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DEUTERONOMY 29:1 These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.

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A recapitulation of God's gracious dealings with Israel, Deu 29:1-8. An exhortation to obedience, and to enter into covenant with their God, that they and their posterity may be established in the good land, Deu 29:9-15. They are to remember the abominations of Egypt, and to avoid them, Deu 29:16, Deu 29:17. He who hardens his heart, when he hears these curses, shall be utterly consumed, Deu 29:18-21. Their posterity shall be astonished at the desolations that shall fall upon them, Deu 29:22, Deu 29:23; shall inquire the reason, and shall be informed that the Lord has done thus to them because of their disobedience and idolatry, Deu 29:24-28. A caution against prying too curiously into the secrets of the Divine providence, and to be contented with what God has revealed, Deu 29:29.

#### Verse 1

These are the words of the covenant - This verse seems properly to belong to the preceding chapter, as a widely different subject is taken up at Deu 29:2 of this; and it is distinguished as the 69th verse in some of the most correct copies of the Hebrew Bible.

Commanded Moses to make - לכרת *lichroth*, to cut, alluding to the covenant sacrifice which was offered on the occasion and divided, as is explained, Gen 15:18 (note).

Beside the covenant which he made - in Horeb - What is mentioned here is an additional institution to the ten words given on Horeb; and the curses denounced here are different from those denounced against the transgressors of the decalogue.

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DEUTERONOMY 29:2 Moses called to all Israel, and said to them: Your eyes have seen all that the LORD did in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land;

DEUTERONOMY 29:3 the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders.

DEUTERONOMY 29:4 But the LORD has not given you a heart to know, eyes to see, and ears to hear, to this day.

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#### Verse 4

The Lord hath not given you a heart, etc. - Some critics read this verse interrogatively: And hath not God given you a heart, etc.? because they suppose that God could not reprehend them for the non-performance of a duty, when he had neither given them a mind to perceive the obligation of it, nor strength to perform it, had that obligation been known. Though this is strictly just, yet there is no need for the interrogation, as the words only imply that they had not such a heart, etc., not because God had not given them all the means of knowledge, and helps of his grace and Spirit, which were necessary; but they had not made a faithful use of their advantages, and therefore they had not that wise, loving, and obedient heart which they otherwise might have had. If they had had such a heart, it would have been God's gift, for he is the author of all good; and that they had not such a heart was

a proof that they had grieved his Spirit, and abused the grace which he had afforded them to produce that gracious change, the want of which is here deplored. Hence God himself is represented as grieved because they were unchanged and disobedient: "O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children for ever!" See Deu 5:29 (note), and the note there.

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DEUTERONOMY 29:5 I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not grown old on you, and your shoes have not grown old on your feet.

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Verse 5

Your clothes are not waxen old - See on Deu 8:4 (note).

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DEUTERONOMY 29:6 You have not eaten bread, neither have you drunk wine or strong drink; that you may know that I am the LORD your God.

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Verse 6

Ye have not eaten bread, etc. - That is, ye have not been supported in an ordinary providential way; I have been continually working miracles for you, that ye might know that I am the Lord. Thus we find that God had furnished them with all the means of this knowledge, and that the means were ineffectual, not because they were not properly calculated to answer God's gracious purpose, but because the people were not workers with God; consequently they received the grace of God in vain. See 2Cor 6:1.

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DEUTERONOMY 29:7 When you came to this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out against us to battle, and we struck them.

DEUTERONOMY 29:8 We took their land, and gave it for an inheritance to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half-tribe of the Manassites.

DEUTERONOMY 29:9 Therefore keep the words of this covenant and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do.

DEUTERONOMY 29:10 All of you stand this day in the presence of the LORD your God; your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers, even all the men of Israel,

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Verse 10

Ye stand - all of you before the Lord - They were about to enter into a covenant with God; and as a covenant implies two parties contracting, God is represented as being present, and they and all their families, old and young, come before him.

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DEUTERONOMY 29:11 your little ones, your wives, and the foreigners who are in the midst of your camps, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water;

DEUTERONOMY 29:12 that you may enter into the covenant of the LORD your God, and into his oath, which the LORD your God makes with you this day;

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Verse 12

That thou shouldest enter - לעבר leaber, to pass through, that is, between the separated parts of the covenant sacrifice. See Gen 15:18 (note).

