

it means. All who have taken any Greek know that “nomos” means law. And you know that “deutero” means second. So we have here a very briefly given “second law.” Of course, that is too brief; it is telegram language, yet it gives an idea of the contents if you throw it out as the second presentation of the law, or the second giving. I think “presentation” is better than “giving”: the second presentation of the law. You might say, the repetition of the law. That is an excellent name for this book, Deuteronomy. The Hebrew name for the book is “These are the words.” That also is a good name because in Hebrew “words” often means “commands.” “These are the commands.”

The verse goes on, “These are the words which Moses spoke unto the people in the plains of Moab over across the Jordan.” In other words, it is the farewell address of Moses. “The Farewell Address of Moses” would be an excellent title for the book. For people who are fairly familiar with Greek, Deuteronomy is a good title, but it is very silly to simply copy the Greek letters into English letters and quote it. There is probably not one person in a thousand in our churches who even has any idea of what this word means. It is very foolish to keep a name in a foreign tongue this way. Paul speaks against it in the New Testament. He says that there is no point in speaking in a foreign tongue that can not be understood, and that is exactly what we do when we use Greek words in the names Deuteronomy and Genesis instead of using English, particularly when we translate the name of Numbers into English — in the one case where it does not fit at all.

It is equally wrong to try to speak King James (or Elizabethan) English in our prayers to God, as if He could understand the language of three hundred years ago better than He can understand the language of today. In addressing God we thus use the terms that the Bible uses to address Satan and to address all kinds of wicked people, thinking that in some way it is a bit more reverent simply because it is the way people talked three hundred years ago!

This Greek word, Deuteronomy, is a good title, if it is either spoken by a Greek or translated into the language of the person who is referring to it. The Hebrew word in this case also is a good title, but the Greeks gave it a title describing the book, so we must give them