

guage purer and more truthful, our homes more beautiful, our religion more vital, and our characters more gracious and influential. For it is only as the soul is bowed daily before what is holy, lovely and pure, that it can go forth bravely and tenderly, to sweeten and hallow other lives.

Kingston, Ont.

### The Motive Everything

By Rev. Henry Dickie, M.A.

Sunday School teachers, in common with other Christian workers, are apt to forget that the highest place in God's kingdom does not necessarily belong either to the longest service, or to the greatest quantity of work done, or even to the most steadfast endurance of the scorching heat of trial and persecution; but only to those who are animated by a really devoted spirit. It is the motive that counts supremely with God.

Our Lord made this perfectly clear in two of His parables, which strongly resemble one another, at least so far as their teaching in this regard is concerned. These are the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, and the parable of the Prodigal Son. In the one parable, there are the cases of the first hired and the last hired; in the other, those of the younger son and the elder son; and in each, there is equal emphasis laid on the two cases. The elder brother, who had served his father all his life, corresponds to the laborers who had toiled in the vineyard from early morning; and the murmuring of the elder brother at seeing the prodigal received with festivity and restored, without a word of reproach, to a son's place in the father's house and the father's love, is parallel to the murmuring of the laborers who had borne the heat and burden of the day, when they saw those who had worked but one hour, and that in the cool of the evening, paid as much as themselves. And the answer to both is the same, namely, that God's service differs from man's in this, that mere length of service does not count in the apportioning of rewards, but the motive that has entered into it.

It is an entire misunderstanding of Christ's words, to say of these parables that the first hired laborers, and the elder son, are, for

their murmuring spirit, excluded from the kingdom, and have their portion among the unfaithful and the hypocrites. Their purpose was not to threaten condemnation, but to warn the hearers against the errors to which those are specially liable, who spend their lives in the service of God. All who accepted the invitation and entered the vineyard, however variedly they had wrought, alike were saved. Each received the penny, which undoubtedly means eternal life, but there is a disparity between them in the kingdom, because of the spirit in which they had wrought.

Let us learn, then, that it is the motive which God chiefly regards. One hour of trustful, humble, loving service is of greater value to Him than a life-time of calculating industry and self-regarding zeal. A busy, perspiring, obtrusive zeal, which makes itself seen and felt through a whole country side, may make a great impression upon men; but it makes no impression upon God, unless animated by a really devoted spirit. It is thus that the first become last and the last first. Therefore, let us look well to our motives, for motive is the principal thing.

Woodstock, Ont.

### The Teacher and The Poets

IN TWELVE ARTICLES

By Rev. F. H. McIntosh, M.A.

#### III. THE BIBLE A POETIC BOOK

The Bible is the Word of God, but it is the Word of God conditioned by the experiences and nature of man. God has spoken "through" men. What the very Word of God is, as it is spoken in that high realm which is as far above our ways and thoughts as the heavens are above the earth, we dare not say. That is too high for us. We only know that the Word of God, in coming down, has flamed into all the colors of this mortal existence, just as the falling star gleams with earthly fires when it cleaves this lower atmosphere. It is shot through and through with human joys and sorrows, hopes and fears. And since poetry is our self-expression at its best, we naturally expect The Book to be a poetic book.

A close examination justifies this expect-