

Now, while it is true that the word talent, by the accommodation of speech, has come to mean a special gift in some particular line, yet the interpretation of the parable as briefly given above, which is the commonly received rendering of it, while true in part, obscures or omits entirely the real application of it to those who have lived since the Saviour's time; for it is possible that a man may improve his talents or natural abilities to the utmost without doing good to any, thereby occupying the double position of the five and one talent man. The omission of the distinction as laid down in the text deprives the parable of its true meaning. Now, let me say, that the *talents are not our abilities*; for in the text talents, not abilities were given. *He gave to every man according to his several ability*, are the words used. The number of talents given depended on the extent of the ability of each. The man with the most received five talents and the others were entrusted commensurate with their ability. Every one in the kingdom has abilities, and those who have not are not fit subjects of it. All have talents just as certainly as they have abilities. Let no one say they have no talent, and are, therefore, as dead branches on a living tree. Abilities come by nature, talents by grace. When the Master calls us into His service the poorest as well as the richest in natural attainments can find "talent" all along their respective lines. Bear in mind, however, that the talent and ability are no way synonymous, the former is something capable of improvement; the latter being the power of improving the talent. This distinction must be constantly kept before us, or we will confound things that differ, and thereby be confused.

Whatever may be the real signification of the talent, and it may be many things, yet to my mind *talents are our opportunities for doing good*. Certainly these are always in proportion to our abilities. By improving them as they come to us by the moments or the hours we have great reward. These are our Master's treasures, and so they appear for the first time rugged, crude, naked, they may not carry with them any value, but when we improve them, transform them by the power of a single act, they may have the worth of shining glistening gold. It is by so doing that we lay up treasures in heaven. Opportunities and abilities are the Christian's stock in trade, and as we use one upon the others to-day we gain promise for the morrow. To the man with the most talents, and the man with the least the "well done" will be said. They both did their best, and that is all the Master expects. We never do our best, however, until we do our all. The man worth one talent might have had said to him well done, his talent was in proportion to his ability, but he digged in the earth and hid his Lord's money. "Thou wicked and slothful servant," fell upon his ears ringing with doom. Alas! too many in the church to-day are hiding their talents, allowing their opportunities, as golden as the hours, to go unheeded, and to be lost forever. We can no more call them back than we can call a soul from the other world. How great are our responsibilities! "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

E. B. B.

THE EDITOR:—The editor must understand something of everything. He wants more than scissors and a bottle of mucilage. If he merely retails the ideas of others, the public will prefer to go up and get the thing at the wholesale establishment. He must be able to discuss with strong and entertaining pen, governments, religions, educational enterprises, social changes, books, amusements, men, institutions, everything. He must have strength to take a thought on the end of his pen and fling it a thousand miles, till it strikes within an inch of the point at which he aimed it.

TALMAGE.

"THE WORD OF GOD."

If we take up the Bible and glance through its pages we very often see things we do not want to see. It is represented as a glass through which we see ourselves. There is not one who, on glancing at the reflecting pages of Holy Writ, will not see something that reminds him of himself. Truly the word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. We may hide the book within the inmost recesses of our library and deny its power and existence, but that is conclusive evidence to my mind of a conscience sin or guilt. It is man again with guilty conscious fleeing from the face of his maker. He is unable to look into the perfect law of liberty, for he is not a doer. It is that innate sense that links man to his God and eternity, compelled by sin to shun its affinity. Every state of man demands certain requirements. These states are of different orders. In secular life, if a man is not fitted out with the requirements of a certain profession he cannot enter it. The very deficiency itself will deprive him of the honors of that profession. So it is in the spiritual life; the very fact that man lacks goodness, honesty and integrity will banish him from the privileges of the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free. The consequence is a result of the very nature of the thing itself. The very fact that sin is present will banish one from God; for God has given sufficient to each one to judge himself and his own conscience or lease of right must either copulate with the word of God and create a new being or remain forever apart with the canker-worm of punishment in itself, being as it is spirit at variance with its God. Hence from this you see that God cannot set one's conscience right, or in other words He cannot take away the sense of guilt or sin from any man until he (man) comes to Him and cries for mercy acknowledging himself a sinner. Then the inherent divinity is linked to the Fountain of all truth upon which it rests, taking away all condemnation. There is that within every man that sits in judgment on all his actions. There is that within every man that will give him happiness to all eternity. There is that within every man that will give him misery to all eternity. The very laws of man's being is sufficient in the presence of truth, to give him happiness or misery independent of any God. Eat of the spiritual food and drink of the spiritual rock and live, refuse it and die. It is a physical law spiritualized. Stretch forth your hand and partake of the food and live. Your part is done when you have made it your own. It rests with the law of life to do the rest, and that is to convert it into strength, health, or the full enjoyment of life.