And into his oath - Thus we find that in a covenant were these seven particulars:

1. The parties about to contract were considered as being hitherto separated.
  2. They now agree to enter into a state of close and permanent amity.
  3. They meet together in a solemn manner for this purpose.
  4. A sacrifice is offered to God on the occasion, for the whole is a religious act.
  5. The victim is separated exactly into two equal parts, the separation being in the direction of the spine; and those parts are laid opposite to each other, sufficient room being allowed for the contracting parties to pass between them.
  6. The contracting parties meet in the victim, and the conditions of the covenant by which they are to be mutually bound are recited.
  7. An oath is taken by these parties that they shall punctually and faithfully perform their respective conditions, and thus the covenant is made and ratified. See Jer 34:18, Jer 34:19, and the notes on Gen 6:18 (note); Gen 15:18 (note); Exo 29:45 (note); Leviticus 26 (note).
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DEUTERONOMY 29:13 that he may establish you this day as his people, and that he may be your God, as he spoke to you, and as he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

DEUTERONOMY 29:14 Neither do I make this covenant and this oath with you only,

DEUTERONOMY 29:15 but with those who stand here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with those who are not here with us this day

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Verse 15

Him that standeth here - The present generation. Him that is not here - all future generations of this people.

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DEUTERONOMY 29:16 (for you know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the midst of the nations through which you passed;

DEUTERONOMY 29:17 and you have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them);

DEUTERONOMY 29:18 lest there should be among you man, woman, family, or tribe whose heart turns away this day from the LORD our God, to go to serve the gods of those nations; lest there should be among you a root that produces bitter poison;

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Verse 18

A root that beareth gall and wormwood - That is, as the apostle expresses it, Heb 3:12, An evil heart of unbelief departing from the living God; for to this place he evidently refers. It may also signify false doctrines, or idolatrous persons among themselves.

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DEUTERONOMY 29:19 and it happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, "I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart, to destroy the moist with the dry."

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Verse 19

To add drunkenness to thirst - A proverbial expression denoting the utmost indulgence in all sensual gratifications.

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DEUTERONOMY 29:20 The LORD will not pardon him, but then the LORD's anger and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and all of the curse that is written in this book will fall on him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under the sky.

DEUTERONOMY 29:21 The LORD will set him apart for evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all of the curses of the covenant that is written in this book of the law.

DEUTERONOMY 29:22 The generation to come, your children who will rise up after you, and the foreigner who will come from a far land, will say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses with which the LORD has made it sick;

DEUTERONOMY 29:23 and that all of its land is sulfur, salt, and burning, that it is not sown, doesn't produce, nor does any grass grow in it, like the overthrow of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath;

DEUTERONOMY 29:24 even all the nations will say, "Why has the LORD done thus to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?"

DEUTERONOMY 29:25 Then men will say, "Because they abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt,

DEUTERONOMY 29:26 and went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods that they didn't know, and that he had not given to them.

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Verse 26

Gods - whom he had not given unto them - This is an unhappy translation. Houbigant renders the original words *וְלוֹ חֵלֶק לַיהוָה* *velo chalak lahem, et quibuscum nulla eis societas*, "And with whom they had no society;" and falls unmercifully on Le Clerc because he had translated it, From whom they had received no benefits. I must differ from both these great men, because I think they differ from the text. *חֵלֶק* *chalak* signifies a portion, lot, inheritance, and God is frequently represented in Scripture as the portion or inheritance of his people. Here, therefore, I think the original should be rendered, And there was no portion to them, that is, the gods they served could neither supply their wants nor save their souls - they were no portion.

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DEUTERONOMY 29:27 Therefore the LORD's anger was kindled against this land, to bring on it all the curses that are written in this book.

DEUTERONOMY 29:28 the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and thrust them into another land, as at this day."

DEUTERONOMY 29:29 The secret things belong to the LORD our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

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#### Verse 29

The secret things belong unto the Lord, etc. - This verse has been variously translated. Houbigant renders it thus: *Quae apud Dominum nostrum abscondita sunt, nobis ea filiisque nostris palam facta sunt ad multas aetates*, "The things which were hidden with the Lord our God, are made manifest to us and our children for many generations." I am not satisfied with this interpretation, and find that the passage was not so understood by any of the ancient versions. The simple general meaning seems to be this: "What God has thought proper to reveal, he has revealed; what he has revealed is essential to the well-being of man, and this revelation is intended not for the present time merely, nor for one people, but for all succeeding generations. The things which he has not revealed concern not man but God alone, and are therefore not to be inquired after." Thus, then, the things that are hidden belong unto the Lord, those that are revealed belong unto us and our children. But possibly the words here refer to the subjects of these chapters, as if he had said, "Apostasy from God and his truth is possible. When a national apostasy among us may take place, is known only to God; but he has revealed himself to us and our children that we may do all the words of this law, and so prevent the dreadful evils that shall fall on the disobedient."

The Jews have always considered these verses as containing subjects of the highest importance to them, and have affixed marks to the original *לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ* *lanu ulebaneynu*, "to Us and to our Children," in order to fix the attention of the reader on truths which affect them individually, and not them only, but the whole of their posterity.