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Refrain Thy Voice from Weeping

THE Lord through the prophet Jeremiah sends a message of consolation for the heart of every bereaved parent misting in Him. We read, "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord: Refrain thy Fact fro:..., weeping and thine eyes from tears, for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy."—Jeremiah 31:15-17.

Five items in our text are worthy of attention.

First. Sorrow for the dead, which is universal, as the Apostle declares, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together.-

Second. The nature of the comfort described—the hope of a resurrection, the hope of the recovery of the dead—"They shall come again," they shall be restored to life.

Third that in death our dear ones are in "the land of the enemy," in harmony with the Apostle". declaration, -The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."-1 Cor.15:26,

Fourth. That the labours of the parents in endeavouring to properly rear their children are rot lost, "Thy work shall be rewarded."

Fifth. Last but not least in importance in this text is the. declaration that this is the Word of the Lord, which cannot be broken—the Word which is sure of fulfilment, however different it may be from the word of man on this subject.

Tears Not Weakness—'Jesus Wept.'

Sorrow for the dead is not a sign of weakness, but rather the reverse—a sign of love and sympathy, of something more than selfishness. If any demonstration of this thought were necessary it is furnished us in the statement of the shortest verse in the Bible—"Jesus wept." Our Lord's tears were shed on a funeral occasion, too; Lazarus, his friend, the brother of Martha and Mary, was dead. Our Lord entered fully into the spirit of the occasion, with a deeper appreciation of the awful meaning of the word, death, than could possibly be entertained by those about Him. He appreciated more than any of the fallen, dying race the great blessing and privilege of living, and what a terrible affliction was death—destruction, annihilation.

On the other hand, however, He understood more clearly than any of His hearers the gracious plan of God for the rescue of the race from annihilation. He realised that for this purpose He had come into the world, that He might give His life as the ransom price for Adam, and thus incidentally for every member of the Adamic race involved in death through the first transgression in Eden. The Master realised from the standpoint of faith in the Father's plan, and His confident intention to carry out His own part in that plan and to lay down His life as our redemption price, that thus resurrection blessings would come to every member of the race.

Not Dead Eternally, But Sleeping.

Let us note carefully the nature of the consolation which our Lord tendered to the sorrowing ones about Him on this occasion. Let us be assured that "He who spake as never man spake" gave the soundest and best comfort. The consolation which He gave was that Lazarus is not dead for all time. He neither spake of him nor thought of him as being dead in the sense, of annihilation, because He had full confidence in the divine plan of redemption and in the resurrection blessings resulting. Hence the interim of death He spoke of as sleep, quiet, restful, waiting sleep.

What a wonderful figure is this, so frequently used throughout the Scriptures by all those who trusted in the divine plan of a resurrection morning. In the Old Testament Scriptures we read frequently of sleep. Abraham slept with his fathers, so did Isaac, so did Jacob, so did all the Prophets, so did all Israel.

In the New Testament it is the same. Not only did our Lord speak of Lazarus sleeping, but the Apostles frequently used this same figure of sleep to represent their hope in a resurrection—that the dear ones who went down into death are not annihilated, but, as our text declares, "Will come again from the land of the enemy"—will awaken in the resurrection morning.

Thus too, of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, it is written that though stoned to death, he "fell asleep," sweetly, restfully, trusting in Jesus and the great power which He ultimately would exercise to call forth from the power of death all redeemed by the precious blood. This, too, we remember, was the comfort the Apostle set before the early church, saying, "Comfort one another with these words"—"They that sleep in Jesus shall God bring from the dead by Him. — (1. Thes. 4:14-18.) Referring to the matter on one occasion the Apostle remarked, "We shall not all sleep, but we must all be changed." He referred to those who would be living at the second coming of Christ, whose resurrection "change" will not be preceded by a period of unconsciousness in death.

