sup>Malachi 2:14-16). But Moses could not absolutely put an end to a practice which was traditional, and common to the Jews with other Oriental nations. His aim is therefore to regulate and thus to mitigate an evil which he could not extirpate.

**Deuteronomy 24:6.** Compare <sup><f351></sup>Exodus 22:25,26.

**Deuteronomy 24:7.** Compare <sup><f352></sup>Deuteronomy 21:14; and <sup><f353></sup>Exodus 21:16.

**Deuteronomy 24:10-13.** Compare <sup><f354></sup>Exodus 22:25-27.



<sup><62413></sup>**Deuteronomy 24:13.** *Righteousness unto thee* Compare

<sup><61625></sup>Deuteronomy 6:25 note.

<sup><62416></sup>**Deuteronomy 24:16.** A caution addressed to earthly judges. Among other Oriental nations the family of a criminal was commonly involved in his punishment (compare Est. 9:13,14). In Israel it was not to be so; compare marginal references.

<sup><62417></sup>**Deuteronomy 24:17-22.** Compare the marginal references. The motive assigned for these various acts of consideration is one and the same (<sup><62418></sup>Deuteronomy 24:18,22).

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 25

**Deuteronomy 25:1,2.** Render it:

(1) If there be a controversy between men, and they come to judgment, and the judges judge them, and justify the righteous and condemn the wicked (compare the marginal reference. and <sup><12317></sup>Exodus 23:7; <sup><11715></sup>Proverbs 17:15);

(2) then it shall be, etc.

**Deuteronomy 25:2.** Scourging is named as a penalty in <sup><1810></sup>Leviticus 19:20. The beating here spoken of would be on the back with a rod or stick (compare <sup><11013></sup>Proverbs 10:13; 19:29; 26:3).

**Deuteronomy 25:3.** The Jews to keep within the letter of the law fixed 39 stripes as the maximum (compare the marginal reference.). Forty signifies the full measure of judgment (compare <sup><11072></sup>Genesis 7:12; <sup><1443></sup>Numbers 14:33,34); but the son of Israel was not to be lashed like a slave at the mercy of another. The judge was always to be present to see that the Law in this particular was not overpassed.

**Deuteronomy 25:4.** Compare the marginal references. In other kinds of labor the oxen were usually muzzled. When driven to and fro over the threshing-floor in order to stamp out the grain from the chaff, they were to be allowed to partake of the fruits of their labors.

**Deuteronomy 25:5-10.** The law of levirate marriage. The law on this subject is not unique to the Jews, but is found (see <sup><1308></sup>Genesis 38:8) in all essential respects the same among various Oriental nations, ancient and modern. The rules in these verses, like those upon divorce, do but incorporate existing immemorial usages, and introduce various wise and politic limitations and mitigations of them. The root of the obligation here imposed upon the brother of the deceased husband lies in the primitive idea of childlessness being a great calamity (compare <sup><1164></sup>Genesis 16:4; and note), and extinction of name and family one of the greatest that could happen (compare 9:14; <sup><14912></sup>Psalms 109:12-15). To avert this the ordinary rules as to intermarriage are in the case in question (compare <sup><1816></sup>Leviticus 18:16) set aside. The obligation was onerous (compare <sup><1346></sup>Ruth 4:6), and might be repugnant; and it is accordingly considerably reduced and

restricted by Moses. The duty is recognized as one of affection for the memory of the deceased; it is not one which could be enforced at law. That it continued down to the Christian era is apparent from the question on this point put to Jesus by the Sadducees (see the marginal references).

<6215> **Deuteronomy 25:5.** *No child* literally, “no son.” The existence of a daughter would clearly suffice. The daughter would inherit the name and property of the father; compare <0270> Numbers 27:1-11.

<6219> **Deuteronomy 25:9.** *Loose his shoe from off his foot* In token of taking from the unwilling brother all right over the wife and property of the deceased. Planting the foot on a thing was an usual symbol of lordship and of taking possession (compare <0137> Genesis 13:17; <0602> Joshua 10:24), and loosing the shoe and handing it to another in like manner signified a renunciation and transfer of right and title (compare <0847> Ruth 4:7,8; <0918> Psalm 60:8, and 108:9). The widow here is directed herself, as the party slighted and injured, to deprive her brother-law of his shoe, and spit in his face (compare <0424> Numbers 12:14). The action was intended to aggravate the disgrace conceived to attach to the conduct of the man.

<6210> **Deuteronomy 25:10.** *The house ...* Equivalent to “the house of the barefooted one.” To go barefoot was a sign of the most abject condition; compare <0150> 2 Samuel 15:30.

<6212> **Deuteronomy 25:12.** This is the only mutilation prescribed by the Law of Moses, unless we except the retaliation prescribed as a punishment for the infliction on another of bodily injuries (<0249> Leviticus 24:19,20). The act in question was probably not rare in the times and countries for which the Law of Moses was designed. It is of course to be understood that the act was willful, and that the prescribed punishment would be inflicted according to the sentence of the judges.

<6213> **Deuteronomy 25:13-19.** Honesty in trade, as a duty to our neighbor, is emphatically enforced once more (compare <0835> Leviticus 19:35,36). It is noteworthy that John the Baptist puts the like duties in the forefront of his preaching (compare <0182> Luke 3:12ff); and that “the prophets” (compare <2650> Ezekiel 45:10-12; <3085> Amos 8:5; <3060> Micah 6:10,11) and “the Psalms” (<2161> Proverbs 16:11; 20:10,23), not less than “the Law,” especially insist on them.

<sup><0513></sup>**Deuteronomy 25:13.** *Divers weights* i.e. stones of unequal weights, the lighter to sell with, the heavier to buy with. Stones were used by the Jews instead of brass or lead for their weights, as less liable to lose anything through rust or wear.

<sup><0517></sup>**Deuteronomy 25:17-19.** It was not after the spirit or mission of the Law to aim at overcoming inveterate opposition by love and by attempts at conversion (contrast <sup><0105></sup>Luke 9:55,56). The law taught God's hatred of sin and of rebellion against Him by enjoining the extinction of the obstinate sinner. The Amalekites were a kindred people (<sup><0135></sup>Genesis 36:15,16); and living as they did in the peninsula of Sinai, they could not but have well known the mighty acts God had done for His people in Egypt and the Red Sea; yet they manifested from the first a persistent hostility to Israel (compare <sup><0278></sup>Exodus 17:8, and note; <sup><0445></sup>Numbers 14:45). They provoked therefore the sentence here pronounced, which was executed at last by Saul (<sup><0151B></sup>1 Samuel 15:3ff).

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 26

**Deuteronomy 26.** Two liturgical enactments having a clear and close reference to the whole of the preceding legislation, form a most appropriate and significant conclusion to it, namely,

- (1) the formal acknowledgment in deed and symbol of God's faithfulness, by presentment of a basket filled with firstfruits, and in word by recitation of the solemn formula prescribed in <sup><6312></sup>Deuteronomy 26:3,5-10; and
- (2) the solemn declaration and profession on the part of each Israelite on the occasion of the third tithe (<sup><6312></sup>Deuteronomy 26:12).

<sup><6312></sup>**Deuteronomy 26:2.** On the subject of firstfruits see the notes at <sup><6312></sup>Leviticus 23:9ff. The firstfruits here in question are to be distinguished alike from those offered in acknowledgment of the blessings of harvest (compare <sup><6312></sup>Exodus 22:29) at the Feasts of Passover and Pentecost, and also from the offerings prescribed in <sup><6312></sup>Numbers 18:8ff. The latter consisted of preparations from the produce of the earth, such as oil, flour, wine, etc.; while those here meant are the raw produce: the former were national and public offerings, those of this chapter were private and personal. The whole of the firstfruits belonged to the officiating priest.

