



Volume XXXV. No. 8 MELBOURNE, AUGUST, 1952 Price— Fourpence Halfpenny

“She Hath Done What She Could.” (Mark 14 :8.)

THE sixth day previous to the Passover was the Jewish Sabbath, which ended at 6 o'clock in the evening, and it is possible that it was at that time that our Lord and His disciples were entertained by Martha and Mary at “the house of Simon the leper”—probably their father; Lazarus, their brother, whom our Lord raised from the dead was also one of the table-guests.

We may suppose that this was no ordinary supper, but in the nature of a feast or banquet in our Lord's honour. Nevertheless, one incident connected with it so outshone all its other features that the narrator mentions it alone—the anointing of our Lord with the “spikenard ointment, very costly.” Our Lord Himself declared, “Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.” (Mark 14:9.) It is entirely proper, therefore, that we should examine with some particularity the details of this service so highly esteemed by the Master.

An authority on the ointment used, states, “By the ointment we are to understand rather a liquid perfume than what we commonly know as ointment.” The alabaster box was rather in the shape of a flask or vase, and the breaking of the box (Mark 14:3) signifies the opening of its tyings and seals by which the precious odors were confined. Judas' words of dissatisfaction furnish us a clue respecting the costliness of this perfume, for he says that it “might have been sold for three hundred denarii.” A denarius, translated “penny” in verse 5, is represented as being the average daily wages at that time—“a penny (denarius) a day.” (Matt. 20:2.) If we compare these values with present money values, counting farm labour at even £ 1 a day, the three hundred denarii would be equivalent in wages to £ 300 of our money. Thus we see that the perfume was indeed “very costly.” There was nearly a pint of the perfume, a Roman pound being twelve ounces. Nor need we question the possibility of perfumes being so expensive, for even today we have a counterpart in value in the attar of roses made in the Far East. It is claimed that four hundred thousand full-grown roses are used to produce one ounce of this perfume, which, in its purity, sells at a high figure, and we must realise that Mary used twelve ounces of this precious perfume. It is said that Nero was the first of the Emperors to indulge in the use of costly perfumes for his anointing: but one much more worthy of tribute, homage and anointing with a sweet perfume was the “Prince of the kings of the earth,” whom Mary had the honour to anoint.

Judas was first to object to this as a waste, the difficulty with him being that he loved the Lord too little and money too much. The amount that love is willing to expend for others is, to some extent at least, a

measure of the love. Another Evangelist informs us that several of the disciples, under the influence of Judas' words, took the same view of the matter, and spoke disapprovingly of Mary's action. The Apostle John, however, takes this opportunity to throw a little sidelight upon the character of Judas, more than is apparent in the common translation of verse 6. His declaration is, "Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the box, and stole what things were deposited in it."—Diaglott.

Our Lord's words, "Let her alone!" are in the nature of a severe reproof to those whose sentiments of love had no other measure than that of money. It was indeed true that there were plenty of poor, and there would still be plenty of poor, and plenty of opportunities to minister to them; but the opportunity to specially honour the Lord, and to pour upon Him the fragrant odors so beautifully expressive of Mary's love and devotion, would not be for long, and our Lord declares that the circumstances fully justified the costly expenditure. We may take from this beautiful incident, then, that blessings of a spiritual kind, upon God's spiritual children was the main lesson intended by our Lord; as though He would say—"there will be the whole thousand years of the Kingdom in which to do good to the poor—"but me ye have not always." No, our Lord's days were few, and so are the days of His true followers upon whom blessings may be bestowed, as unto the Lord Himself. Our Master showed Himself out of sympathy with the sentiments which balance themselves too accurately with money values. Moreover, we may esteem that in many instances like the one here recorded, the persons who are so careful lest money should be spent except for the poor are often like Judas, so

avaricious that whatever money gets into their possession very little of it gets to the poor.