Let us go back to Jesus and the sorrowing sisters at Bethany, and hearken to the words of comfort extended to the bereaved on that occasion. We cannot improve upon the great Teacher and the lessons which He presented. Let us hearken to His conversation with Martha. He says: "Thy brother shall live again." He does not say thy brother is living now. He did not say, as some erroneously teach to-day, thy brother is more alive in death than he was before he died. No, No! The Lord would not thus mock the common sense and reason of His hearer, nor could He thus violate the truth and declare the dead not dead.

Hearken! The Lord admits that a calamity has befallen the household. He says not a word about His friend Lazarus having gone to heaven—not an intimation of the sort. On the contrary, He has tears of sympathy, and holds out as the strongest and only truthful solution of the sorrow, the hope of a resurrection—"Thy brother shall live again." "I am the resurrection and the life!" The hope of all the dead centres in Me. My death will effect the cancellation of the original Adamic condemnation, and I shall have the right then in harmony with the Father's plan to call forth all the dead from the great prison house of death, from the tomb. "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth."—John 5:28.

The Resurrection Morning.

At the close of His conversation with Martha, explaining that her hope must centre in a resurrection of the dead and that He was the centre of that resurrection hope, our Lord asked for the tomb, intent upon giving an illustration of the power which by and by in the resurrection morning will be exercised toward the whole world of mankind. Standing at the door of the tomb our Lord cried in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth," and the dead came forth—he had been dead, he was quickened by our Lord's power and authority.

This, like other miracles performed by our dear Redeemer at His first advent, we are particularly told, was a foremanifestation of His coming glory and power, an advance exhibit of what He will do at His second advent, only that the work at the second advent will be universal, higher, deeper, broader every way. "All the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped"; all that are in their graves shall come forth, not merely to relapse again into blindness and death, but a permanent recovery—not only recovery from the loss of natural sight and hearing, but the eyes and ears of their understanding will be opened also; not merely aroused from a sleep of death to a few years more under present conditions, but aroused to the intent that by obedience of the divine arrangement of the Millennial Age all the awakened ones may attain to all the glorious perfections, mental, moral and physical, lost by Adam's disobedience.

"Times of Restitution Shall Come."

Glorious hope of a glorious time. What wonder that He speaks of those years of the Millennial Age as "times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets since the world began."—Acts 3:20, 21.

Lazarus died again, Jairus' daughter died again, the son of the widow of Nain died again. Their awakening from the tomb was merely a temporary matter, merely an illustration of the Lord's power, as it is written. "These things did Jesus and manifested forth His glory." These were merely foregleams of the coming power and glory and blessed work of the gracious Prophet, Priest and King whom God has appointed not only to redeem the world, but to grant to all, in due time, the opportunities secured by that redemptive sacrifice.

We cannot go into more details, but we here endeavour to show amongst other things that the great blessing which will ultimately be for the world of mankind, as well as for the church, centres in the coming of our Lord and Master, our Redeemer and King, and that the great blessings centring in Him are not merely temporary, but designed of God to be everlasting and eternal to those who accept divine favours in the right spirit, reverently, thankfully, obediently.

Death "The Land Of The Enemy."

Why should death be called "The land of the enemy"? Why should it be written, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"? All because, disguise the facts as we may, death is an enemy. The suggestion that it is a friend comes not from the Word of God, but from heathen philosophies. The suggestion that it is unreal comes not from the Scriptures, but from heathendom. The suggestion that the dead are more alive than they were before they died is totally out of harmony with the Scriptural declaration. "The dead know not anything—their sons come to honour and they know it not, and to dishonour and they perceive it not of them," because "there is neither wisdom nor knowledge nor device in the grave whither thou goest." (Job 14:21; Eccl. 9:10.) The suggestion that we deceive ourselves and imagine without reason that the moment of death is the moment of greater life is of the adversary, who contradicted the Lord's statement in Eden to our first parents, "Ye shall surely die" for your sin, declaring in opposition, "Ye shall not surely die."—Gen. 3:24.