<sup><6312></sup>**Deuteronomy 26:5.** *A Syrian ready to perish was my father* The reference is shown by the context to be to Jacob, as the ancestor in whom particularly the family of Abraham began to develop into a nation (compare <sup><6312></sup>Isaiah 43:22,28, etc.). Jacob is called a Syrian (literally, Aramaean), not only because of his own long residence in Syria with Laban (Genesis 29—31), as our Lord was called a Nazarene because of his residence at Nazareth (<sup><6312></sup>Matthew 2:23), but because he there married and had his children (compare <sup><6312></sup>Hosea 12:12); and might be said accordingly to belong to that more than to any other land.

<sup><6312></sup>**Deuteronomy 26:12.** See the marginal reference to Numbers and note. A strict fulfillment of the onerous and complicated tithe obligations was a leading part of the righteousness of the Pharisees: compare <sup><6312></sup>Matthew 23:23.

**Deuteronomy 26:14.** *I have not eaten thereof in my mourning*

When the Israelite would be unclean (compare the marginal references).

*Nor given ought thereof for the dead* The reference is not so much to the superstitious custom of placing food on or in tombs as to the funeral expenses, and more especially the usual feast for the mourners (compare <sup><2407></sup>Jeremiah 16:7; Ezra 24:17; <sup><2900></sup>Hosea 9:4; Tobit 4:17). The dedicated things were to be employed in glad and holy feasting, not therefore for funeral banquets; for death and all associated with it was regarded as unclean.

**Deuteronomy 26:16-19.** A brief and earnest exhortation by way of conclusion to the second and longest discourse of the book.

**Deuteronomy 26:17.** *Thou hast avouched* literally, “made to say:” so also in the next verse. The sense is: “Thou hast given occasion to the Lord to say that He is thy God,” i.e. by promising that He shall be so. Compare <sup><1247></sup>Exodus 24:7; <sup><1644></sup>Joshua 24:14-25.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 27

**Deuteronomy 27.** Moses in a third discourse (Deuteronomy 27—30), proceeds more specifically to dwell upon the sanctions of the Law. In these chapters he sets before Israel in striking and elaborate detail the blessings which would ensue upon faithfulness to the covenant, and the curses which disobedience would involve. Deuteronomy 27 introduces this portion of the book by enjoining the erection of a stone monument on which the Law should be inscribed as soon as the people took possession of the promised inheritance (<sup><B27D></sup>Deuteronomy 27:1-10); and by next prescribing the liturgical form after which the blessings and cursings should be pronounced (<sup><B27E></sup>Deuteronomy 27:11-26).

<sup><B27D></sup>**Deuteronomy 27:2.** The stones here named are not those of which the altar (<sup><B27E></sup>Deuteronomy 27:5) was to be built, but are to serve as a separate monument witnessing to the fact that the people took possession of the land by virtue of the Law inscribed on them and with an acknowledgment of its obligations.

<sup><B27E></sup>**Deuteronomy 27:3.** *All the words of this law* i.e. all the laws revealed from God to the people by Moses, regarded by the Jews as 613 (compare <sup><B27F></sup>Numbers 15:38 note). The exhibition of laws in this manner on stones, pillars, or tables, was familiar to the ancients. The laws were probably graven in the stone (“very plainly,” <sup><B27G></sup>Deuteronomy 27:8 is by some rendered “scoop it out well”), as are for the most part the Egyptian hieroglyphics, the “plaister” being afterward added to protect the inscription from the weather.

<sup><B27H></sup>**Deuteronomy 27:4.** *In mount Ebal* Compare the marginal references. The Samaritan Pentateuch and Version read here Gerizim instead of Ebal; but the original text was probably, as nearly all modern authorities hold, altered in order to lend a show of scriptural sanction to the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim.

The erection of the altar, the offering thereon burnt-offerings and peace-offerings (<sup><B27I></sup>Deuteronomy 27:6,7), the publication of the Law in writing, form altogether a solemn renewal of the covenant on the entrance of the people into the promised land, and recall the ceremonies observed on the original grant of the covenant at Sinai (compare <sup><B27J></sup>Exodus 24:5). And

Ebal (the mount of “barrenness “), the mount of cursing, was the fitting spot on which to celebrate them. For the curses were the penalties under which the children of Israel bound themselves to keep the Law. Suitably also was the same place selected as that in which were to be set up both the monumental stones containing the Law, and the altar at which the covenant was to be renewed. We must note too the fact that <sup><5715></sup>Deuteronomy 27:15ff set out verbatim the curses only, the blessings being omitted. The law because of man’s sinfulness brings on him first and chiefly a curse: compare <sup><5816></sup>Deuteronomy 31:16,17; <sup><880></sup>Galatians 3:10.

<sup><5711></sup>**Deuteronomy 27:11-26.** Compare <sup><682></sup>Joshua 8:32-35. The solemnity was apparently designed only for the single occasion on which it actually took place.

<sup><5712></sup>**Deuteronomy 27:12,13.** The tribes appointed to stand on Gerizim to bless the people all sprang from the two wives of Jacob, Leah and Rachel. All the four tribes which sprang from the handmaids Zilpah and Bilhah are located on Ebal. But in order, as it would seem, to effect an equal division, two tribes are added to the latter from the descendants of the wives, that of Reuben, probably because he forfeited his primogeniture (<sup><6404></sup>Genesis 49:4); and of Zebulun, apparently because he was the youngest son of Leah.

The transaction presents itself as a solemn renewal of the covenant made by God with Abraham and Isaac, but more especially with Jacob and his family. Accordingly the genealogical basis of the “twelve patriarchs” (compare <sup><4712></sup>Acts 7:12; <sup><6104></sup>Revelation 7:4ff), the sons of Jacob, is here assumed. The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh are merged in the name of Joseph, their father; and Levi regains on this occasion his place collaterally with the others. “The Levites” of <sup><5714></sup>Deuteronomy 27:14 are no doubt “the priests the Levites” (compare <sup><683></sup>Joshua 8:33), in whom the ministerial character attaching to the tribe was more particularly manifested. It is noteworthy that the group of tribes which stood on Gerizim far exceeded the other in numbers and in importance, thus perhaps indicating that even by the Law the blessing should at length prevail.

<sup><5715></sup>**Deuteronomy 27:15.** The “Amen” attested the conviction of the utterers that the sentences to which they responded were true, just, and certain; so in <sup><612></sup>Numbers 5:22, and in our own Communion Office, which is modelled after this ordinance of Moses.



~~6715~~ **Deuteronomy 27:15-26.** Twelve curses against transgressions of the covenant. The first eleven are directed against special sins which are selected by way of example, the last comprehensively sums up in general terms and condemns all and every offence against God's Law. Compare the marginal references.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 28

A comparison of this chapter with <sup><0233></sup>Exodus 23:20-23 and Leviticus 26 will show how Moses here resumes and amplifies the promises and threats already set forth in the earlier records of the Law. The language rises in this chapter to the sublimest strains, especially in the latter part of it; and the prophecies respecting the dispersion and degradation of the Jewish nation in its later days are among the most remarkable in scripture. They are plain, precise, and circumstantial; and the fulfillment of them has been literal, complete, and undeniable.

<sup><630></sup>**Deuteronomy 28:1-14.** The Blessing. The six repetitions of the word “blessed” introduce the particular forms which the blessing would take in the various relations of life.

<sup><630></sup>**Deuteronomy 28:5.** The “basket” or bag was a customary means in the East for carrying about whatever might be needed for personal uses (compare <sup><630></sup>Deuteronomy 26:2; <sup><630></sup>John 13:29).

The “store” is rather the kneading-trough (<sup><630></sup>Exodus 8:3; 12:34). The blessings here promised relate, it will be observed, to private and personal life: in <sup><630></sup>Deuteronomy 28:7 those which are of a more public and national character are brought forward.