On the contrary, it is the deep, loving, benevolent hearts, like that of Mary, which delight in costly sacrifices at times upon God's spiritual children, which also are likely to be deeply sympathetic and helpful to the physically poor. And in our ministrations to others we are not to forget that money is not the only thing of which people are sorely in need— some need love and sympathy, who do not need money. Our Lord was one of these: His own heart, full of love, found comparatively little companionship in the more or less sordid minds of even the noblest of the fallen race represented amongst His apostles. In Mary He seemed to find the depth of love and devotion which was to Him an odor of sweet incense, of refreshment, of reinvigoration, a tonic; and Mary apparently appreciated, more than did others, the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the Master's character; she not only delighted to sit at His feet to learn of Him, but now delighted, at a great cost, to give Him some manifestation of her devotion, her love.

She poured the perfume first upon our Lord's head (Mark 14:3), the usual custom, and then the remainder she poured upon His feet. But the Apostle John, in recording the matter, seems to have forgotten entirely the anointing of our Lord's head, so deeply was He impressed with the still more expressive devotion manifested in the anointing of the feet and the wiping of them with the hairs of her head. It is indeed a picture of love—a devotion well worthy of being told as a memorial.

Some one has said: "She took 'woman's chief ornament' and devoted it to wiping the travel-stained feet of her Teacher; she devoted the best she had to even the least honourable service for Him. It was the strongest possible expression of her love and devotion. She gave her choicest treasures in the most self-devoted manner. She was bashful and retiring, and could not speak her feelings, and therefore she expressed them in this manner."

We are not surprised to learn that the whole house was filled with the odor; and we doubt not that the odor remained for a long time; but far more precious than that was the sweet odor of Mary's heart-affections, which the Lord accepted and will never forget, and the sweet odor of her devotion which has come down through the centuries to us, bringing blessing to all true hearts who have honoured her service and desired to emulate her conduct.

It is not our privilege to come into personal contact with our dear Redeemer, but we have, nevertheless, many opportunities for doing that which to some extent will correspond to Mary's act—it is our privilege to anoint the Lord's "brethren" with the sweet perfume of love, sympathy, joy and peace, and the more costly this may be as respects our self-denials, the more precious it will be in the estimation of our Elder Brother, who declared that in proportion as we do or do not unto His brethren, we do or do not unto Him. Moreover, He represents these "brethren" in a figure as "members of His body;" and from this standpoint we see that, while it is not our privilege to pour the perfume upon the Head of the Body, now highly exalted far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named—next to the Father—it is our privilege to pour the perfume upon the feet of Christ—the last living members of His church of this Gospel Age.

We know not to what extent the closing years of this Gospel age may correspond to the closing days of our Lord's ministry—we know not how similar may be the experiences of the "feet" of the body of Christ to the experiences of the Head of the body: we do know, however, that in any event it is our blessed privilege to comfort one another, to encourage one another, to sustain one another, in the trials incident to our "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." (Col. 1:24.) And to whatever extent we would improve these opportunities, as did Mary, we must first appreciate them as she did.

Nothing in this suggestion is intended to imply any neglect of the members of our natural families "according to the flesh;" attentions to these are proper always, and are generally understood, and should more and more be appreciated and used in proportion as the Lord's people receive freely and fully of His spirit of love—kindness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering. But we emphasize that which the Scriptures emphasize, namely, that our interest and efforts are not to be confined to those of fleshly tie, but, on the contrary, are to be "especially to- the household of faith."

(Gal. 6:10.) There will be other and future opportunities of doing good to mankind in general, but the opportunity for serving "the body of Christ" is limited to the present age.

Respecting this propriety of doing good to others—expressing our love by our conduct, as well as by our words to the members of our families as well as to the members of the body of Christ, we quote the words of another: "The sweetest perfume that the home circle ever knows arises from deeds of loving service which its members do for each other. The sweetest perfumes of our homes do not arise from elegant furniture, soft carpets, elegant pictures, or luxurious viands. Many a home, having all these, is pervaded by an atmosphere as tasteless and odorless as bouquets of waxen flowers."