The adversary has kept up this false teaching for 6,000 years, and at last not only heathendom is deceived by his misrepresentation of facts, but very, very many of Christendom likewise trust to the word of Satan, “Ye shall not surely die,” and believe that the dead are not dead, and reject the testimony of God’s Word that “the wages of sin is death,” that “the soul that sinneth, it shall die,” that “death has passed upon all men because all are sinners,” and that the hope of the Church as well as the hope for the world lies in the fact that Christ died for our sins and redeemed us from the death sentence, and in the Father’s due time is to effect a resurrection of the dead.

The Key of Death’s Prison.

Let us comfort our hearts with the true comfort, the substantial comfort of the Word of God—there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth. The thousands of millions who have gone down into the great prison-house of death shall be released, because the Great Redeemer has the “key,” the power, the authority, to bid the prisoners^ come forth, even as the Scriptures declare.

What a glorious resurrection morning that will be! What a glorious reunion! We understand the Scriptural teaching to be that the awakening processes will continue throughout a considerable portion of the Millennial Age, the thousand-year day of resurrection and restitution. First will come the resurrection of the Church, the “Bride,” the “Lamb’s Wife,” the “Body of Christ.” These, as the Scriptures declare, will constitute the first resurrection—not only first in order of time, but first in the sense of chief. In that company will be none except the saints, as it is written, “Blessed and holy is he that bath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death bath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:6.) Nevertheless that will be but a little flock, as the Scriptures declare, including “not many wise, not many great, not many learned, but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, heirs of the Kingdom.”-1 Cor. 1:26, 27: Jas. 2:5.

Not long after the First Resurrection, the glorification of the Church, will come the resurrection of the ancient worthies—the overcomers of olden times prior to the Gospel Age. The assurance is that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the holy prophets—yes, all who were approved to God by their faith and their efforts to obedience — will come forth from the tomb to human conditions, glorious, grand, earthly illustrations of the heavenly Creator, to constitute the earthly representatives of the Kingdom, the instructors of mankind.

The instruction of the world will forthwith proceed. We are assured that “the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep”—to such an extent that “They shall teach no more every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.” We cannot stop to describe that glorious time and the grand opportunities it will give to every creature to know the Lord, to obey Him, to attain to resurrection in its full significance—a raising up to mental, moral and physical perfection.

The Last First, The First Last.

After the Kingdom of God shall have been fully established in the earth, and Satan shall have been bound, after the darkness shall have rolled away and the true light shall have lightened every creature, the time will come for the awakening of all the families of the earth—not all at once, but gradually, “they shall come again from the land of the enemy.” The Scriptures do not go into details on this subject; they leave much to faith, but give us a firm foundation for that faith, nevertheless, in the positive promise of the Lord’s Word.

To our understanding those who have fallen asleep last, will be among the first to be called back from the

land of the enemy, to be awakened, and thus the work of awakening the sleeping ones will progress backward, as we might express it; the living ones will prepare for their brothers and sisters and parents, and they in turn for their brothers and sisters and parents, and so on all the way back, until finally father Adam and mother Eve shall come forth to see the world filled with their progeny, in accord with the Lord's original commission that they multiply and fill the earth.

They will behold with astonishment the showers of blessing that have come upon the race from the Heavenly Father and through the Heavenly Saviour; they will see what havoc was wrought by their disobedience, but that God in His wisdom and power was both able and willing to overrule the matter and to bring order out of confusion and resurrection out of death. They and all will realise something of the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the Love of God. The grand plan of salvation shall loom up before them; they will see how Abel, their son, who suffered for righteousness, was a type and picture of the great Son of God who suffered for righteousness and for our deliverance, and they will see how His blood speaks peace for all for whom it is shed, speaks forgiveness and renewed harmony with God.

The Tragedy Of Sin And Death.