<sup><630></sup>**Deuteronomy 28:9.** The oath with which God vouchsafed to confirm His promises to the patriarchs (compare <sup><0226></sup>Genesis 22:16; <sup><630></sup>Hebrews 6:13,14) contained by implication these gifts of holiness and eminence to Israel (compare the marginal references).

<sup><630></sup>**Deuteronomy 28:15-68.** The curses correspond in form and number (<sup><630></sup>Deuteronomy 28:15-19) to the blessings (<sup><630></sup>Deuteronomy 28:3-6), and the special modes in which these threats should be executed are described in five groups of denunciations (<sup><630></sup>Deuteronomy 28:20-68).

<sup><630></sup>**Deuteronomy 28:20-26.** First series of judgments. The curse of God should rest on all they did, and should issue in manifold forms of disease, in famine, and in defeat in war.

**Deuteronomy 28:20.** *Vexation* Rather, confusion: the word in the original is used (<sup><0172></sup>Deuteronomy 7:23; <sup><0140></sup>1 Samuel 14:20) for the panic and disorder with which the curse of God smites His foes.

**Deuteronomy 28:22.** “Blasting” denotes (compare <sup><0423></sup>Genesis 41:23) the result of the scorching east wind; “mildew” that of an untimely blight falling on the green ear, withering it and marring its produce.

**Deuteronomy 28:24.** When the heat is very great the atmosphere in Palestine is often filled with dust and sand; the wind is a burning sirocco, and the air comparable to the glowing heat at the mouth of a furnace.

**Deuteronomy 28:25.** *Shalt be removed* See the margin. The threat differs from that in <sup><0133></sup>Leviticus 26:33, which refers to a dispersion of the people among the pagan. Here it is meant that they should be tossed to and fro at the will of others, driven from one country to another without any certain settlement.

**Deuteronomy 28:27-37.** Second series of judgments on the body, mind, and outward circumstances of the sinners.

**Deuteronomy 28:27.** The “botch” (rather “boil;” see <sup><0109></sup>Exodus 9:9), the “emerods” or tumors (<sup><0116></sup>1 Samuel 5:6,9), the “scab” and “itch” represent the various forms of the loathsome skin diseases which are common in Syria and Egypt.

**Deuteronomy 28:28.** Mental maladies shall be added to those sore bodily plagues, and should (<sup><0129></sup>Deuteronomy 28:29-34) reduce the sufferers to powerlessness before their enemies and oppressors.

*Blindness* Most probably mental blindness; compare <sup><0144></sup>Lamentations 4:14; <sup><0117></sup>Zephaniah 1:17; <sup><0114></sup>2 Corinthians 3:14ff.

**Deuteronomy 28:30-33.** See the marginal references for the fulfillment of these judgments.

**Deuteronomy 28:38-48.** Third series of judgments, affecting every kind of labor and enterprise until it had accomplished the total ruin of the nation, and its subjection to its enemies.

**Deuteronomy 28:39.** *Worms* i.e. the vine-weevil. Naturalists prescribed elaborate precautions against its ravages.

**Deuteronomy 28:40.** *Cast ...* Some prefer “shall be spoiled” or “plundered.”

**Deuteronomy 28:43,44.** Contrast <sup><6382></sup>Deuteronomy 28:12 and <sup><6383></sup>Deuteronomy 28:13.

**Deuteronomy 28:46.** *Forever* Yet “the remnant” (<sup><6107></sup>Romans 9:27; 11:5) would by faith and obedience become a holy seed.

**Deuteronomy 28:49-58.** Fourth series of judgments, descriptive of the calamities and horrors which should ensue when Israel should be subjugated by its foreign foes.

**Deuteronomy 28:49.** The description (compare the marginal references) applies undoubtedly to the Chaldeans, and in a degree to other nations also whom God raised up as ministers of vengeance upon apostate Israel (e.g. the Medes). But it only needs to read this part of the denunciation, and to compare it with the narrative of Josephus, to see that its full and exact accomplishment took place in the wars of Vespasian and Titus against the Jews, as indeed the Jews themselves generally admit.

*The eagle* The Roman ensign; compare <sup><4128></sup>Matthew 24:28; and consult throughout this passage the marginal references.

**Deuteronomy 28:54.** *Evil* i.e. grudging; compare <sup><6139></sup>Deuteronomy 15:9.

**Deuteronomy 28:57.** *Young one* The “afterbirth” (see the margin). The Hebrew text in fact suggests an extremity of horror which the King James Version fails to exhibit. Compare <sup><1169></sup>2 Kings 6:29.

**Deuteronomy 28:58-68.** Fifth series of judgments. The uprooting of Israel from the promised land, and its dispersion among other nations. Examine the marginal references.

**Deuteronomy 28:58.** *In this book* i.e. in the book of the Law, or the Pentateuch in so far as it contains commands of God to Israel.

Deuteronomy is included, but not exclusively intended. So <sup><6361></sup>Deuteronomy 28:61; compare <sup><6278></sup>Deuteronomy 27:3 and note,

<sup><6319></sup>Deuteronomy 31:9.

~~(5286)~~ **Deuteronomy 28:66.** *Thy life shall hang in doubt before thee* i.e. shall be hanging as it were on a thread, and that before thine own eyes. The fathers regard this passage as suggesting in a secondary or mystical sense Christ hanging on the cross, as the life of the Jews who would not believe in Him.

~~(5288)~~ **Deuteronomy 28:68.** This is the climax. As the Exodus from Egypt was as it were the birth of the nation into its covenant relationship with God, so the return to the house of bondage is in like manner the death of it. The mode of conveyance, “in ships,” is added to heighten the contrast. They crossed the sea from Egypt with a high hand. the waves being parted before them. They should go back again cooped up in slaveships.

*There ye shall be sold* Rather, “there shall ye offer yourselves, or be offered for sale.” This denunciation was literally fulfilled on more than one occasion: most signally when many thousand Jews were sold into slavery and sent into Egypt by Titus; but also under Hadrian, when numbers were sold at Rachel’s grave (~~(1359)~~ Genesis 35:19).

*No man shall buy you* i.e. no one shall venture even to employ you as slaves, regarding you as accursed of God, and to be shunned in everything.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 29

**Deuteronomy 29:1.** This and the following chapter contain the address of Moses to the people on the solemn renewal of the covenant. Consult the marginal references for proof of historical statements or explanation of obscure words.

**Deuteronomy 29:4.** Ability to understand the things of God is the gift of God (compare <sup><4121></sup>1 Corinthians 2:13,14); yet man is not guiltless if he lacks that ability. The people had it not because they had not felt their want of it, nor asked for it. Compare <sup><4734></sup>2 Corinthians 3:14,15.

**Deuteronomy 29:9.** *That ye may prosper* literally, “that ye may act wisely.” The connection of the two ideas of wisdom in conduct and prosperity in circumstances is noteworthy.

**Deuteronomy 29:11.** The covenant was national, and therefore embraced all the elements which make up the nation. The “little ones” would of course be represented by their parents or guardians; the absent (<sup><6295></sup>Deuteronomy 29:15) by those present; nor were the servants and proselytes to be excluded (compare <sup><4129></sup>Acts 2:39). The text is fairly alleged in justification of the Church’s practice of admitting little ones into covenant with God by Baptism, and accepting promises made on their behalf by sponsors.

**Deuteronomy 29:15.** *With him that is not here with us* i.e. as the Jews explain, posterity; which throughout all generations was to be taken as bound by the act and deed of those present and living.

**Deuteronomy 29:17.** *Idols* See the margin, “dungy gods;” i.e. clods or stocks which can be rolled about (compare <sup><1350></sup>Leviticus 26:30).

