

in the affairs of the kingdom. Both the five-talent and the two-talent man, by shrewd and careful trading, doubled the money given them. They were equally faithful, and, according to their different opportunities, equally successful. *Received one*; a large amount, as God's gifts, even to the poorest and weakest, are very great. A less increase was looked for from him than from either of the others, but equal faithfulness. *Digged . . hid . . money*; a common practice, where there were few places of safe deposit. (See ch. 13 : 44.) The one-talent man was really dishonest, withholding from his master the service he might have given.

III. The Reckoning, 19-30.

V. 19. *After a long time*; so that the servants might be thoroughly tested. *Cometh, and maketh a reckoning* (Rev. Ver.). Jesus insists again and again on the fact that He will return to judge His servants (see Luke 19 : 15 ; John 5 : 22).

Vs. 20-23 tell the rewards of the two faithful servants—the same in both cases, because they had shown equal fidelity. The reward in each case was fourfold : (1) *Well done*. Such a word of praise from a Lord like ours will richly compensate any toil. (2) *Faithful over a few things*. No satisfaction can surpass that of knowing that we have done something to advance Christ's kingdom. (3) *Ruler over many things*. Higher work, and more strength and wisdom to do it, are sure results of fidelity. *Joy of thy Lord*. Here this joy comes to us as a tiny rivulet ; in heaven we enter into it as into the sea.

Vs. 24, 25. Now, the one-talent man stands before his lord. *I knew thee*. So did the others. *A hard man* (Rev. Ver.); an unreasonable man, using his power to extort more than his lawful rights. *Reaping where thou hast not sown*; unjustly seizing for himself the fruits of other men's labors. *Gathering . . not strawed* (scattered). The reference is to the threshing-floor, where the threshed grain was tossed about ("scattered") by the winnowing fan to separate the chaff. The man represents his Lord as like one who should compel his servant to do this work and then take all the grain for himself. It is true, as this parable shows, that God requires faithful service ; but He is not un-

reasonable. *I was afraid*; of losing the money and so provoking his lord to anger. But it is better to fail when obeying, than to disobey because of an unrighteous fear. *Lo, thou hast thine own* (Rev. Ver.). We do not give to God His own unless we bring all that our abilities can produce. For these abilities are His gift, and He has a right to the fruit of their exercise.

Vs. 26, 27. *Wicked and slothful*. This is the root of the trouble. The slave really claimed that his action was almost his lord's fault—so hard was he. But the slave was indolent. Slothfulness, in Christ's view, is wicked ; powers are given to be used. Work is a Christian virtue. *Thou kneuest*, etc. Even had the lord been all he said, that should have been a reason for working the more diligently and faithfully so as to escape his displeasure. *Money to the bankers* (Rev. Ver.). (Rev. Ver.). One of the best authenticated sayings of Jesus outside of the scriptures is, "Become approved bankers," that is, Invest your talents in the way that God would approve. *Mine own with usury* (Rev. Ver., "interest"). Usury now means an exorbitant rate of interest ; but formerly "usury" and "interest" had the same meaning. It is perfectly fair for a man to ask a reasonable return for the use of his money.

Vs. 28-30. *Therefore*, etc. He has proved his incapacity for such a trust as even one talent. *Give it unto him*, etc.; who has proved his character and ability to use what is entrusted to him. V. 29 is a favorite saying of Jesus (compare ch. 13 : 12). The use of privilege increases privilege. Note that there is no excuse for the man because he had but little. The point of the parable is that the smallest trust must be faithfully fulfilled. *Unprofitable*; a man useless to God—the worst possible judgment. *Outer darkness*; that is, deepest darkness enveloping a scene of irremediable sorrow and remorse.

Light from the East

EXCHANGERS—The money-changers of the old world were also the bankers of that time. They received money on deposit and paid a fixed rate of interest on it. They also loaned it out at higher rates and negotiated drafts on their correspondents abroad. Interest