They will learn, too, of the terrible degradation which came upon their race subsequently to their death; they will read with appalled hearts and bated breath of the terrible famines and pestilences which came upon the race as a part of the original sentence or death curse; they will learn about the mental aberrations which afflicted the world, so that men thought they were doing God service in persecuting one another because of religious differences of opinion, and how others, more or less consumed with selfishness, land hunger, etc., warred and fought and devised engines of destruction against each other, and killed one another by the thousands in battle. They will wonder at the patience of God in so long permitting the evil.

Then truly they will see what God has wrought: First, His justice, which provided the great redemption price and would not otherwise clear the guilty. Second, His love, manifested in the same connection in the giving of His Son. Third, they will come to understand how that during this Gospel Age God has been selecting His Church to be the Bride of Christ and joint-heir with Him in the Kingdom. Fourth, they will perceive that when this election was complete and the members of the glorified company had all been tried and polished and tested and glorified, then the blessing of the world through the glorified Christ, Head and Body, came upon all mankind in the restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.—Acts 3:20, 21.

O, how they and all of their posterity would naturally be prompted to say, glory, honour, dominion, majesty, power and might be unto Him who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever.

O, how glad they will be to see the glorious outcome which the power of God will thus have wrought! How glad they will be that the divine plan is that ultimately all imperfection shall be eradicated and that all of the race that will, may live eternally under divine favour and blessing, while those otherwise minded will be destroyed from among the people in the Second Death. They will surely cry, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God almighty. Who shall not come and worship before Thee; Thy righteous acts are made manifest?—Rev. 15:3.

“Thy Work Shall Be Rewarded.”

Finally, consider the Lord's word to us all as a race, and particularly His word to parents, “Thy work shall be rewarded.” What a blessing and comfort, what a consolation and encouragement are in these words to those parents who, seeking to train up their children in the way they should go, are sadly wounded and discouraged when the arrow of death smites down upon the dear ones they had so loved and cherished.

They are disposed at first to say, Ah, my love, my counsel, my motherly care, my fatherly provision, were wasted. But not so, saith the Lord, thy works shall be rewarded.

How Rewarded?

You shall see the fruit of your labour in the future; we shall know as we are known, by and by. Our dear ones will be with us, and to whatever extent time and effort will have been expended upon them to mould and fashion them along the lines of righteousness and truth, uprightness and godliness, these surely have not been spent in vain. The child shall come forth that much more advanced in its mental and moral development; to that much more easy attainment of the grand heights which the Lord will then open up before it.

On the other hand, the parent who has been careless of his children, neglectful of his privileges and obligations as a parent, will undoubtedly have his negligence rewarded in the future as he shall see what he might have done for his children but did not.

And more than this. By a divine law of reaction, every parent who is faithful in the discharge of his parental duties shall have his work rewarded in himself, and likewise every parent neglectful of his duties shall have his work rewarded in himself. For who does not realise that there is no greater privilege or opportunity for self-development than comes to the parent in his endeavour to train up his children in the way they should go, in the reverence and admonition of the Lord.

Character Building Is Included.

Undoubtedly it is true, too, that every effort to do good unto others, especially to your own children, has its compensating blessings upon your own hearts. May this blessing deepen as the years go on.

In conclusion we say to you, not only for today, but for the future days, "Comfort one another with these words" of our Lord to the effect that your little ones shall come again from the land of the enemy, and that their return shall even be much more blessed, under much more favourable conditions than at present. Then, the great King reigning, all evil will be in subjection, all evil doers will be under restraint, all the influences of righteousness will be let loose, and the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the great deep. Blessed prospects are these before us, and to Him who loved us and bought us, and to the Heavenly Father who designed the great plan, we give everlasting thanks and praises, and show this by our daily lives!

Convention News.

It is usually a good indication of spiritual growth on the part of the Lord's people when they feel that the Lord's blessings of the present time are truly increasing as they progress along the Christian way. In other words, while people generally so often look back upon and refer to "the good old days" as being the most happy and pleasurable of their lives, the reverse is the experience of all true Christians.