**Deuteronomy 29:18.** The word here and in <sup><622></sup>Deuteronomy 32:32 rendered “gall,” is in <sup><3104></sup>Hosea 10:4 translated “hemlock.” It is the name of a plant of intense bitterness, and of quick growth; and is therefore repeatedly used in conjunction with “wormwood” (compare <sup><3915></sup>Jeremiah 9:15; <sup><2189></sup>Lamentations 3:19; <sup><3162></sup>Amos 6:12), to express figuratively the nature and effects of sin (compare the marginal references.). The herb is probably the poppy. Hence, the “water” (i.e. juice) “of gall” (<sup><2484></sup>Jeremiah

8:14, 23:15) would be opium. This would explain its employment in the stupefying drink given to criminals at the time of execution (compare <sup><1921></sup>Psalm 69:21; <sup><1273></sup>Matthew 27:34), and the use of the word as synonymous with poison (compare <sup><1523></sup>Deuteronomy 32:33; <sup><1806></sup>Job 20:16).

*Wormwood* is the plant “absinthium.” It is used to denote metaphorically the distress and trouble which result from sin.

“The root that beareth gall and wormwood,” means in this place any person lurking among them who is tainted with apostasy.

<sup><1519></sup>**Deuteronomy 29:19.** Compare on the thought <sup><2317></sup>Jeremiah 23:17. The secret and presumptuous sinner is meant who flatters himself that all is well and will be well with him, since he follows his own devices and prospers. Compare <sup><1731></sup>Psalm 73:11ff.

*To add drunkenness to thirst* The sense is probably: “Himself, drinking iniquity like water, (<sup><1856></sup>Job 15:16), he corrupts and destroys others who are thirsting for it or prone to it.”

The sense of the whole passage from <sup><1596></sup>Deuteronomy 29:16 onward to <sup><1521></sup>Deuteronomy 29:20 may be exhibited thus: “Ye have seen the abominations of idolatry among the pagan. Do you therefore look diligently that there be no secret idolater among you; a root of bitterness to all about him. Let there be no one, I say, who when he hears the curses of the Law against this sin, flatters himself, saying within himself, ‘All will be well, for I walk unmolested in my own self-chosen path;’ and thus acting, not only takes his own fill of sin, but destroys likewise every tempted brother within his reach, for the LORD will not spare him,” etc.

<sup><1523></sup>**Deuteronomy 29:23.** The description is borrowed from the local features of the Dead Sea and its vicinity. The towns of the vale of Siddim were fertile and well watered (compare <sup><0130></sup>Genesis 13:10) until devastated by the wrath of God (<sup><0192></sup>Genesis 19:24,25). The ruin of Israel and its land should be of the like sort (compare <sup><1331></sup>Leviticus 26:31,32; <sup><1973></sup>Psalm 107:34; <sup><1019></sup>Zephaniah 2:9). The desolate state of Palestine at present, and the traces of former fertility and prosperity, are attested by every traveler.

<sup><1523></sup>**Deuteronomy 29:29.** *The secret things belong unto the LORD our God* This verse seems to be added as a solemn admonition on the part of Moses, in order to close the series of blessings and curses which he has delivered. The sense seems to be this: “The future, when and how these

good and evil things will take effect, it lies with the Lord our God to determine; it pertains not to man's sphere and duty. God's revealed will is that which we must carry out." The 17th of our Articles of Religion concludes with much the same sentiment.



## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 30

**Deuteronomy 30.** The rejection of Israel and the desolation of the promised inheritance were not to be the end of God's dispensations. The closing words of the address therefore are words of comfort and promise. Compare marginal reference and <sup><1009></sup>Deuteronomy 4:29ff; <sup><1086></sup>1 Kings 8:46-50.

<sup><6318></sup>**Deuteronomy 30:1-10.** The chastisements of God would lead the nation to repent, and thereupon God would again bless them.

<sup><6318></sup>**Deuteronomy 30:3.** *Will turn thy captivity* Will change or put an end to thy state of captivity or distress (compare <sup><1947></sup>Psalms 14:7; 85:2; <sup><2408></sup>Jeremiah 30:18). The rendering of the Greek version is significant; "the Lord will heal thy sins."

The promises of this and the following verses had no doubt their partial fulfillment in the days of the Judges; but the fact that various important features are repeated in <sup><2427></sup>Jeremiah 32:37ff, and in <sup><3119></sup>Ezekiel 11:19ff, 34:13ff, 36:24ff, shows us that none of these was regarded as exhausting the promises. In full analogy with the scheme of prophecy we may add that the return from the Babylonian captivity has not exhausted their depth. The New Testament takes up the strain (e.g. in Romans 11), and foretells the restoration of Israel to the covenanted mercies of God. True these mercies shall not be, as before, confined to that nation. The "turning again of the captivity" will be when Israel is converted to Him in whom the Law was fulfilled, and who died "not for that nation only," but also that he might "gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (<sup><615></sup>John 11:51,52). Then shall there be "one fold and one shepherd" (<sup><616></sup>John 10:16). But whether the general conversion of the Jews shall be accompanied with any national restoration, any recovery of their ancient prerogatives as the chosen people; and further, whether there shall be any local replacement of them in the land of their fathers, may be regarded as of "the secret things" which belong unto God (<sup><629></sup>Deuteronomy 29:29); and so indeed our Lord Himself teaches us (<sup><406></sup>Acts 1:6,7).

<sup><6316></sup>**Deuteronomy 30:6.** *Circumcise thine heart* Compare <sup><616></sup>Deuteronomy 10:16 note; <sup><2429></sup>Jeremiah 32:39; Ezra 11:19.

**Deuteronomy 30:10-20.** Ignorance of the requirements of the law cannot be pleaded (<sup><6500></sup>Deuteronomy 30:10-14); hence, (<sup><6505></sup>Deuteronomy 30:15-20) life and death, good and evil, are solemnly set before the people for their own choice; and an earnest exhortation to choose the better part concludes the address.

**Deuteronomy 30:11-14.** “The righteousness which is of faith” is really and truly described in these words of the Law; and, under Paul’s guidance (see marginal references) we affirm was intended so to be. For the simplicity and accessibility which Moses here attributes to the Law of God neither is nor can be experimentally found in it except through the medium of faith; even though outwardly and in the letter that Law be written out for us so “that he may run that readeth,” and be set forth in its duties and its sanctions as plainly as it was before the Jews by Moses. The seeming ease of the commandment, and yet its real impossibility to the natural man, form part of the qualifications of the Law to be our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.

**Deuteronomy 30:11.** *Not hidden from thee* Rather, not too hard for thee, as in <sup><6578></sup>Deuteronomy 17:8.

*Neither is it far off* Compare <sup><6721></sup>Luke 17:21.

**Deuteronomy 30:13.** The paraphrase of this verse in the Jerusalem Targum is noteworthy, and should be compared with Paul’s rendering in <sup><6507></sup>Romans 10:7: “Neither is the law beyond the great sea, that thou shouldest say, Oh that we had one like Jonah the prophet who could descend into the depths of the sea and bring it to us!”

**Deuteronomy 30:14.** *In thy mouth, and in, thy heart* Compare <sup><6506></sup>Deuteronomy 6:6; 11:18-20.

**Deuteronomy 30:20.** *That thou mayest love the LORD* Compare <sup><6505></sup>Deuteronomy 6:5. Love stands first as the essential and only source of obedience.

*He is thy life* Or, “that” (i.e., “to love the Lord”) “is thy life;” i.e., the condition of thy life and of its prolongation in the promised land. Compare <sup><6540></sup>Deuteronomy 4:40; 32:47.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 31

**Deuteronomy 31:2.** *I am an hundred and twenty years old* The 40 years of the wandering had passed since Moses, then 80 years old, “spake unto Pharaoh” (<sup><0100></sup>Exodus 7:7; Compare <sup><0340></sup>Deuteronomy 34:7).

