

The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B. - - - FEBRUARY, 1891

EDITORIAL.

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS, MATT. XXV:14.

Jesus "the Light of the world" has revealed both the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory, a present salvation from sin, and also a future salvation from all the consequences of sin. How to enter the kingdom of God here he has told Nicodemus, and made it plain in his last commission to all the world. Those who are saved enter the divine favor now, and, by a faithful continuance in well-doing, will have an abundance entrance ministered to them into the future kingdom. When Peter writes to Christians he calls them the elect. Being obedient believers at the time their election was an accomplished fact. Yet he urges them to make their calling and election sure. Their past election was sure, and he exhorts them to make their future election sure by adding to their faith virtue and many other graces, assuring them that if they did these things they would never fall, but so an entrance would be ministered to them abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (I. Pet. i:2; [I. i:5-13.]

Jesus showed much anxiety that his disciples should at enter his heavenly kingdom, and near his death spoke many parables respecting the last judgment. This chapter begins with the ten virgins, then comes the talents. And as if to meet the capacity of his humblest followers, closes the chapter with the impressive parable of the sheep and the goats.

He here compares himself to a man travelling into a far country, who called his servants and delivered unto them his goods. Jesus has gone into heaven, which is so far from us that no mortal eye can see either it or its inhabitant. All our knowledge of it comes through faith in the testimony of our Teacher, who came from heaven to live and die among us, and has gone back to prepare a place for his servants giving each of them talents to use and increase.

By talents we understand the power of doing good to others, and thus honoring Christ. He has not given the same number of talents to each servant, because all have not the same ability to handle talents. He gives to every man according to his ability. No man can say: Because my brother is stronger than I am, I have no right to labor at all." If my brother is stronger than I am the Master requires more of him. He expects him to do all he can, and expects the same of me. If another brother is still weaker than I he requires less of him than of either of us; but requires all of us to do what we can do, and he will graciously reward all accordingly.

If we are the servants of Christ, he has given each of us talents which we are to use and increase, and account for at his second coming. Every one who joins the Church of Christ should earnestly pray: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? and never cease until he is convinced what his particular work is in the Church and in the world, so that he may bend all his energies in its accomplishment.

The Church should be so well acquainted with all its members as to ascertain what department of work each one is best fitted for, and what is his particular desire, and encourage and help all to carry out the will of the Saviour, and thus trade on the talents which he has given.

How appropriate for a senior whose life inspires confidence and affection, to enquire: Bro. B., are you satisfied what the talents are which the Lord has intrusted to you? And on receiving at least partial affirmative to proceed. Are you striving

to use and increase these? And after a similar reply to continue: "Do you find your work easier and more satisfactory than at first?" Then to encourage the young brother with words of counsel and cheer; remarking: "I have noticed with interest your efforts and are happy to see a marked improvement. I am confident that the Lord is waiting to supply all your needs, and to enable you to make your Christian life a grand success." Who can tell how much the friendship of older brethren aid and prompt younger members to discover and use their talents for the Lord.

A living church will help its respective members to use their talents for Christ. Some have a natural talent for speaking. The church encourages them to speak, and if they manifest a love for the salvation of men, and a Godly and self-denying life it discovers that it is God's will that such should spend their life in preaching the gospel, so it aids and encourages them in this work. Others may have an aptitude for teaching the young, and the Church encourages this, and finds work for them. Others may be talented in prayer and have ability to lead in prayer and social meetings. These useful talents are known and encouraged. Some have a good influence in visiting the sick, and the poor and needy, and the Church encourages this noble work. Some have the gift of singing and can do great good in this delightful department of Christian work.

Others have a faculty of making and saving money. This ability comes from God, and should be used for his glory. "The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." And yet Jesus tells his disciples to make to themselves friends with it, which shall receive them into everlasting habitations, Luke xvi. Both the use and abuse of money and its worth are so clearly set forth by the Saviour in the parable of the sheep and the goats that all who read may understand and remember. He shows it to be the hinge on which shall turn our eternal destiny. How important then to use it for God's glory. By it his needy ones are relieved and his gospel spread throughout the earth.