Another has said: "If my friends have alabaster boxes full of fragrant perfume of sympathy and affection laid away, which they intend to break over my body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours and open them, that I might be refreshed and cheered with them while I need them . . . I would rather have a plain coffin without a flower, a funeral without a eulogy, than a life without the sweetness of love and sympathy . . . Flowers on the coffin cast no fragrance backward on the weary road."

“Suffer Little Children to Come Unto Me.”

The children wanted to come to Jesus. Their were attracted to Him. There must have been something very fascinating about Jesus in His personality, the beauty of His spirit, the charm of His conversation, the love He bore to all. It is no wonder that they came to Him.

Are we presenting the true spirit of the Master in our dealings with the children? Can they see anything of Him in us? Are we truly reflecting His character, so that there is something in us, too, which attracts them?

“Mother,” a little child once said, how old must I be before I can become a Christian?”

The wise mother answered: “How old will you have to be before you love me?”

“Why, mother, I have always loved you!” was the child’s reply.

And as no child is too young to love the Saviour, our lives and characters should be so beautiful that they show to the child what the love of Jesus is.

“I know how anxious thought can press,
I know the weight of carefulness;
But now I know the sweet reward
Of casting all upon the Lord.
No longer bearing what He bears,
Because I know that Jesus cares.”

—F. R. Havergal.

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST’S KINGDOM,

(Monthly) 4/6 (85 cents) per annum, post paid.

Published by the Berean Bible Institute,

Ermington Place, Kew, E.4, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord’s Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

A Cross (x) on the wrapper indicates that the Subscription to “Peoples Paper” is overdue,

“After this Manner Pray Ye.”

The model prayer which Jesus gave His disciples is grandly simple. It opens with a reverent acknowledgment of the greatness and sacredness of the Heavenly Father’s name, or character. The petition, “Thy Kingdom come,” is an acknowledgment of faith in God’s promise that eventually His Kingdom will be established on earth, and an expression of the suppliant’s heart sympathy with God and righteousness.

“Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in Heaven,” signifies full confidence that Satan will be bound; that the reign of Sin and Death will end; that the knowledge of God’s glory will fill the earth and that all wilful opposers will be destroyed.

The request for daily bread implies our realization that our sustenance, both temporal and spiritual, must come from God. The failure to specify the kind of food implies full resignation to Divine providence.

When the justified pray, “Forgive us our trespasses,” they do not refer to original sin; for they were freed from it in justification. Trespasses signify those unintentional imperfections which appertain to all and which Jesus’ followers strive to overcome. The request that we shall have forgiveness as we are forgiving towards those who trespass against us is a reminder of the general terms of our relationship with God. We cannot grow in grace except as we cultivate the spirit of love—a forgiving, generous spirit in our dealing with others.

“Abandon us not in temptation” indicates that we are aware that we are surrounded by the powers of evil, which we as New Creatures cannot withstand successfully without Divine aid. “Deliver us from the Evil One” is a recognition that Satan is our great Adversary; and that we are on the alert to resist him, yet realise our need of Divine assistance. “We are not ignorant of his (Satan’s) devices”; “We wrestle not against flesh and blood (merely), but against wicked spirits in high positions.

Jesus admonishes that prayer be fervent—not Merely formal words. He gave the illustration of the Man who was finally moved by the earnestness ‘of his friend’s petition. So we are not to think that our prayers are unheeded. Although we are hot hastening the Kingdom by our prayers, yet we are entering a blessing of rest through faith in God’s promises.

What God really wishes to give His people is His holy spirit. Because of the imperfections of the flesh none of us can be filled with the spirit at first. But we can come to God, desiring to be in His character likeness; and to our knocking the door will be opened. Nor should we fear; our Father delights to give His spirit to those who seek it.

“Covet Earnestly the Best.”

God has His best things for the few
Whose love shall stand the test ;

God has His second choice for those
Who do not crave His best.

