

light was kindled in a chamber on the ground floor. He made a secret investigation, and overheard the lad's prayer.

One evening this father ordered the young servant to come to him to his cell, announced to him what he had discovered, and commanded him to bring the book to him immediately. The youth was at first confused, but soon recovered and began to defend himself; but it was of no avail, the book must be brought without delay.

When it was produced, and they were both alone and unobserved the Jesuit looked into his book-cupboard, drew out a book, and handed it to the lad. Well, it was a "Garden of Paradise" too!

"I also pray and read every day out of Arndt's 'Garden of Paradise,'" said the venerable old man. "And you, whom I have long loved and respected on account of your good and upright conduct, continue firm in your faith. Behold these strong convent walls! they will be forsaken and will fall, but this insignificant little book will remain."

The Jesuit was right. Of the Jesuit monastery at Millstadt only the blackened walls remain, but not far from them there flourishes a prosperous evangelical community, whose most precious book, after the Bible and Luther's Catechism, is the "Garden of Paradise." The name of this village is Unterhaus.

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

READ ST. MATTHEW XXV. 14—30.



IN this parable our Lord still teaches us about His coming at the end of the world. As the time of His leaving them drew near, almost all that He said to His disciples bore upon this subject, as though He would leave them under a deep impression of it, to live so always when He should be gone. And so He would have us to live.

In this parable He teaches us about the talents which He has entrusted to us, and the use we are to make of them, and the account we must give.

A talent was a sum of money. In our case it means not money only, but all the various powers, gifts, and opportunities which we have in this life; such as our time, our bodily strength, our powers of mind, our station in life.

Our Master has gone away, and has left us, His servants, here below. He has given talents to us all, to some more, to others less, as to the servants in the parable; but to all He has given some. When He comes again He will reckon with us. He is not like this master, who did not know what his servants were doing with his goods till he came back. Our Master, though He is in heaven, yet knows exactly what we are doing every day. What does He see us doing with

our talents? What kind of account could we give, if we were called upon for it now?

The two first servants were both faithful, and equally faithful. The very same words of blessing were spoken by their master to them both. Yet one had been entrusted with five talents, and had made them ten, while the other had received only two and made them four. What does this teach us? That we shall be reckoned with according to the use we make of our talents, not according to the talents themselves. A poor man may be as faithful a servant of Christ as a rich man, and receive hereafter as full a blessing. One who has never even learnt to read may be as true a Christian as a great scholar; a servant as a master; a child as a grown-up person.

True, the scholar, the master, and the grown-up person have more talents, greater opportunities of doing good; but this is not the question: the question is, what use they make of their talents, whether five, or two, or only one. They who love their Saviour have this comfort, that, however humble they may be in station, learning, or ability, yet He will certainly own them as "good and faithful servants," if they use their little aright.

The servant who was cast out, was cast out, not because he had received only one talent, but because he had made no use of that one; he would have been just as unprofitable with five talents.

How plainly his case shows us what our Lord expects of us? He kept his money safe; was not that enough? No, he should have used it; his condemnation was because he was an unprofitable servant, he made no profit of it for his master. Many excuse themselves by saying, "I do no one any harm." But what is that at the best but to hide their talent in the earth? Even if what they say were true, they would be unprofitable servants; and the unprofitable servant was cast out.

But it is not true. Every one who is not doing good in the world is doing harm. A person has an influence over others, whether he thinks of it or not. What he does and what he say, the general tone of his character and conduct, tells upon those around him for good or for evil, they are the better, or the worse, for him. The talent is not really hidden in the earth, though he may think it is; it is above ground, doing harm if it is not doing good.

Did the master mean to acknowledge that he was a hard man? No; he only took the servant in his own way, and condemned him out of his own mouth. If he was indeed so hard and unreasonable, why did not the man take all the more pains to satisfy him, instead of making it an excuse for doing nothing?

In like manner many have hard thoughts of God. They think Him stern and severe, and His service bondage. But what does God say of Himself? "God is love." And how does our Lord invite us into His service? "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Our Master is kind, gracious, and compassionate. All our strength for