This principle was well demonstrated throughout the Convention gatherings in Melbourne over the recent Christmas season, when for six days (four days being the Convention proper) the brethren gladly assembled in the Lord's name with a goodly number of visiting friends from four Australian states. 'Well did the Psalmist declare—'Praise is comely for the upright,' and we do give all praise and thanksgiving to the Lord for His rich favours bestowed by His spirit and through His people during this most profitable season of refreshing.

The attendance at these gatherings was very good, and the Bible studies, addresses and fellowship meetings provided a full programme of "heavenly manna" for each day. The passages for the Bible studies were taken from Heb. 10:32-39, 1 Cor. 15:48-58 and Rev. 3:14-22, and very helpful discussions were enjoyed on each of these important Scriptures. A Question Meeting on selected verses of Scripture also provided very profitable study.

The addresses by the visiting and local brethren were most encouraging, each subject having its particular message for the upbuilding of all who seek to apply the Scriptural injunctions to their own lives. The subjects of these Convention addresses were—"Divine Invitation"; "Key Scriptures"; "The Bible Message for Christmas 1951"; "Looking Unto Jesus These Last Days" "Ye Are God's Workmanship"; "Martha and Mary"; "Moses"; "A Human Creature's Greatest Choice"; "Approving Things That Are Excellent"; "Freedom of Religion"; "The Power Of The Spirit"; "The Test Of Discipleship" and "Living By Every Word Of God." It is expected that some of these addresses will appear in these columns in the months ahead for the benefit of the majority of our readers who could not attend the Convention in person.

The Fellowship Meetings provided the opportunity for praise and testimony to the Lord's goodness and favour, and the expressions of a more personal nature at these sessions helped to reveal the intimate relationship existing between the Lord and each of His true people, as they progress along the pilgrim way. The fact that the brethren have so very similar experiences, with the needed grace and blessings added from the Lord, is most encouraging when any "light afflictions" are encountered. It certainly gives strength and comfort to know that the Lord's loving care and protection are ever available for each one of His dear people, and the receiving of God's grace to help in every time of need depends upon the opening of our heart to Him, our earnest desire to receive from His hands.

The friends appreciated very much the numerous messages of Christian love and greetings from brethren over a wide area, indicating their sincere interest in the gatherings and prayers for our blessing. The warm Christian love and greetings from the assembly, together with the passage of Scripture—Rev. 3:20-22—is sent as a Convention message to all our dear brethren in every place. At the closing session of the Convention the hymns 'Blest Be The Tie' and "God Be With You," and the usual Love Feast, with concluding prayer of thankfulness to God, provided a fitting conclusion to the very profitable season of dwelling together in heavenly places in Christ.

(A supply of Notes on the above Convention will be available shortly. Prepared by one of our visiting brethren these may be obtained free)

Adelaide Easter Convention.

The brethren in Adelaide wish to announce that their usual Easter Convention will be held again this year (D.V.) on the four days, Good Friday to Easter Monday, April 11th to 14th, in the Builders and Contractors' Rooms, Waymouth Street, Adelaide. A cordial invitation is extended to all friends able to join the members in Adelaide for these gatherings in the Lord's name.

Martha and Mary.

(Convention Address.) —Luke 10 :38-42.

“Mary sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving.”

NOT many people receive the Lord into their houses; some have not enough room and they don't like any restrictions with regard to their comfort. Others fear for their time; they rather like to pay Him a visit in a church, and may even greet Him occasionally when they meet Him on their way, but somewhat carelessly, so that He must not ask them, “Where do you come from? Where are you going?”

Martha had received the Lord into her house, but without knowing what she actually did. She knew all right that she was not dealing with a common guest and did everything to honour Him, but had no idea about the real character of her guest, nor of the position which belonged to Him in the house.