It is not always open sin
That risks the promised rest ;

A good more often is the foe
That keeps us from the best.

“Our Lord’s Great Prophecy.”—Most helpful explanation of this timely subject, 50 pages, paper cover, price 9d.; 6 copies for 4/-.

“The Plan of God—in Brief.”—This 104-page booklet covering the main features of God’s Plan of the Ages. Most helpful; heavy paper cover, price 1/-; 6 copies for 5/-.

“The Lord is My Shepherd.”—The beautiful 23rd is explained in a very helpful manner in this booklet of 24 pages. Price 5d. per copy; 6 copies for 2/-, posted.

“Peace Desired—War Continues.” --In this booklet of 24 pages the present world outlook is reviewed, and the only hope for peace set forth in the light of God’s Word. Price 5d. per copy ; 6 copies for 2/-, posted.

“Do the Dead Know Anything”—The full and satisfactory answer to this question is given from the Bible in this 24- page booklet. Price 5d. per copy; 6 copies for 2/-, posted.

Perth Meetings.

Friends in Western Australia are advised of a new address for the regular Sunday meetings at 3.30 p.m. and 6.15 p.m., namely-9 Howard Street, Perth.

Concordances

Some copies of Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance are now on hand with strong cloth binding. While the price is greatly increased, these Concordances contain such a wealth of information with the meanings of all Hebrew and Greek words used in the Bible, and are really essential for detailed study of the Scriptures. The present price is 17/1216. plus freight

That which enables us to know and understand aright the things of God, must be a living principle of holiness within us. The sun of truth never shines into any unpurged souls . . . He that will find truth must seek it with a free judgment and a sanctified mind.—John Smith (1616-1652).

Building a Disposition.

“Well, I do hope that when I reach the age when I have to be taken care of, I shall be willing to let other people have their way instead of insisting upon my own and making it hard for everybody else,” said a clear, decided voice as three women parted at the street corner.

They had been discussing the troubles of an acquaintance. As the speaker departed, the other two looked at each other with a significant smile. This friend of theirs was one who had great faith in her own wisdom.

“I am afraid that virtue does not develop suddenly,” remarked one. “I suspect that the person who is to be gentle and unselfishly considerate in old age has to begin to cultivate that spirit much further back.”

That is the story of so many of our failures to attain our ideals. We do not begin to practice their graces early enough. The strong, self-controlled, useful manhood or womanhood does not grow naturally from a careless, self-indulged youth, and the beautiful old age that is a benediction is not likely to spring from the hasty, domineering spirit that has been allowed to rule middle life.

Character is a garden whose gracious flowering calls for early planting.

Why Doubt the Resurrection?

Who would imagine that from a single grain of seed a huge tree would rise up, unless he had it as a certain fact by experience? In the extreme minuteness of a grain where is the wood buried, the roughness of the bark, the greenness of the root, the savour of the fruit, the sweetness of the scents, the variety of the colours, the softness of the leaves? Yet because we know this by experience, we do not doubt that all these spring from a single grain of seed. Where, then, is the difficulty that dust shall return into limbs, when we have every day before our eyes the power of the Creator, who in a marvellous manner from a grain creates wood and fruit.—S. Gregory.

Convention Notes.

Copies of Notes on the Adelaide Convention are now available, and are supplied free upon request.

Proved.

There is never a trial that comes to you but what is ordered by the loving hand of thy Father. It is sent to thee to prove thy faith, not to try thee. Accept it of His hand as a cherished gem, realising that when your faith is perfected you shall come forth as gold, made meet to adorn the Kingdom of thy Lord.—P.E.M.

It may be thou art entered into the cloud which will bring a gentle shower to refresh thy sorrows.—J.T.

Moses, the Servant of God

(Convention Address)

WHEN we review the life of Moses, we stand amazed at the way Divine providence overrules even in the face of man's strongest opposition. Not only is God able to set at naught man's endeavours to hinder His plans, but He is able to turn them to good. Well did the Psalmist say, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee." (Psa. 76:10.)