*I can, no more go out and come in* Render I shall not longer be able to go out and come in: i.e., discharge my duties among you. There is no inconsistency with <sup><0340></sup>Deuteronomy 34:7. Moses here adverts to his own age as likely to render him in future unequal to the active discharge of his office as leader of the people: the writer of Deuteronomy 34, one of Moses’ contemporaries, remarks of him that up to the close of life “his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated” (<sup><0310></sup>Deuteronomy 31:7); i.e. that he was to the last, in the judgment of others, in full possession of faculties and strength.

**Deuteronomy 31:7,8.** Moses hands over to Joshua that office as leader of the people, to which he had already been designated (<sup><0138></sup>Deuteronomy 1:38; <sup><0273></sup>Numbers 27:23). He assigns also to the Levitical priests and the elders, as the ecclesiastical and civil heads of the nation, the responsibility of teaching the law and enforcing its observance (<sup><0310></sup>Deuteronomy 31:10-13). Both these were symbolic acts, designed to mark the responsibility of the parties concerned after the death of Moses.

**Deuteronomy 31:11.** Compare the marginal references. It is not to be supposed that the whole of the Pentateuch was read, nor does the letter of the command require that it should be so. This reading could not be primarily designed for the information and instruction of the people, since it only took place once in seven years; but was evidently a symbolic transaction, intended, as were so many others, to impress on the people the conditions on which they held possession of their privileges and blessings.

**Deuteronomy 31:14-23.** The transaction recorded in these verses may be regarded as the solemn inauguration of Joshua to the office to which he had some time before (<sup><0272></sup>Numbers 27:22) been called, and his recognition in it by God, which were manifested by his being summoned into the tabernacle with Moses while the Lord appeared in the pillar of cloud (compare <sup><0425></sup>Numbers 11:25; 12:5).

**Deuteronomy 31:16.** The future apostasy of the people is announced in the presence of Joshua that the latter might be fully aware of the danger and strive in his day to avert it. This he faithfully did (compare Joshua 24:31); but we find him in his own last address to Israel repeating (Joshua 23:15,16) the self-same prediction and warning.

**Deuteronomy 31:19.** *A witness for me against them* i.e., an attestation from their own mouths at once of God's benefits, their own duties, and their deserts when they should fall away. Being in verse it would be the more easily learned and kept in memory. The use of songs for such didactic purposes was not unknown to the legislators of antiquity. Compare also the advice of Paul, "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Colossians 3:16).

**Deuteronomy 31:23.** *He gave* i.e., the Lord gave.

**Deuteronomy 31:24-29.** Moses completes the writing out of the book of the Law, and directs it to be placed by the ark of the covenant.

**Deuteronomy 31:24.** The "book" here spoken of would contain the whole Pentateuch up to this verse, and be "the Book of Moses," called generally by the Jews "the Law" (compare Matthew 22:40; Galatians 4:21).

**Deuteronomy 31:25.** *The Levites, which bare the ark* i.e., as in Deuteronomy 31:9, "the priests the sons of Levi." The non-priestly Levites could not so much as enter the sanctuary or touch the ark (compare Numbers 4:15). Though in the journeys through the wilderness the ark was borne by the non-priestly Kohathites, yet on occasions of a more solemn and public character it was carried by the priests themselves (Joshua 3:3ff, 4:9,10; 6:6,12; 8:33; 1 Kings 8:3).

**Deuteronomy 31:26.** *Put it in the side of the ark* Rather, by the side of the ark. The two tables of the Decalogue were in the ark (1 Kings 8:9); the Book of the Law was to be laid up in the holy of holies close by the ark of the covenant, probably in a chest. Compare 2 Kings 22:8.

**Deuteronomy 31:27.** *How much more after my death* Hence, Deuteronomy 31:24 and the rest of the book (with the exception of the song, Deuteronomy 31:19) must be regarded as a kind of appendix

added after Moses' death by another hand; though the Blessing (Deuteronomy 33) is of course to be regarded as a composition of Moses.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 32

### Deuteronomy 32. Song of Moses.

If <sup><6511></sup>Deuteronomy 32:1-3 be regarded as the introduction, and <sup><6516></sup>Deuteronomy 32:43 as the conclusion, the main contents of the song may be grouped under three heads, namely,

- (1) <sup><6524></sup>Deuteronomy 32:4-18, the faithfulness of God, the faithlessness of Israel;
- (2) <sup><6529></sup>Deuteronomy 32:19-33, the chastisement and the need of its infliction by God;
- (3) <sup><6534></sup>Deuteronomy 32:34-42, God's compassion upon the low and humbled state of His people.

The Song differs signally in diction and idiom from the preceding chapters; just as a lyrical passage is conceived in modes of thought wholly unlike those which belong to narrative or exhortation, and is uttered in different phraseology.

There are, however, in the Song numerous coincidences both in thoughts and words with other parts of the Pentateuch, and especially with Deuteronomy; while the resemblances between it and Psalm 90: "A Prayer of Moses," have been rightly regarded as important.

The Song has reference to a state of things which did not ensue until long after the days of Moses. In this it resembles other parts of Deuteronomy and the Pentateuch which no less distinctly contemplate an apostasy (e.g. <sup><6535></sup>Deuteronomy 28:15; <sup><6534></sup>Leviticus 26:14), and describe it in general terms. If once we admit the possibility that Moses might foresee the future apostasy of Israel, it is scarcely possible to conceive how such foresight could be turned to better account by him than by the writing of this Song. Exhibiting as it does God's preventing mercies, His people's faithlessness and ingratitude, God's consequent judgments, and the final and complete triumph of the divine counsels of grace, it forms the summary of all later Old Testament prophecies, and gives as it were the framework upon which they are laid out. Here as elsewhere the Pentateuch presents itself as the foundation of the religious life of Israel in after times. The currency of the

Song would be a standing protest against apostasy; a protest which might well check waverers, and warn the faithful that the revolt of others was neither unforeseen nor unprovided for by Him in whom they trusted.

That this Ode must on every ground take the very first rank in Hebrew poetry is universally allowed.

**Deuteronomy 32:1-3.** Introduction. Heaven and earth are here invoked, as elsewhere (see the marginal references), in order to impress on the hearers the importance of what is to follow.

**Deuteronomy 32:4.** *He is the Rock, his work is perfect* Rather, the Rock, perfect is his work. This epithet, repeated no less than five times in the Song (<sup><15215></sup>Deuteronomy 32:15,18,30,31), represents those attributes of God which Moses is seeking to enforce, immutability and impregnable strength. Compare the expression “the stone of Israel” in <sup><1424></sup>Genesis 49:24; and see <sup><1112></sup>1 Samuel 2:2; <sup><1912></sup>Psalms 18:2; <sup><1068></sup>Matthew 16:18; <sup><312></sup>John 1:42. Zur, the original of “Rock,” enters frequently into the composition of proper names of the Mosaic time, e.g., <sup><1005></sup>Numbers 1:5,6,10; 2:12; 3:35, etc. Our translators have elsewhere rendered it according to the sense “everlasting strength” (<sup><2314></sup>Isaiah 26:4), “the Mighty One” (<sup><2319></sup>Isaiah 30:29); in this chapter they have rightly adhered to the letter throughout.

**Deuteronomy 32:5.** Render: “It” (i.e. “the perverse and crooked generation”) “hath corrupted itself before Him (compare <sup><2004></sup>Isaiah 1:4); they are not His children, but their blemish:” i.e., the generation of evil-doers cannot be styled God’s children, but rather the shame and disgrace of God’s children. The other side of the picture is thus brought forward with a brevity and abruptness which strikingly enforces the contrast.

**Deuteronomy 32:6.** *Hath bought thee* Rather perhaps, “hath acquired thee for His own,” or “possessed thee:” compare the expression “a peculiar people,” margin “a purchased people,” in <sup><1111></sup>1 Peter 2:9.