If somebody is enjoying hospitality, it is a matter of good custom and gentleness that he keeps away from anything which is connected with the closer circle of family life, but where Jesus is received into a house He desires to know everything that is happening, even the thoughts and motions of the heart. There is no possibility to hide anything from Him, and one cannot think of reserving one room of the house for one's own. Jesus wants to have entrance anywhere at any time, day and night, so that means one has to deliver to Him the key of the house. Perhaps you do realise this and therefore it is not so easy for you to receive such a delicate guest into your place.

But that is not all. While a common guest is carefully thinking of not making trouble and not disturbing the order of the house, we must expect of Jesus that He will soon tell us His displeasure here and there, and that He will ask for many possible changes until perhaps the whole house is revolutionized.

It did not come into Martha's mind that a house into which Jesus is received is thus becoming His property, and that He can direct and rule everybody as an absolute master. There is nothing more to offer to such a guest; on the contrary one has become His guest, or even better, His servant and should be pleased in giving Him all kind of honour and attention. We should, then, expect the orders of our divine guest like a slave in the Orient waits for any hand sign of his master.

What is said here of the service with which Martha was seeking to honour her Lord is applicable to all service, to all work in the Lord's vineyard, if it is done in the spirit of Martha. It is difficult for the sinner, as well as the disciple, to see that he cannot give anything to God which has not first been given to him—that he may not dare to offer anything which he has not received from God. It is hard for the sinner to understand that all endeavours to rend the strings of sin and to approach his God are presumption on his part. He does not understand that he begins to honour God only when he confesses all his deep corruption, his helplessness and inability to please God, and should expect all further things from God's grace and mercy.

The disciple has trouble to sit at Jesus' feet and to listen to Him in simplicity and humility—to receive instead of giving. One tends to see everywhere some works to do, some defections to abolish, some

necessities of help. O, let no one think to honour God or to further His cause by plunging himself into excitement! Perhaps you may say that the love of Christ Jesus constraineth you; but what sort of love? Can the love to your God and Saviour be anything else than the love of a weak child who expects everything from his father? Or is it the love to save souls which does not give you rest? But you are unable to save just a single one, and you know that Jesus loves the souls much more than you do; that He has kept nothing from them and that He is still doing everything to-day that can be done for their salvation.

To be sure, the Lord needs human tools for this task, but His most mighty tools are those who have the heart of a priest, and learn from Him to take the burdens of their soul and lay them down before Him. If the prayer of your love is not sufficient; if you feel the necessity—and you should feel it—to speak to others of their Saviour and give your strength and life for them, then never forget that the Lord gives only to such as Mary the privilege, of being His witnesses. You first have to sit still at His feet, so that He may cultivate and teach you; if you hurry into His vineyard before He has called and prepared you, you may be sure to cause damage.

Or will you say that the zeal of the Lord's house had eaten you up? Has the zeal already eaten up your pride and arrogance, your selfishness and vanity, your laziness and cowardice, your excitement and impatience? We first have to overcome ourselves and then to receive strength to wait until the Master may call us. He will surely not keep us waiting too long, and if it may please Him to spend thirty years in your preparation, you may be sure afterwards to be able to do more in three years than could otherwise be done in the longest course of life.

Let no one wish to bring forth fruit before the time! It would surely be only unripe fruit, to the dishonour of the Master one is thinking to serve. Before anyone speaks of love and zeal let him ask himself whether Jesus has already taken possession of his heart. Where Jesus establishes His dwelling, everything will become silent and quiet before Him, to let Him speak and work, with the result that a more peaceful and solemn, sabbath quietness will be felt.

It seems that what constrained the Apostle Paul, as he said in 2 Cor. 5:14, was in the first place not the love to Jesus, but the love wherewith Jesus loved him; and where Jesus has once filled the heart with His love, He will then also direct and arrange the work which is springing out of such a love. As a matter of fact, one never gets into excitement for God and His cause; that would be too foolish. His cause is in good hands and its triumph is guaranteed, as you well know. One gets into excitement only where self is concerned; where, under the pretence of God's work someone is doing his own work and seeking his own honour. Sit down at Jesus' feet, and suffer to be judged and to be appeased; sit down, or even better, cast yourself down into the dust!