It is not without man's free choice that God uses any one as His instrument, but He desires their co-operation. Indeed, the one who cooperates with God the most, is the one whom God uses the most and bestows the greater blessing. And this is what we find in the life of Moses. How wonderfully did Divine providence overrule and direct in laying the foundation for Moses to become the great leader that God intended.

While Joseph was ruler of Egypt, and for some years after, the children of Israel lived peaceably in Egypt. Then the account tells us—"There arose up a new king over Egypt who knew not Joseph." It was because of the rapid increase of the children of Israel, causing this despotic monarch some concern, that after taking several repressive measures, he sent forth an edict—"Every son that is born, ye shall cast into the river." (Exod. 1:22.) It was under these conditions that Moses was born.

Perhaps we all remember the story respecting Moses' mother building a little ark out of bulrushes and placing him in it on the river where Pharaoh's daughter used to come to bathe, and how the princess took compassion on the child when he wept, and she decided to adopt him for her own son, and even arranged to have Moses' own mother to nurse him. There is a simple, yet wonderful romance in this narrative. One day the child, Moses, is a danger, a menace in the house of his parents; at any moment his presence may be discovered and made known to an Egyptian officer. Then he would be killed and the home broken up, and possibly the lives of his parents would be lost for attempting to disobey the royal edict. Next day, through divine providence, the child is back in the same home, and it's own mother is paid by the Egyptian princess in caring for it, and it is in every way protected by royal favour.

The wise man declared, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," and we may be sure that Moses' parents would teach him the basic principles of righteousness, and that his faith in God would be inspired by the promises God gave to Abraham and reiterated to Isaac and Jacob, namely, "that in thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." And how true was this in Moses' case. We are told in Acts 7:22 that "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." But none of these things swerved him from the pathway of righteousness and justice.

"In all the learning of the Egyptians," as the adopted son of Pharaoh, the result must have been a very noble and handsome man; yet, with all these accomplishments by nature and education, Moses is described to us as "the meekest man in all the earth." We do not mean that he was the meekest man in all the earth from the time he finished his learning in the Egyptian schools, but he was by the time God had taught him further lessons.

We are not told much about Moses from the time he was handed over to his foster mother to be educated until he was a man of forty years of age. But that his early training left a deep impression upon his heart and mind, and that he was also a man of faith is evident from what is implied in Heb. 11:24, 25,—"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." It was Moses' keen sense of justice and his utter hatred of wrong doing, that caused him to make his attempt to

relieve his brethren from the evils they were suffering from the Egyptians; thus, the time came when Moses decided to cast in his lot with his brethren. He renounced his relationship to the king's family and refused any longer to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God and to share with them in the promises made to them and their fathers. While he was with the Egyptians he shared in the riches and pleasures that were accruing to that people through the oppression of the Israelites, but he could no longer be a participator in the fruits of their wrong doing, nor enjoy the pleasures of this injustice.

“And it came to pass in those days when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren and looked on their burdens, and he spied an Egyptian smiting one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way and when he saw no man he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.” (Exod. 2:11, 12.) Although Moses was naturally meek he was not unmindful of his education and ability. This being known to his people, and the fact that they were expecting a deliverer to take them out of their bondage, Moses fully expected that they would rejoice at the thought of having him as their law-giver and counsellor. He hoped that by taking this step he would awaken the spirit and energy of his people and that they might accept him as their leader; but his disappointment was great when the next day he was endeavouring to correct a dispute between two Israelites he found that his brethren had no such loyal feelings toward him as he had toward them, for the erring Israelite demanded, “Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killest the Egyptian?”

Moses fondly hoped that the sacrifice he had made in giving up the honour and glory of Egypt for the sake of his brethren would at least be appreciated by them, but not so. Thoroughly disheartened and cut off from a cultured class in Egypt, and cut off also from his own kinsmen whom he hoped to assist, Moses settled down to a life in the wilderness. This led to him marrying one of the daughters of Jethro, and himself becoming a shepherd, and caring for his father-in-law's flocks.