**Deuteronomy 32:8.** That is, while nations were being constituted under God’s providence, and the bounds of their habitation determined under His government (compare <sup><4172></sup>Acts 17:26), He had even then in view the interests of His elect, and reserved a fitting inheritance “according to the number of the children of Israel;” i.e., proportionate to the wants of their population. Some texts of the Greek version have “according to the

number of the Angels of God;” following apparently not a different reading, but the Jewish notion that the nations of the earth are seventy in number (compare <sup><0100></sup>Genesis 10:1 note), and that each has its own guardian Angel (compare Eccclus. 17:17). This was possibly suggested by an apprehension that the literal rendering might prove invidious to the many Gentiles who would read the Greek version.

<sup><6214></sup>**Deuteronomy 32:14.** These verses set forth in figurative language the helpless and hopeless state of the nation when God took pity on it, and the love and care which He bestowed on it.

<sup><6210></sup>**Deuteronomy 32:10.** *In the waste howling wilderness* literally, “in a waste, the howling of a wilderness,” i.e., a wilderness in which wild beasts howl. The word for “waste” is that used in <sup><0100></sup>Genesis 1:2, and there rendered “without form.”

<sup><6211></sup>**Deuteronomy 32:11.** Compare <sup><0204></sup>Exodus 19:4. The “so,” which the King James Version supplies in the next verse, should be inserted before “spreadeth,” and omitted from <sup><6212></sup>Deuteronomy 32:12. The sense is, “so He spread out His wings, took them up,” etc.

<sup><6212></sup>**Deuteronomy 32:12.** *With him* i.e., with God. The Lord alone delivered Israel; Israel therefore ought to have served none other but Him.

<sup><6213></sup>**Deuteronomy 32:13.** i.e., God gave Israel possession of those commanding positions which carry with them dominion over the whole land (compare <sup><6229></sup>Deuteronomy 33:29), and enabled him to draw the richest provision out of spots naturally unproductive.

<sup><6214></sup>**Deuteronomy 32:14.** *Breed of Bashan* Bashan was famous for its cattle. Compare <sup><0212></sup>Psalms 22:12; <sup><6218></sup>Ezekiel 39:18.

*Fat of kidneys of wheat* i.e., the finest and most nutritious wheat. The fat of the kidneys was regarded as being the finest and tenderest, and was therefore specified as a part of the sacrificial animals which was to be offered to the Lord: compare <sup><0213></sup>Exodus 29:13, etc.

*The pure blood of the grape* Render, the blood of the grape, even wine. The Hebrew word seems (compare <sup><2712></sup>Isaiah 27:2) a poetical term for wine.



**Deuteronomy 32:15.** *Jesbarun* This word, found again only in Deuteronomy 33:5,26, and Isaiah 44:2, is not a diminutive but an appellative (containing an allusion to the root, “to be righteous”); and describes not the character which belonged to Israel in fact, but that to which Israel was called. Compare Numbers 23:21. The prefixing of this epithet to the description of Israel’s apostasy contained in the words next following is full of keen reproof.

**Deuteronomy 32:16.** *They provoked him to jealousy* The language is borrowed from the matrimonial relationship, as in Deuteronomy 31:16.

**Deuteronomy 32:17.** *Devils* Render, destroyers. The application of the word to the false gods points to the trait so deeply graven in all pagan worship, that of regarding the deities as malignant, and needing to be propitiated by human sufferings.

*Not to God* Rather, “not God,” i.e., which were not God; see the margin and Deuteronomy 32:21. Compare Deuteronomy 13:7; 29:25.

**Deuteronomy 32:19.** The anger of God at the apostasy of His people is stated in general terms in this verse; and the results of it are described, in words as of God Himself, in the next and following verses. These results consisted negatively in the withdrawal of God’s favor (Deuteronomy 32:20), and positively in the infliction of a righteous retribution.

*Daughters* The women had their full share in the sins of the people. Compare Isaiah 3:16ff; 32:9ff; Jeremiah 7:18; 44:15ff.

**Deuteronomy 32:20.** *I will see what their end shall be* Compare the similar expression in Genesis 37:20.

**Deuteronomy 32:21.** God would mete out to them the same measure as they had done to Him. Through chosen by the one God to be His own, they had preferred idols, which were no gods. So therefore would He prefer to His people that which was no people. As they had angered Him with their vanities, so would He provoke them by adopting in their stead those whom they counted as nothing. The terms, “not a people,” and “a foolish nation,” mean such a people as, not being God’s, would not be accounted a people at all (compare Ephesians 2:12; 1 Peter 2:10),

and such a nation as is destitute of that which alone can make a really “wise and understanding people” (<sup><6946></sup>Deuteronomy 4:6), namely, the knowledge of the revealed word and will of God (compare <sup><4018></sup>1 Corinthians 1:18-28).

<sup><6524></sup>**Deuteronomy 32:24.** *Burning heat* i.e., the fear of a pestilential disease. On the “four sore judgments,” famine, plague, noisome beasts, the sword, compare <sup><6852></sup>Leviticus 26:22; <sup><2452></sup>Jeremiah 15:2; <sup><2157></sup>Ezekiel 5:17; 14:21.

<sup><6526></sup>**Deuteronomy 32:26,27.** Rather, I would utterly disperse them, etc., were it not that I apprehended the provocation of the enemy, i.e., that I should be provoked to wrath when the enemy ascribed the overthrow of Israel to his own prowess and not to my judgments. Compare <sup><6038></sup>Deuteronomy 9:28,29; <sup><2510></sup>Ezekiel 20:9,14,22.

*Behave themselves strangely* Rather, misunderstand it, i.e., mistake the cause of Israel’s ruin.

<sup><6530></sup>**Deuteronomy 32:30.** The defeat of Israel would be due to the fact that God, their strength, had abandoned them because of their apostasy.

<sup><6531></sup>**Deuteronomy 32:31.** *Our enemies* i.e., the enemies of Moses and the faithful Israelites; the pagan, more especially those with whom Israel was brought into collision, whom Israel was commissioned to “chase,” but to whom, as a punishment for faithlessness, Israel was “sold,” (<sup><6530></sup>Deuteronomy 32:30). Moses leaves the decision, whether “their rock” (i.e. the false gods of the pagan to which the apostate Israelites had fallen away) or “our Rock” is superior, to be determined by the unbelievers themselves. For example, see <sup><1245></sup>Exodus 14:25; Numbers 23; 24; <sup><6119></sup>Joshua 2:9ff; <sup><6008></sup>1 Samuel 4:8; 5:7ff; <sup><1228></sup>1 Kings 20:28. That the pagan should thus be constrained to bear witness to the supremacy of Israel’s God heightened the folly of Israel’s apostasy.

<sup><6532></sup>**Deuteronomy 32:32.** *Their vine* i.e., the nature and character of Israel: compare for similar expressions <sup><6808></sup>Psalms 80:8,14; <sup><2121></sup>Jeremiah 2:21; <sup><2300></sup>Hosea 10:1.

*Sodom ... Gomorrah* Here, as elsewhere, and often in the prophets, emblems of utter depravity: compare <sup><2010></sup>Isaiah 1:10; <sup><2314></sup>Jeremiah 23:14.

*Gall* Compare <sup><6298></sup>Deuteronomy 29:18 note.

**Deuteronomy 32:35.** Rather: “Vengeance is mine and recompense, at the time when their foot slideth.

**Deuteronomy 32:36.** *Repent himself for* Rather, have compassion upon. The verse declares that God’s judgment of His people would issue at once in the punishment of the wicked, and in the comfort of the righteous.

*None shut up, or left* A proverbial phrase (compare <sup><1140></sup>1 Kings 14:10) meaning perhaps “married and single,” or “guarded and forsaken,” but signifying generally “all men of all sorts.”