The nations, the Gentiles are standing up and getting into excitement, as told in Psalm 2:1. Children of God, bow down and adore! Do you fear to fall by this way into a dreamy, contemplative sort of Christianity? Do not worry! Of course, if you wish to make a noise in this world you need not consider, just choose Martha's part. But know, it is the worse one! As much filled as a Martha's life may seem to be, in reality it is a lost life.

If you are longing for a really fruitful life, then choose Mary's part; it is the good one! Nowhere else than at Jesus' feet is it possible to escape the law of vanity, of fruitlessness and of death, under which all human endeavours are suffering. In Jesus' presence alone one awakes to a real new life: in Him is the source of life and the motive power of all fruitful work. Begin with laying down at Jesus' feet all your Martha-zeal, your readiness to serve, your willingness to sacrifice and your generosity. Bring all this to Him as a sacrifice and thus confess your inability to produce of yourself anything usable or worthy of life. Bow down under the Scripture which says: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth

alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” John 12:24.

And, secondly, listen to the Master’s words and put yourself under their discipline—suffer to be taught and instructed. If you will do that in sincerity and by giving all your life, you will not be afraid of losing any time; one never stays too long at Jesus’ feet. His spirit will come upon all who are listening to His voice, and it is a working spirit. As soon as Jesus has told you what you need to know for the time being, He will send you forth to tell others, to use for others what you have received; sometimes, of course, only after He has tested you in trials and sufferings, but never without giving you a sufficient supply of grace and strength.

While the Lord sends us out at the right time, He also leads us back into quietness again, so that our store never runs out, and we never have to depend on our own strength. Furthermore, the Lord will teach you the secret to remain in spirit in the Mary-position, even in the midst of all business. You only have to watch that you do not get caught by the work, but keep your most hidden thoughts in the light of His countenance, and put your speaking and silence under the discipline of His spirit. With all your deeds you must watch His footsteps and never run ahead of Him; in that way it will be seen that the Lord Jesus lives in you, and where He is living, there He is also working. Then, you can say with Paul,—”So I labour, yet not I, but the favour of God with me.” 1 Cor. 15:10. Who thus can speak may be sure of a richly blessed career; in such a life each moment will be fruitful and the Lord’s words will be fulfilled—”He that believeth on me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water.” John 7:38.

How did Samuel mature to his great prophetic profession which God gave to him? Surely in no other way than by arranging his whole life after that prayer which Eli had taught him in that memorable night,—”Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth!” 1 Sam. 3:9, 10, 19.

Obviously, the two sisters of Lazarus had more than one mark of character in common, and we may well assume that both were sincere disciples of the Lord Jesus. It is remarkable, however, to note that later, in John 12.2, it is not said that “Martha was cumbered about much serving,” but simply, “Martha served.” But if we keep in mind the entirely different, maybe passing circumstances with regard to Jesus in which the 10th chapter of Luke shows us the two characters, we can find therein two different spiritual lessons.

These spiritual lessons, not the actual characters of the two persons, we wish to keep in mind as we proceed to talk about Martha and Mary. So understanding, we find in the actions of Mary the principles of the evangelical spirit, as the Apostle expresses it in Roman 4:5,—”To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

When one has put everything down at Jesus’ feet, there is no more to be given to Him, and one is happy to receive all from Him. In other words, one is living by faith. The soul is not proposing what should be done for Jesus, but like the Psalmist the soul can say, “I have set the Lord always before me.” Like David, the soul is desiring one thing only, namely, “To behold the beauty of the Lord”; like John the Baptist, the soul is happy “Because of the Bridegroom’s voice.” The soul is grateful for each moment at Jesus’ feet, alone with Him, following Him with the eyes, considering His words and listening to the voice of His spirit.