For forty years Moses lived the life of a shepherd, and, so far as we are informed, he had no direct manifestation of God's favour; but he did have a knowledge of the hopes of his people and of God's promises to Abraham. From what we gather from the sacred writings he must have been a man of faith, and his faith never wavered. The first forty years of Moses' education was of an ordinary kind, but the next forty were of a special kind. We can see the Lord's supervision in all his affairs, for although he would be ignorant of it, in all of his experiences the Lord would be testing his loyalty and preparing him for the great work He had for him to do in the future. In his wanderings as a shepherd, he would no doubt become very familiar with the layout of the land; he would know every road and stream in that country. What a great advantage this would be to him, when, under the direction of the Lord, he would be leading the children of Israel through that wilderness to the land of Canaan. And we may be sure that he would learn lessons of patience, humility and obedience to the Divine will during those forty years.

Now that Moses had grown to eighty years of age he would look back at the attempt he made to become Israel's leader forty years previously, and would realise more fully what a great task it was to carry out, and would possibly think of it as a mistake. Doubtless, like David the shepherd, he would learn to think of his sheep and his care over them, and to consider God the great Shepherd over His flock, and probably wondered why, after giving the gracious promises to Abraham, God had left His flock, the children of Abraham, in apparently a hopeless bondage.

There is something about the quiet solitude of the wilderness that gives one a feeling of nearness to God, the Great Creator. There is something also about the sight of the mountains that helps us to appreciate the greatness of God; as the sight of the mountains inspired the poet to write, “Forever firm God's justice stands, as mountains their foundations keep.” Perhaps Moses was wondering if God had really forgotten His people back there in Egypt, and if that could be, how was it that he himself remembered them? And as Moses was thus philosophizing, his attention was directed to a very unusual sight—a bush seemed to

be on fire, yet it was not being consumed. As Moses turned aside to examine this phenomenon, the Lord spoke to him, from the midst of the burning bush. Moses at once realised that what he had witnessed was a miracle by which the Lord would attract his attention, for the purpose of communicating to him an important lesson. There seems to have been a symbolic meaning in the miracle of the burning bush, which would represent Israel in the midst of tribulation, yet not consumed. And what a good illustration the burning bush is of the experiences of Christ and all His members. Are they not surrounded by fiery trials, and do they not come through unscathed, uninjured; on the contrary, they are blessed and strengthened, "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground," is what the angel of the Lord said to Moses. "The fear (reverence) of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Psa. 111:10.) "Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God." Whether the house of God be a great house as it was in times past under Divine direction, or whether it be the Temple, which is the church in the flesh, we should realise that reverence is befitting to us in connection with everything holy and consecrated. Whoever neglects the cultivation of reverence makes his own pathway slippery and dangerous, and is much more likely to stumble, to fall, and be utterly cast down. If even Moses, the meekest man in all the earth, needed from the Lord the lesson of humility as his first instruction, shall we not suppose that such a lesson is necessary for us. God's message to Moses was the foundation for his hopes and those of Israel.

"I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." These words would assure Moses that God had not forgotten the good things He had promised; and thus his faith would be re-established. What a great change had taken place in Moses in those forty years in the wilderness. As the man of forty years he felt ready and equal for the mighty task of delivering his brethren out of Pharaoh's land, but now, when the invitation comes, he does not trust himself, and feels with all the educational advantages he had that he was fit for nothing better than a shepherd, and wanted to leave it to someone much more competent. Now the Lord needs to encourage him, and Moses receives more deeply than he could have done forty years before the understanding that Israel's deliverance was not to be by man, or through man, but by the Lord Himself, and the human agent would be merely the Lord's representative.