**Deuteronomy 32:40-42.** Render: For I lift up my hand to heaven and say, As I live forever, if I whet, etc. On <sup><1530></sup>Deuteronomy 32:40, in which God is described as swearing by Himself, compare <sup><2362></sup>Isaiah 45:23; <sup><2275></sup>Jeremiah 22:5; <sup><3167></sup>Hebrews 6:17. The lifting up of the hand was a gesture used in making oath (compare <sup><1142></sup>Genesis 14:22; <sup><6105></sup>Revelation 10:5).

**Deuteronomy 32:42.** *From the beginning of revenges upon the enemy* Render, (drunk with blood) from the head (i.e. the chief) of the princes of the enemy.

**Deuteronomy 32:43.** *Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people* Some prefer the marginal rendering.

In this profound passage, there is shadowed forth the purpose of God to overrule:

- (1) the unbelief of the Jews to the bringing in of the Gentiles; and
- (2) the mercy shown to the Gentries to the eventual restoration of the Jews (compare <sup><5125></sup>Romans 11:25-36).

The Song closes as it began (<sup><1531></sup>Deuteronomy 32:1-3), with an invitation to praise. It has reached, through a long series of divine interpositions, its grandest theme in this call to the Gentiles, now pagan no more, to rejoice over God’s restored people, the Jews.

**Deuteronomy 32:44-52.** These verses were, no doubt, added by the author of the supplement to Deuteronomy. For the statements contained in them, consult the marginal references.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 33

The Blessing contains:

- (1) an Introduction, <sup><630></sup>Deuteronomy 33:1-5;
- (2) the Benedictions pronounced on the tribes individually, <sup><630></sup>Deuteronomy 33:6-25;
- (3) a Conclusion, <sup><630></sup>Deuteronomy 33:26-29.

It was no doubt spoken by Moses, probably on the same day and to the same assembly as the Song (<sup><630></sup>Deuteronomy 32:1-43), as soon as he received the reviewed notice of his approaching decease (<sup><630></sup>Deuteronomy 32:48), and just before he ascended Mount Nebo. Like the Blessing of Jacob (Genesis 49), to, which it has an intimate though independent correspondence throughout, it is the solemn farewell of the earthly head of the race. A comparison with Genesis (see the marginal references) will show how the blessings uttered by Moses over the several tribes partly repeat, partly enlarge and supplement, and sometimes modify or even reverse, the predictions of the dying Jacob.

This chapter, in striking contrast with the last, is pervaded by a tone of happy augury; and the total absence of warning and reproof has been rightly noted as indicating that Moses is here speaking of the ideal Israel, of the people of God as they might and would have been but for their perverseness, rather than foretelling what would in fact be the fate and fortunes of the twelve tribes. As the Song sets forth the calamities with which God's justice will visit Israel's fall, so does the Blessing describe the glory and greatness which would from His mercy crown Israel's faithfulness. The Song and the Blessing are therefore correspondent, and mutually supplementary. The form into which the Blessing is thrown exhibits the several tribes cooperating, each according to its special characteristics and circumstances, for the accomplishment of the national mission.

<sup><630></sup>**Deuteronomy 33:1.** The title "the man of God" in the Old Testament is one who is favored with direct revelations, but not necessarily an official prophet. The occurrence of the title here is no doubt a token that

the Blessing was not, as was the Song, transcribed by Moses himself. Compare <sup><6312></sup>Deuteronomy 31:27.

<sup><6312></sup>**Deuteronomy 33:2.** By “Seir” is to be understood the mountain-land of the Edomites, and by “mount Paran” the range which forms the northern boundary of the desert of Sinai (compare <sup><0146></sup>Genesis 14:6 note). Thus the verse forms a poetical description of the vast arena upon which the glorious manifestation of the Lord in the giving of the covenant took place.

*With ten thousands of saints* Render, from amidst ten thousands of holy ones: literally from myriads of holiness, i.e., holy Angels (compare <sup><3845></sup>Zechariah 14:5). God is represented as leaving heaven where He dwells amidst the host of the Angels (<sup><1129></sup>1 Kings 22:19) and descending in majesty to earth (<sup><3100></sup>Micah 1:3).

*A fiery law* more literally as in the margin, with perhaps an allusion to the pillar of fire (<sup><0232></sup>Exodus 13:21). The word is much disputed.

<sup><6313></sup>**Deuteronomy 33:3.** “The people” are the twelve tribes, not the Gentiles; and his saints refer to God’s chosen people just before spoken of. Compare <sup><6378></sup>Deuteronomy 7:18,21; <sup><0296></sup>Exodus 19:6; <sup><2103></sup>Daniel 7:8-21.

<sup><6315></sup>**Deuteronomy 33:5.** *He was king* i.e., not Moses but the Lord became king.

<sup><6316></sup>**Deuteronomy 33:6.** *Let not his men be few* literally, “a number,” i.e., “a small number,” such as could be easily counted (compare <sup><0330></sup>Genesis 34:30 note). While the verse promises that the tribe shall endure and prosper, yet it is so worded as to carry with it a warning. The Reubenites, occupied with their herds and flocks, appear, soon after the days of Joshua, to have lost their early energy, until in later times its numbers, even when counted with the Gadites and the half of Manasseh, were fewer than that of the Reubenites alone at the census of Numbers 1 (Compare <sup><1358></sup>1 Chronicles 5:18 with <sup><0412></sup>Numbers 1:20.) No judge, prophet, or national hero arose out of this tribe.

The tribe of Simeon, which would according to the order of birth come next, is not here named. This omission is explained by reference to the words of Jacob concerning Simeon (<sup><0140></sup>Genesis 49:7). This tribe with Levi was to be “scattered in Israel.” The fulfillment of this prediction was in the

case of Levi so ordered as to carry with it honor and blessing; but no such reversal of punishment was granted to Simeon. Rather had this latter tribe added new sins to those which Jacob denounced (compare <sup><0415></sup>Numbers 26:5 note). Accordingly, though very numerous at the Exodus, it had surprisingly diminished before the death of Moses (compare <sup><0412></sup>Numbers 1:22,23 with <sup><0412></sup>Numbers 26:12-14); and eventually it found territory adequate for its wants within the limits of another tribe, Judah. Compare <sup><0412></sup>Joshua 19:2-9.

<sup><0412></sup>**Deuteronomy 33:7.** *Bring him unto his people* Moses, taking up the promise of Jacob, prays that Judah, marching forth at the head of the tribes, might ever be brought back in safety and victory; and intimates that God would grant help to accomplish this.

<sup><0412></sup>**Deuteronomy 33:8.** *Thy holy one* i.e., Levi, regarded as the representative of the whole priestly and Levitical stock which sprang from him. The contrast between the tone of this passage and that of <sup><0415></sup>Genesis 49:5-7 is remarkable. Though the prediction of Jacob respecting the dispersion of this tribe held good, yet it was so overruled as to issue in honor and reward. The recovery of God's favor is to be traced to the faithfulness with which Moses and Aaron, who came of this tribe, served God in their high offices; and to the zeal and constancy which conspicuous persons of the tribe (e.g. Phinehas, <sup><0415></sup>Numbers 25:11ff), and the whole tribe itself (compare <sup><0412></sup>Exodus 32:26), manifested on critical occasions in supporting the leaders of the people. The same reasons led to Levi's being selected for the special service of God in the sanctuary (<sup><0412></sup>Deuteronomy 10:8ff, and <sup><0415></sup>Numbers 8:5ff); and for the office of instructing their brethren in the knowledge of the Law. The events at Massah and Meribah, the one occurring at the beginning, the other toward the end, of the forty years' wandering, serve to represent the whole series of trials by which God proved and exercised the faith and obedience of this chosen tribe.

<sup><0412></sup>**Deuteronomy 33:9.** *Who said unto his father and to his mother* Compare <sup><0417></sup>Matthew 10:37; <sup><0416></sup>Luke 14:26.

