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The Evangelical Churchman.

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THE INNER CALM.

Calm me, my GOD, and keep me calm,
While these hot breezes blow;
Be like the night dew's cooling balm
Upon earth's fevered brow.

Calm me, my GOD, and keep me calm,
Soft resting on Thy breast:
Soothe me with holy hymn and psalm
And bid my spirit rest.

Calm me, my GOD, and keep me calm,
Let thine outstretching wing
Be like the shade of Elim's palm
Beside the desert spring.

Yes, keep me calm, tho' loud and rude
The sounds my ears that greet;
Calm in the closet's solitude,
Calm in the bustling street.

Calm in the hour of buoyant health,
Calm in my hour of pain,
Calm in my poverty or wealth,
Calm in my loss or gain.

Calm in the sufferance of wrong,
Like Him who bore my shame,
Calm 'mid the threatening, taunting throng,
Who hate Thy holy name.

Calm when the great world's news with power
My listening spirit stir,
Let not the tidings of the hour
E'er find too fond an ear.

Calm as the ray of sun or star
Which storms assail in vain,
Moving unruffled through earth's war
The eternal calm to gain!

—Rev. H. Bonar.

DEFINITE CONSECRATION OF TALENTS

In order to the Consecration of our talents to God "being very real," it must be very *definite*. We must as far as possible discover what our talents are. Some are in a measure common to all alike. Others are more special; and these are not equally bestowed upon those who possess them. Some may have few talents; others many: but none are without any, from the least to the greatest. "Every man," in the parable, received something from the master (Matt. xxv. 15). Many hardly recognize what talents they have. They have so often thought of such things as riches, health, and high station in life as talents, but have never looked upon poverty, sickness, low estate, and many other things in which they have a share, in the same light. But as a matter of fact, everything is a talent that we can use in God's service, to bring glory to Him, and to advance His Kingdom in this world. This view enlarges very much the list of every one's talents, and opens up avenues of definite service, which were before unrecognized. We hope in these papers to make this plain to all.

Having discovered and recognized our talents, the next thing is not to underrate them. Some cannot do this. Their special gifts and opportunities are so obvious, that it would be simple affectation to speak lightly of them. Such people, however, often need a more lively sense of their responsibility. But others are tempted to under-estimate their talents. Because these are not brilliant and obvious, they think that they have very little entrusted to them, and can accomplish next to nothing. These people also need to be awakened to a careful use of their little. They are in danger of hiding their Lord's money. And it is remarkable that in the parable the man who did so was one to whom least was entrusted. Supposing, however that their talent is small, it is as important to be "faithful in a very little" (Luke xix. 17) as in the greater gifts. But as a matter of fact we cannot estimate how great or how little they are. God requires the talents of each of us in the sphere in which we have been placed. Compared with the heavenly rewards for their right employment, it is true that they are all regarded as "a few things" (Matt. xxv. 21, 23), and "a very little" (Luke xix. 17). But considered in themselves, they are all of equal importance for the sphere in which they are needed, and for which they are given to us by God. They are not measured out to "every man" *anyhow*, but "according to his several ability" (ver. 15), a very comforting expression. The abilities of each individual are duly considered in the bestowment of them. Talents not needed are not bestowed. But those which are given will most surely find a sphere of exercise close at hand, if it is only recognized.

From this point of view, no single talent is of little value. "The Lord hath need of it" makes all the difference. This made the obscure young colt on that special occasion, when prophecy had to be fulfilled, even more necessary and important than the finest horse in Palestine. And it is exactly so with our talents. Wherever God needs them they are of the very first importance. The talents of the humblest cottager are more needed in his cottage home than the brilliant gifts of the statesman or the preacher; and *there* they are far more important. The same is true of every condition of life.

Then, it is so necessary definitely to regard our

talents as very real openings for the direct service of God. This is as true of talents, which relate to the ordinary and daily surroundings of our life, as of those which refer to what is more usually called "religious" work. It is as true of the talents employed in making home life all that it ought to be, as of those needed for preaching the Gospel, or for writing books on spiritual life for thousands to read. If the "Lord has need" of both, He is served as much by one as the other. The one may produce results bearing more directly on eternity; but all are for Him. The routine of domestic employment, or of the necessary employment of life, are avenues through which our talents may do Him service, none the less than preaching and Sunday-school teaching, if our whole life is devoted to His glory. The recollection of this will surround the most ordinary and "humdrum" life with splendid and constant possibilities of serving God.

And lastly, a word about the responsibility for our talents, and the reward for the right use of them. It will stimulate to increased diligence, and to more definite consecration.

Never let us forget that we are responsible for our talents. They are not only for use, but God *expects* us to use them, and will require an account of them. We so easily forget this account to be rendered, just because we so often forget that they are not our own, but *His*. If they are His, of course an account must be rendered for each of them. None can be left out of His reckoning, however much we may have left them out of ours. The unused talent of the slothful servant was brought into the account, just as much as those which had been usefully employed by the others.

Let us remember then that, at the judgment-seat of Christ, when he comes again, this account must be rendered by every one. Day by day, and hour by hour, we are laying up the materials for that searching judgment; and so our whole life's work is bound up very solemnly with the Second Advent. We are trading now with our Lord's money, and on His return He will "reckon" with servants (ver. 19), to "know how much every man has gained by trading" (Luke xix. 15). The reckoning is to be as *individual* as the bestowment of the talents is: and proportionate results will be expected from their use.

But then comes the grand reward. It is very solemn to bear in mind that, apart from the question of personal salvation through faith in Christ, the rewards of His future kingdom are to be proportioned according to *works*. "My reward is with Me, to give to every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12), is just as true as, "By grace you are saved through faith . . . not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 8, 9). The reconciliation is to distinguish between salvation itself, and the rewards which will be given to the saved according to the measure of their works. And we may safely say that the whole question of works centres round the right employment of the talents entrusted to us. These are the tools with which we are to work, and these indicate the sort of work we are intended to do. But the actual amount of reward will depend upon how earnestly we do the work. Each day we live we are in this solemn way making our mark upon eternity.

In regard, then, to all the talents entrusted to us, let us be "always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58).