What a valuable lesson Moses was learning and how necessary is such a lesson to all the Lord's people, especially to any and to all whom God would use in any special sense in connection with His work; not our power or ability or wisdom, or greatness or learning is esteemed of the Lord, but the essential thing is the Divine power working in and through us, "which is mighty to the pulling down of strongholds," and to the lifting up of the weak, and to bring in everlasting salvation which He has promised. The more thoroughly we learn this lesson, the better it will be for ourselves and for all who, in the Lord's providence, we are sent to assist in His way—to deliver from the bondage of sin and death.

"Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring my people of Israel out of Egypt." ' It is to be noted that God expressly declares Himself to be the Deliverer; had Moses then been disposed to boast of his own powers and doings we presume that the Lord would not have used him, but would have found someone else for the work. Whenever the Lord sends us on any special mission, we may be sure that He does not wish us to undertake it as our mission, nor to claim the honour of the success attending it. He merely deigns to use us as His instrumentalities, whereas He could do the entire work much easier, we might say, without us. How wonderful it seems that God throughout all His dealings, past and present, has been willing to use His consecrated people. Telling them on the one hand that they are unworthy, He assures them on the other hand of His willingness to use their imperfections and to overrule and guide in respect of their services for Him and His cause.

The prime essentials, evidently, in the faithful performance of such a commission, would be reverence for the Lord and humility as respects our own talents and abilities. It was so with Moses, "the meekest man in

all the earth.” He was overwhelmed with the thought that the Lord would deign to use him as a messenger, and promptly disclaimed any special qualifications therefore. Indeed, he evidently felt, as well as said, that there were others much more capable for the work than himself. But was it not this very appreciation of his own unworthiness that helped to make him suitable for the Lord’s business? And so with us; we may be sure that when we feel strong, then are we weak; and when we feel weak in our own strength, then we are best prepared to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, and to be used of Him as His instruments.

In all the forty years as a leader of Israel, with all the great responsibilities and burdens that fell upon the shoulders of Moses, yet he made only one deflection, and that was the smiting of the rock. The Lord distinctly told Moses he was not to strike the rock but to speak to it. For a moment Moses forgot himself and permitted a spirit something akin to pride and anger to control his actions. “Ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice.” (Num. 20:10, 11.) The effect may have been dramatic; the people may have stood in awe of Moses, but all the same, that was not the best way of dealing with the matter, for it was not God’s way. Better would it have been for Moses to have hidden himself, humbled himself, and to have asked water from the rock in Jehovah’s name, as he had been instructed to do.

There never was a time, surely, when the honesty and the faithfulness of the Lord’s servants were more severely tested than now. What all need is meekness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly-kindness, love and loyalty to God— faithfulness to their covenant. In conclusion, the following is a quotation from the author of Scripture Studies. “So Moses the servant of the Lord died . . . ‘According to the word of the Lord: This is the land which He sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed . I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.’ As we look into the beauties of the Millennial epoch, the Lord tells us that we shall not go over to possess it, but that it shall be for mankind. But He tells us more, namely, that He has ‘provided some better thing for us.’ He tells us that we must die, that ‘flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven.’ The glorious vision shown us is merely for our comfort and strengthening in connection with the closing scenes of this age. In the Hebrew language the expression, ‘according to the Word of the Lord,’ would literally be ‘by the mouth of the Lord,’ and Jewish rabbis have given this a poetic turn and say, ‘by the kiss of the Lord.’ It is a beautiful thought, for while Moses was about to pass to the extreme limit of the curse, death, he was recognised of the Lord and dealt with as a faithful servant; and in view of the fact that the Lord in His plan had arranged for Moses’ redemption from sheol, the grave, his death is appropriately described as a sleep. And thus we have the picture of a father kissing his child to sleep; and also the other picture of the glorious morning of the resurrection in which the Antitypical Moses (Christ and His Church) , as the Father’s representative, will awaken Moses to the blessings and eternal rewards of the perfect earth, and which are his in the divine plan because of his faithfulness.”

The poet has said of him
“This was the truest warrior
That ever buckled sword;

This the most gifted poet
That ever breathed a word.

