

## A BIBLE LESSON FOR MODERN DAYS.

Mention has been made in the press that the premier of the Netherlands, Hon. Abraham Kuyper, is also Rev. Abraham Kuyper, D.D., LL.D., and the fact is commented upon as a very interesting piece of history. So it is. As a sturdy Calvinist he should make a sturdy and reliable statesman, and so far as we know he is all that. But he is also an author, for in a recent number of the *Christian Intelligencer* of New York, we find an article under the following caption:

### Deborah the Nurse.

BY THE REV. ABRAHAM KUYPER, D.D., LL.D., PREMIER OF THE NETHERLANDS.

Gen. 35 : 8. But Deborah, Rebecca's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak; and the name of it was called Allon-Bachuth.

Now, this is quite an interesting fact in itself, rendered doubly interesting from the manner in which this incident of Bible history is treated by the distinguished author. Deborah was Rebecca's nurse, literally a "bond-slave," given to Rebecca when she started in company with Abraham's servant from Mesopotamia to go to the land of Canaan to become the wife of Isaac. She must have been a faithful as well as an aged servant, otherwise she would not have received the special mention in Bible history recorded in Genesis. It would appear that she remained with Rebecca as long as she lived and then became attached to Jacob's family. She must have been greatly beloved by Jacob's family—a fact which is indicated by the name given to her burial place, "the oak of weeping."

The special lesson urged by the preacher-statesman of the Netherlands is the considerate and affectionate treatment accorded to the bond-slave in the families of Isaac and Jacob, so often in sharp and striking contrast to the treatment accorded to domestic servants, and the behavior of domestic servants, in these modern days. What he says is well worth being reproduced:

"Deborah means a bee; which as a name for a servant, and especially for a nurse, was beautiful and deeply significant. A bee is the image of restless, steady and ever active diligence and care. An insect that gathers honey from every flower; and gives what it gathers to others and robs none for itself. And the grace of God by faith had made Deborah to be such a lovable, quiet and faithful servant. A worthy example to put other servants to shame, also in our days, who have received Christian baptism and go themselves by reputation of being Christian, but who, as the ant, merely toil for their own interests, or who, worse yet, have only the sting in common with the bee, with which to hurt and to poison the life of many a family.

On the other hand, by grace and faith the Lord had worked a tender attachment to Deborah in the hearts of Jacob, Leah, Rachel, and their children. Deborah was not merely their servant, but her service was appreciated. Deborah had become a member of the family. Deborah was held in honor and she was loved. And when she died there could have been no mourning more sincere over an own child, than over her. And her burial was such as might have been given to an own sister of Jacob or Leah.

This is also a noble example that might set to shame many employers in our times, who confess that Christian-like they know

the Lord, and who nevertheless look down upon their servants, and call it too great a familiarity to talk with them as one might speak to a sister or a brother; and who, when the servants complain, or even when they die, remain quite ignorant of the fact; and shed no tear; and are the first to think or say: "for her or him another." And then the evil operates from both sides, simply because the faith remains dead. It is dead in the housemaid who has no heart in her service; or dead in the master or mistress, because the payment of the wages is the end of all interest.

Evidently the Golden Rule of the New Testament must have been faithfully observed in the families of Isaac and Jacob. If such a "community of interests" could be established in modern families between mistresses and their "help"—considerate and affectionate treatment on the one hand and quiet and faithful service on the other—it would probably go a long way to solve "the servant girl problem," which seems everywhere to have reached an acute stage. The faults are not all on one side, and they could be reduced to a minimum if mistresses and their servants, in their relations towards each other, would endeavor to act upon the Golden rule.

It is true of a nation as well as of the individual that it does not live "by bread alone." To rise to any noble place among the nations or do any noble work, means must be provided plentifully and the best for culture in the broadest sense. For intellectual culture, though not for that only, schools, colleges and universities must be maintained. These should be largely, it not solely maintained by the State, and on them the gifts of the wealthy, the patriotic and philanthropic may very wisely be spent. The more numerous they are, provided they are properly equipped for the special work they undertake, the better will it be for the country, and the greater will be the number who will be attracted to their halls, and aspire to obtain cultivation for their minds. For this reason we would suppose that, the vast majority of those who read the speech lately given by Principal Grant to the students and other friends of Queen's University, will agree with him, that there is need and a place and work for Queen's to do for the country. In a country growing as ours is, and with incalculable possibilities in the future, there ought to be the opportunity and inducement given to youth to obtain an education equal to the best that can be given anywhere, except what is only possible in the most ancient and full-grown universities of old lands. This too will come to us in time. While we would not have the University of Toronto crippled to the extent of one dollar in its endeavour to keep itself up to the highest state of efficiency that the demands of the country call for, we agree, and we think that the majority of those who think wisely, on this subject, will agree with the Principal of Queen's when he says that "Clearly, Ontario needed more than one university, were it only to save the one from the blight which Napoleon's centralized University of France with the suppression of the old universities brought upon higher education in that country, and Queen's, from its location, traditions and freedom from

denominational control seemed peculiarly fitted to be the second, and of all the most value to the Province from its distinctive-ness of type."

We might be inclined to enter a caveat to the last words of this sentence, but in the absence of fuller explanation we are not prepared to discuss the question.

"It steals in incessantly," were the words used recently to describe the insidious and persistent efforts of those opposed to moral reforms for the sake of gain or pleasure, to evade or override the laws made to enforce such reforms. These are often more dangerous than open defiance of law, now, unhappily so common by powerful and unscrupulous corporations. The pettiness, the harmfulness of some infraction of a law, the selling of a dish of ice cream, for instance, on Sunday, is held up, and it is called persecution to oppose or forbid it. So a young man's first glass, his first insignificant speculation or bet with money not his own, is thought of or represented as being a very small offence, or trifling departure from the path of rectitude. In the light of tampering, compromising with principle, of possible consequences and consequences that very often follow such acts, they are not small; they are like the first small drops of water that trickle through the dam which holds millions of gallons of water in a reservoir. Let this pass without attention and every moment the leak will increase in size until the dam gives way and the waters carry desolation and death in their path. It is only by eternal vigilance that the forces of evil can be detected, and the moral desolation and destruction, which, if left alone they are sure to work, can be arrested and overcome. On the side of evil the personal element of gain or pleasure constantly acts as a stimulus, on the other side, comes in, what ought to act with still greater force, but unfortunately often fails to do so, the highest welfare, the salvation of the individual from the results of his own folly, and the safety and wellbeing of the whole community, of the whole country it may be.

The death of Mrs. Ball, widow of the late Rev. Wm. S. Ball, and youngest sister of Hon. Geo. Brown, removes another of the links, rapidly getting fewer, which connect the well-known Christian workers of the Presbyterian Church of the past generation with those of the present. Of the founders and earnest workers and leaders of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, Mrs. Ewart, Mrs. MacMurchy, Mrs. Jeffrey are gone and now Mrs. Ball. Among our men, Revs. Dr. Cochrane, King, Reid and last. Dr. Robertson have all within a very recent period, passed away. Men come and men go, but God, whose servants they all were, is able to raise up and He will raise up in the future as in the past, a never-failing succession of godly men and women to follow in the footsteps of those who have gone and do the work needed in successive generations.