

# Northern Messenger

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'No paper so well fitted for the general needs of Canadian Sabbath Schools.'—Wm. Millar, McDonald's Corners, Ont.

## Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard.



—From 'Pictures and Parables from the Bible,' Ernest Nister, London.

Idlers all day about the market-place  
They name us, and our dumb lips answer  
not,  
Bearing the bitter while our sloth's disgrace,  
And our dark tasking whereof none may  
wot.  
O, the fair slopes where the grape-gatherers  
go!  
Not they the day's fierce heat and burden  
bear.

But we who on the market-stones drop slow  
Our barren tears, while all the bright hours  
wear.

Lord of the vineyard, whose dear word de-  
clares

Our one hour's labor as the day's shall be,  
What coin divine can make our wage as theirs  
Who had the morning joy of work for thee?

—L. Gray Neble.

## Take God at His Word.

(By the Rev. Dr. J. F. Berry.)

Several years ago, when in New York City, I became a little weary of my visit and of business, and wandered down to Castle Garden to while away an hour. As I was coming away, just outside the Garden I passed a loaded fruit-stand. Standing near the stand, feasting with his eyes on the vision of abundance, was a little street Arab, togged up in a cast-off suit of man's clothes, with sleeves cut off, and trousers cut off, and the skirt of

his coat cut off, and all tied together and tied on with pieces of rope. Pale-faced and wan, with eyes sunken, the little urchin stood watching that fruit-stand from his great brown eyes. He had no money; the Italian who presided wouldn't give him any of the fruit if he asked for it; he simply stood there looking, and imagining how good it would taste—if he only might!

Now, I am usually a penurious, mean, close-fisted sort of person, but something about that sight moved me with an impulse of generosity, and I said to the lad, 'Johnny,

how would you like to have all of that fruit you could eat?' The boy said nothing, but edged away. I said, 'Johnny, I used to have two little boys and I used to take them home fruit, and candy, and lots of nice things, but Johnny, one day God came down to my house, and he liked my boys, and he took them away up in the sky. They don't need candy and fruit there, Johnny; and I haven't spent any money on boys in more than a week—so I want you to eat all you can off from that fruit stand.' You should have seen that boy look at me! From crown to toe, he looked me all over, and took my measure and then started to move away. I was dumbfounded. I ran after him; caught hold of him; he pulled one way and I the other. 'Here, my boy, come back here! Don't you believe me? Come back here, and you shall have all the fruit you want to eat. He looked up at me, and said he, 'Mister, wot you say is orful good—or-ful good—but mister, that's too good to be true! Say, mister, I've lived in this town too long to be fooled by such a looking chap as you be!'

Well, I called in the Italian's assistance, and he began at the boy: 'Cohm here, leetle boy! Cohm here. Does kin' gen'lman geef you all fruits you want! Cohm here, leetle boy! C-e-c-cohm quick, or gen'lman change his min'! Cohm! All fruits you want—help yourself, leetle man!'—And the boy believed the Italian in preference to me, and began to fill himself—not his stomach, but his clothes,—first a pocket on this side; then a pocket on that side; then a pocket in his trousers that went clear down to China; then another pocket in his trousers. Then he turned himself about and shook himself down, and began again, and got in another very respectable layer. As that boy went around the corner, he cast at me one long, lingering look, and that look was so full of grateful appreciation that it was ample remuneration for the outlay—and it wasn't such a small outlay, either; the things he carried off with him cost me three dollars and seventy cents.

Then I went back to my room at the hotel, and I paced the floor. And finally I said to myself: 'J. F. Berry, you've been acting all your Christian life toward God just as that little boy acted toward you! When you have been staggering under the weight of responsibility, weak and pale and haggard—God has said, "Come, my child, to the storehouse of the Gospel fruitage. Come! There is enough of grace and to spare. Withholding doth not enrich me, and giving doth not impoverish me!" And you have answered, "What you say is awful good, God, but it's too good to be true!" and you have turned away to faint and stagger and fall again! And I fell on my face and cried, 'God forgive me for going half-famished when I might have been filled with heavenly blessings! God forgive me!' and I left that room to believe God; to take him at his word.

Let us begin to take God at his word. Let us open our hearts to him! The storehouse is full; it is open for the pouring out of blessing. Let us open our hearts! Let us open them just now!—'Young People's Paper.'