And never earth’s philosopher
Traced with his golden pen
On the deathless page, truths half so sage
As he wrote down for men.

“And had he not high honour?
The hillside for his pall
To lie in state, while angels wait
With stars for tapers tall;

And the dark rock pines, like tossing plumes,
Over his bier to wave,
And God’s own hand, in that lonely land,
To lay him in the grave.”

Choose Ye This Day.

“As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.”—Joshua 24:15.

THE Children of Israel had crossed Jordan. Moses was dead and. Joshua was their Leader. They were having no difficulty at that time; but Joshua thought ‘that it was proper just then for them to make their decision—proper for them to decide whether or not they would be faithful to the Lord, or would allow themselves to be led away by the idolatry of the people who lived in Canaan. Joshua had called them together and had recounted to them the Lord’s blessings and favour which they had thus far enjoyed, and then expressed himself in the grand and noble sentiments of our text.

So, we who realise that the Lord has been blessing, guiding and sustaining us in the past, should come to a full, positive decision as respects our course of life. The very fact of coming to a positive decision is a great help in the formation of character. Every time we come to a wise decision on any question, it strengthens mind and character, and makes us much more ready for another test—along some other line, perhaps.

We well recognise the fact that the entire consecration which the Christian makes, leaves nothing out; but we need to have some touchstone, something which will enable the mind to reach a decision quickly, and this touchstone should be God’s will, so that to perceive the Lord’s will on any subject would be to settle it without any temporizing. Again, it is highly proper that we should reiterate our consecration, and thus make it prominent before others.

For instance, there would be nothing wrong in saying, “Whatever any one else may do, I acknowledge God and will serve Him”—not as a new vow, but as a fresh acknowledgment of the consecration Vow we have already taken.

Every day we should renew our covenant with the Lord—renew it and make it fresh in our minds, thus showing that there has been no change on our part; that we are still in the same attitude. We are exhorted to make this review of our lives and renewal of our consecration daily; to continue to keep this before our minds and hearts; to render our sacrifice to the Lord.

If the Lord’s consecrated people could be brought to the point where the chief aim in life, the burden of all their prayers, would be that they might have a larger measure of the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of the Truth, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of a sound mind, what a blessing it would mean! if then they should wrestle with Him until the breaking of day, their hold upon Him would be sure to bring the desired blessing. The Lord reveals Himself for the purpose of giving this blessing: but He withholds it until we learn to appreciate and desire it.

It is Not the Deed We Do.

“It is not the deed we do
Though the deed be ever so fair,
But the love that the dear Lord looketh for,
Hidden with holy care

In the heart of the deed so fair.
“The love is the priceless thing,
The treasure our treasure must hold;
Or ever the Lord will take the gift,
Or tell the worth of the gold
By the love that cannot be told.”

Spiritual serenity is spiritual strength. It comes in by no softness of sentiment, but by thorough work. It comes by a faith that emboldens and energises the whole soul.—F. D. Huntington.

Bible Study Meetings.

Assemblies for undenominational Bible Study are to be found in the various States, and all earnest truth seekers will be very welcome.

Melbourne.—Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond (near Church Street)—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Geelong, Vic.—Sons of Temperance Hall, Ryrie Street—Sundays, 3 p.m.

Adelaide.—Builders and Contractors Rooms, 17 Way-mouth Street.—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6.15 p.m.

Perth.—9 Howard Street, Perth.—Sundays, 3 p.m. and 5.45 p.m.

FRANK & ERNEST TALKS

Geelong, 3GL, 222 M. Sundays 10 a.m.

Sydney, 2KY, 294 M. , 8.15 a.m.

Brisbane, 4KQ, 435 M. , 9 a.m.

Perth, 6KY, 227 M. , 4.45 p.m.

Printed by Hickling & Powell Pty. Ltd . Lygon St., East Brunswick for Berean Bible Institute. Ermington Place, Kew, Melbourne. E.4