Jesus tells in few words how the servants handled their talents. The first traded on the five and made them ten, and the second made his four. But the third hid his lord's money in the earth. So, after a long time, their lord came and called them to account. Jesus has been now a long time away; some think far too long. But he will come as a thief in the night. It will be as sudden as the lightning's flash. Around him will shine his own glory, the glory of the Father and that of the holy angels, who there meet to witness his last judgment.

He who received the five talents speaks first, and tells the simple story. Lord, thou gavest me five talents and I have gained other five. Jesus says: "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou the joy of thy Lord."

The second said about the same and received the same plaudit—"enter thou unto the joy of thy Lord." They both traded according to their ability, and received the same welcome entrance into the joy of their Lord. To be awarded before such a company and by such a Judge is something far beyond our imagination, and we can only sing, "What must it be to be there?"

But the third servant comes forward. He has more to say than the other two. He is readier to pass sentence on the Judge than to hear his own. I knew thee that thou art an hard man. Thou reapest where thou sowest not, and gatherest where thou hast not strewn, and I was afraid and I hid the money in the earth. Here is all that belongs to you. He manifests an air of haughty independ-

once, and assumed justice as if he said: I knew your demands. You asked me to do what you know I had not the power to do, and I was afraid of your service, but would not meanly spend your money. I honorably hid it, and now give you all that you can reasonably demand, and want to have nothing more to do with you.

Perhaps he had been spending much of the time of trading in arguing on the divine sovereignty and on man's utter inability to do what Christ commanded him to do. He might have thought it the highest honor to the Creator to degrade his noble creature man to the level of a mere machine. At any rate his refuge was the hardness of Christ in requiring man to do what he was unable to do, reaping where he had not sown. But he now finds this refuge swept away, leaving him in all his iniquity, exposed to the gaze of the universe.

The Judge condemns him on his own testimony. Thou knowest that I reap where I sow not. If you were afraid of me why did you not give my money to the exchangers that I might get both principal and interest on my return. You would neither trade on it nor allow others to. You had the ability to do what you were told. You will have that ability no longer. Take from him the talent and give it to him who has ten, and cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Original Contributions.

OUR MOTIVE.

It a well-known fact that every effect or result must have a cause; that is, some preponderating principle that originates all the actions of mankind, whether they be good or whether they be evil. The entire human organism is subject to the mind. The limbs and organs of the body are subservient to the will, and are called into action by the command of the sensorium. You see the truth of this if it only be in the stretching forth of your hand. From the sensoria the fiat is flashed with lightning speed along the intricate network of nerves, selecting for itself the proper one, finally reaching the muscles of the arm which immediately contract, and then follows action with results. But the question may be asked just here, Does the mind originate these thoughts? Certainly; the idea is framed in the mind, but only after receiving certain perceptions through the sensual organs, and which when acted upon produce actions. Now, we have already seen that the bodily organs are subservient to the mind; that the mind is influenced, or rather develops itself by what it receives through the ear, the eye or the knowledge transmitted to it through the eye and ear. Understand, then, our actions depend upon what we read, what we hear and what we see, or perhaps more particularly still upon the result of our reading, our hearing and our seeing. How careful should we be then in selecting our companions and our books; for it is by these, as we have seen, that the mind is framed, which is the seat of thought that give rise to actions. Our actions form our character, which is the impress given by us to the world.

No one can associate with low companions, the votaries of folly, and not be contaminated by the immoral miasma that they shed around them. No one can peruse the current fiction of the day, or even many of our newspapers, and not become influenced by these silent guides of satan. You will see from what I have already said that our destiny hinges upon the result of our connections with the world. If our mind dwells only upon what is good in reading, in seeing and in hearing, then it follows that our thoughts will be good; and if our thoughts our actions; and if our actions, character; and if char-