<sup><0412></sup>**Deuteronomy 33:11.** *Smite through the loins* Rather, strike the loins, i.e., the seat of their strength.

<sup><0412></sup>**Deuteronomy 33:12.** *He shall dwell between his shoulders* i.e., be supported by God as a son who is carried by his father (compare

<sup><0131></sup>Deuteronomy 1:31). Benjamin was especially beloved of his father (<sup><0158></sup>Genesis 35:18; 44:20); Moses now promises no less love to him from God Himself.

<sup><0313></sup>**Deuteronomy 33:13-17.** Comparing the words of Moses with those of Jacob, it will be seen that the patriarch dwells with emphasis on the severe conflicts which Joseph, i.e., Ephraim and Manasseh, would undergo (compare <sup><0423></sup>Genesis 49:23,24); while the lawgiver seems to look beyond, and to behold the two triumphant and established in their power.

<sup><0317></sup>**Deuteronomy 33:17.** Rather: “The first-born of his” (i.e. Joseph’s) “bullock is his glory”: the reference being to Ephraim, who was raised by Jacob to the honors of the firstborn (<sup><0430></sup>Genesis 48:20, and is here likened to the firstling of Joseph’s oxen, i.e., of Joseph’s offspring. The ox is a common emblem of power and strength.

<sup><0318></sup>**Deuteronomy 33:18,19.** Zebulun possessed a commodious sea-shore and the fisheries of the Lake of Tiberias: and was therefore to thrive by commerce, and to rejoice in his “going out,” i.e., in his mercantile enterprises. Issachar possessed a fertile inland district, and would therefore dwell at home and prosper in agriculture. Both tribes distinguished themselves in the contest with Jabin (compare <sup><0754></sup>Judges 5:14,15,18): and of Zebulun it is particularly noted that it produced the officers and tacticians who led and marshalled the host which vanquished Sisera (see <sup><0754></sup>Judges 5:14, and compare <sup><1323></sup>1 Chronicles 12:33).

<sup><0319></sup>**Deuteronomy 33:19.** *Unto the mountain* Compare <sup><0257></sup>Exodus 15:17.

*Sacrifices of righteousness* Sacrifices offered in a righteous spirit, and therefore well pleasing to God (compare <sup><1905></sup>Psalms 4:5; 51:19).

*Treasures hid in the sand* The riches of the seas in general. However, it is noteworthy that the sand of these coasts was especially valuable in the manufacture of glass; and glass was a precious thing in ancient times (compare <sup><0317></sup>Job 28:17). The murex from which the highly-prized purple dye was extracted, was also found here. A typical reference to the conversion of the Gentiles is strongly suggested by <sup><2105></sup>Isaiah 60:5,6,16; 66:11,12.

**Deuteronomy 33:20.** i.e., Blessed be God who shall grant to Gad a spacious territory. Compare the blessing of Shem (<sup><0005></sup>Genesis 9:26).

*With the crown* Rather, yea, the crown. The warlike character of this tribe is shown by their leading the van in the long campaigns of Joshua (compare <sup><0012></sup>Joshua 4:12,13; 22:1-4). Compare also <sup><0358></sup>1 Chronicles 5:18-22; 12:8ff, and the acts of Jehu, the Gadite, in 2 Kings 9; 10.

**Deuteronomy 33:21.** The first fruits of the conquest made by Israel were assigned to Gad and Reuben by Moses, at their own request.

*Because ... seated* Render, because there was the leader's portion reserved, i.e., there was reserved the fitting portion for Gad as a leader in war.

*And he came ...* i.e., he joined the other leaders to fulfill the commands of God respecting the conquest of Canaan (compare <sup><0327></sup>Numbers 32:17,21,32; <sup><0014></sup>Joshua 1:14). Moses regards the promise of the Gadites to do this as already redeemed.

**Deuteronomy 33:22.** Dan shall be like a lion which leaps forth from his covert in Bashan. Compare Cant. 4:8.

**Deuteronomy 33:23.** *Satisfied with favor* Compare <sup><0421></sup>Genesis 49:21 and note.

*The west and the south* i.e., taking the words as referring not to geographical position but to natural characteristics, "the sea and the sunny district." The possession of Naphtali included nearly the whole west coast of the Sea of Galilee, the Lake of Merom, the modern Bahr el Hulch, and the well watered district near the springs of Jordan. It contained some of the grandest scenery and some of the most fertile land in Palestine. Josephus speaks of the shore of Gennesaret as "an earthly paradise;" and Porter describes it as "the garden of Palestine." The modern name for this district, "land of good tidings," is significant.

**Deuteronomy 33:24.** Rather, "Blessed above the sons" (i.e. of Jacob-most blessed among the sons of Jacob) "be Asher; let him be the favored one of his brethren," i.e., the one favored of God. The plenty with which this tribe should be blessed is described under the figure of dipping the foot in oil (compare the marginal reference).



**Deuteronomy 33:25.** The strength and firmness of Asher is as if he were shod with iron and brass (compare <sup><6015></sup>Revelation 1:15). The territory of this tribe probably contained iron and copper. Compare the marginal reference.

*As thy days, so shall thy strength be* i.e., “thy strength” (some prefer “thy rest”) “shall be continued to thee as long as thou shalt live: thou shalt never know feebleness and decay.”

**Deuteronomy 33:26.** Rather, There is none like unto God, O Jeshurun! See marginal reference and note.

**Deuteronomy 33:27.** *Thy refuge* Rather, “dwellingplace.” Compare <sup><9911></sup>Psalm 90:1; 91:9.

**Deuteronomy 33:28.** *The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine* The King James Version does not preserve the symmetry of the clauses. Render it: “Israel shall dwell in safety; alone shall the fountain of Jacob be” (compare <sup><9831></sup>Psalm 68:26; <sup><2801></sup>Isaiah 48:1); “in a land,” etc.

**Deuteronomy 33:29.** *Be found liars unto thee* Perhaps rather, “cringe before thee.” The verb means to show a feigned or forced obedience: see the marginal references.

*Tread upon their high places* i.e., occupy the commanding positions in their land, and so have it in subjection.

## NOTES ON DEUTERONOMY 34

**Deuteronomy 34:1.** *Dan* This can hardly be the Dan (Dan-Laish) of Judges 18:27ff, which was not in Gilead. It is probably a town of this name which stood in the north of Peraea; perhaps the same as Dan-jaan, 2 Samuel 24:6; and the Dan of Genesis 14:14.

**Deuteronomy 34:3.** *Unto Zoar* Compare Genesis 19:22.

**Deuteronomy 34:4.** *I have caused thee to see it* The sight thus afforded to Moses, like that of “all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time” (Luke 4:5), was no doubt supernatural.

**Deuteronomy 34:5.** *According to the word of the LORD* It denotes that Moses died, not because his vital powers were exhausted, but by the sentence of God, and as a punishment for his sin. Compare Deuteronomy 32:51.

**Deuteronomy 34:6.** *No man knoweth of his sepulchre* Hardly, lest the grave of Moses should become an object of superstitious honor, because the Jews were not prone to this particular form of error. Bearing in mind the appearance of Moses at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-10), and what is said by Jude (Jude 1:9), we may conjecture that Moses after death passed into the same state with Enoch and Elijah; and that his grave could not be found because he was shortly translated (transported) from it.

**Deuteronomy 34:9.** *Spirit of wisdom* The practical wisdom of the ruler is especially meant.

**Deuteronomy 34:10.** *There arose not a prophet since in Israel* Words like these can only have been written some time, but not necessarily a long time, after the death of Moses. They refer more particularly to the wonders performed by the hand of Moses at the exodus and in the desert; and do but re-echo the declaration of God Himself (Numbers 12:6ff). They may naturally enough be attributed to one of Moses’ successors, writing perhaps soon after the settlement of the people in Canaan.