NELSON STEVENSON.

Crapaud, Sept 1st.

MARTHA OR MARY.

I cannot choose. I should have liked so much To sit at Jesus' feet. To feel the touch Of His kind, gentle hand upon my head, While drinking in the gracious words He said. And yet to serve Him! Oh, divine employ! To minister and give the Master joy! To bathe in coolest springs His weary feet, And wait upon Him while He sat at meat. Worship or service, which? Ah, that is best To which He calls me, be it toil or rest; To labor for Him in life's busy stir, Or seek His feet a silent worshipper. So let Him choose for us. We are not strong To make the choice. Perhaps we should go wrong, Mistaking zeal for service. Sinful sloth For loving worship. And so fail of both.

—Christian Commonwealth.

Miscellaneous.

RAM'S HORN WRINKLES.

God will not look at your tombstone to see whether you are fit for heaven.

A coward can fight in battle, but it takes a hero to patiently suffer alone.

When every church member gets religion in his money the devil will run.

The world is full of people who tire themselves and others nearly to death in trying to rest.

There are hypocrites in the church, to be sure, but in it are also found the best people on earth.

No man is safe for eternity until he has found out the truth about God, himself, and the devil.

It looks as though the man who loves God with all his strength ought to keep from going to sleep in church.

The man who can keep sweet in church while his politics are being shot at is the man the devil hates.

The devil is always glad to see people join the church who have no intention of making any change in their conduct.

When you pray for a deeper work of grace in your heart do you ever pray that it may be deep enough to strike you in the pocket.

When the devil can't have his way about who the pastor of the church shall be, he generally manages to have a hand in picking out the janitor.

The devil has done a good day's work when the father of a family has been persuaded that he can save money by not taking a religious newspaper.

Have you seen the Ram's Horn? a first-class weekly paper working on a line peculiarly its own, thoroughly evangelical, and readable from the first letter to the last. Send a postal to The Ram's Horn, News' Building, Indianapolis, Indiana, for a sample copy.

CHIPS FROM TALMAGE.

The world has learned that a thing is not necessarily good because it is dry. There is no religion in chips. We never could see any sanctity in husks. The donkey hath no hilarity in his voice and no nonsense in the twitch of his ear. He never was known to dance, yet he never gets higher than his feed box, while the robin and the lark from the tip of bill to the tip of claw all life and joy and merriment, with their wings brush the door-latch of heaven. I would like it the more if the editor dips his pen in the dew to tell me of the morning, and in roseate to describe the sunset, and into the purple vats to suggest the vineyards, and if then he fastens his sheets together with a blue band torn from the forehead of heaven. There is yet to be such a thing as holiness on the bells of the horses, and when religion shall have completed the conquest of the earth I expect to see all the diamonds of the universe flashing in the rim of her tiara.

Alas! for that absurdity rampant among families, that when because of physical incompetency, a man is fit for nothing else, he is fit to be a "legate of the skies." Religion will never make up for lack of liver and backbone.

The chief glory of God comes after the rain. No shower, no rainbow; no trouble, no Christian consolation. Weavers are sometimes, by reason of their work, dirty and rough in their apparel; and so it is the coarse clad tempest, whose hand and foot swing the shuttle that weaves the rainbow.

Christ the Lord stands ready to save any man who wants to be saved. He waited for you all