Martha must work; it is her happiness to work and to be busy. Of course, she is working for Jesus, she is getting tired for Him, she is giving all to Him, her strength and her time. But while occupied with her work, she is forgetting the Master’s warning in Luke 10:20—”In this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” In all the work Martha is doing for the Lord she is forgetting Him; she is getting away from the source of life, and if she does not stop in time, will be in danger of reaching eternity with a life behind her in which she has spoken untravelling of Him and has sacrificed all for His sake; and yet, now she is saved only so as by fire, naked, without her

works following her.

All Martha-service is work wherewith one is thinking to please God, but which is really pleasing oneself. Instead of really giving and sacrificing, as one would like to believe, such are seeking self and becoming self-righteous. They are doing works with a hireling spirit, jealous and murmuring because Mary is doing nothing. Mary will work just the same. in due time; don't worry. Martha. But first she has to learn the important lesson at Jesus' feet that she is a useless servant: one who is not indispensable to her Lord. She will work as well, but she is too humble to put herself into the foreground. If the Lord will once honour her by a task, she will do it the more readily and joyfully, praising Him for the grace that she may do such a thing.

Martha's inner happiness is connected with work; it is rising and falling with the changing success to which all human work is subject. At first she is full of joy and zeal, but soon it will faint. It is somewhat like excitement and fever, so that relaxation must come some time; and when hindrances arise she gets troubled and loses her courage.

However, Mary gets her strength and satisfaction from Him who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. Therefore her inner being remains unmoved and unsaddened, not depending on the fact whether her work seems to be successful or not. She knows that any work which is done in the love of Jesus is never in vain, therefore she is steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, as we are told in 1 Cor. 15:58. There may be many difficulties, like mountains, on her way, but she knows that faith can move mountains, and this helps her to keep quiet in her work; she remains quiet in view of the tasks, the mere thought of which puts Martha into excitement. The difficulties may only serve to impress on her mind the necessity for complete dependence upon the Lord, to mature and strengthen her inner being, and at the same time to keep her humble. Mary never feels any trace of strength in herself and is always rejoicing in the fact that her strength is in God, and she may count on this power of God for each task to which she may be called. In this strength she is running without getting tired; well, she may get tired, but she never breaks down. She is waiting for the Lord who will renew her strength. He will renew her youth and freshness of life, so that she may mount up with wings as eagles. Even in her work she is living only by faith, only thinking to be found faithful in the least which may be given unto her.

And now, dear Sisters, who may run a household, and who know from experience how much pain and grief may be caused by all the little troubles of daily life; who may have walked many years under sorrows and needs, under the pressure and the burden of a household; who may have lost several times your quietness of soul and your inner balance, because the work has simply grown above your head; you may not have been ready in time to please your husband and family; O, try to understand better than Martha what it means to receive Jesus into your house. Dismiss yourself as mistress and put the reins forever into His hands for the general management of your household, as well as the particular arrangements, and expect only His directions and orders. If there is to be trouble, the Lord will be there. Remain Mary: the Lord will take all responsibility. He knows how to loosen all knots; He will put everything right and on the right foot, without worrying yourself. And now, once more—Choose the good part, which shall not be taken away from you.

Passover Memorial Services.

The anniversary of the institution of the Memorial of Christ's death falls this year on the evening of Tuesday, 8th April. After sundown on this date will be the appropriate time to observe this Memorial in remembrance of Christ our Passover Lamb.

Friends desiring supplies of the unleavened bread and wine may obtain these from this office. Early application should be made, preferably by the middle of March, and please state the number of persons to be served.

Melbourne.—Tuesday 8th April at 8 p.m.. at 271 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn. (Near Glenferrie Station ; few doors south of Burwood Road.)

Adelaide.—Tuesday, 8th April, at 7.45 p.m., at Builders' and Contractors' Rooms, Waymouth Street, Adelaide.

Sydney.—Tuesday, 8th April, at 7 p.m.. at 233 Liverpool Road, South Strathfield. Take No. 27 red bus from Strathfield Station (left side of station coming from Sydney) to Sch,ffer's Upholstery.