

## March 17

*Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that*

R3695 "How abundant is the cause for thanksgiving! We who have been blessed with the richest favors of divine grace in that knowledge of divine truth which reveals to us the high privilege of becoming sons and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away...

Spiritually, we have feasted on the bounties of divine favor; while in things temporal, under whatsoever circumstances we have been placed, having the assurance that *all things* work together for good to them that love God... Wherefore, we can and do most heartily "offer unto God thanksgiving." And shall we not render unto him, not only the praise of our lips, but also the incense of truly consecrated lives, throughout the year upon which we are just entering? Dearly beloved, consecrate yourselves anew to the Lord today -- not in the sense of invalidating the consecration made once for all, possibly many years ago, but rather in the sense of re-affirming and emphasizing that covenant. Tell the dear Lord that you consider yourselves entirely his, and that it is still your purpose to keep your all upon the altar of sacrifice during this new year and until it is wholly consumed in his service. Then let us proceed with studious care from day to day to pay these, our vows...

### HOW SHALL WE PAY OUR VOWS?...

When we consecrated ourselves fully to the Lord, we thereby signified that we would hold nothing back for self. That consecration included all our possessions, our time, our physical energies and our mental attainments. And it implied the sacrifice of all our former earthly ambitions, hopes and aims, so that we should no longer pursue them to any extent. This, and nothing less, is what our vow of full consecration signifies. But it signifies, further, that these possessions or personal qualifications, which the Lord terms talents, are not only to be released from the service of the worldly ambitions, etc., but that they are to be so released, not for aimless inactivity, but for the purpose of being utilized in an opposite direction--in the service of God, of his plan and of his children.

In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) the Lord illustrated very clearly how we are expected to pay our vows of consecration to the Most High. He says: "It is like a man who, intending to travel, called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to each according to his respective capacity; and straightway took his journey."

### TO EACH ACCORDING TO ABILITY

This master had important and valuable interests to leave in charge of his servants; and as these servants had all engaged to serve him, he had a right to expect of them a sincere and faithful interest in the work. Yet he did not expect more of them than they were severally able to accomplish. He rightly expected larger returns from the one who had five talents than from those who had

*which he hath. Matthew 25:28,29*

WHY is the one-talented man chosen as an illustration of these talent-burials? It is to show the responsibility of those who have least--that the Lord expects even the least of His consecrated people to know of and to

one or two talents. And in the reckoning, it will be observed that the servant who had doubled his two talents was just as highly commended as the one who had doubled his five. The reply to each was the same--"Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And had the servant with the one talent been similarly faithful he would have received the very same commendation. Notice also that the parable does not represent the obligations of the world of mankind in the use of their talents, but merely of "his own servants"-- the consecrated believers only. And notice also that no servant was left without some talent of usefulness and responsibility. Each servant had *at least* one talent; and for the right use of that one talent he was just as accountable to his master as were those who had more.

But the professed servant with the one talent was unfaithful to his master, and yet he evidently wanted to be considered a servant still, and probably thought he was worthy of commendation and reward for not perverting his Lord's money to other uses. He had taken good care of the talent; he had not turned it in opposition to the Lord, but he had simply buried it--failed to use it. At the reckoning time, he who had received the one talent said, "Lord, I knew thee, that thou art an exacting man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not scattered. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast thine own."

"His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not scattered; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers; and then at my coming I should have received mine own with interest." It will be observed that this servant was not what men would generally call wicked. He was simply an idler, willing, if he could, to draw a servant's approval and compensation, but lacking any real, active interest in his master's business. He had no ill will toward his master; he was probably very glad that the other servants kept the business from going to wreck and ruin; he did nothing to hinder them from using their talents, but he did not feel the responsibility he had assumed in becoming a "servant," nor take a proper interest in his master's affairs. Yet, as a faithless, slothful servant, he was really a covenant-breaker, and therefore "wicked" and certainly unfit to be trusted with still greater responsibilities on the master's return.

But let us remember that this was not a real case: it was simply a parable used to illustrate real cases. And if the illustration fits your individual case, let it not lose its effect upon you. The very object of the parable is to arouse such to a sense of their short-comings, and to recover them from the lethargy into which they have relaxed, by reminding them of their responsibilities. Activity in the Lord's service to the full

use the talents he has in his possession, and that He will not hold guiltless even those who have the smallest ability to serve Him and His brethren and His truth, and who neglect to use it. Z. '01-59 R2765:1

extent of our ability or talents is what the Lord has a right to expect of all who profess to be his servants; and it is what he does expect. Therefore, if you have but one talent, do not bury it, but cultivate and use it; do what you can, and all you can, in the great work to which we have already consecrated our lives.

### MUCH GIVEN, MUCH REQUIRED

And those who have several talents, let them see to it that they too are faithful to the extent of their abilities, not being content to do merely what the one-talented man can do or ought to do. Such a one would not be a good and faithful servant, and could not expect the Master's approving "Well done!" His approval will be given to those only who are faithful to the extent of their opportunity.

Those who find the truth and make the consecration before they are encumbered with the cares of this life, who have no families dependent upon them and who have a reasonable degree of health, have at least two talents--time and health--which can and ought to be utilized in the service to the best possible advantage. Then there are those who have a money talent, or a business talent, and such should consider how these are being used. Are they largely swallowed up in luxuries, or a superabundance of the good things of this life, for either self or family? Or are they being laid up as treasures upon earth--in banks, store-houses and investment securities, to enrich and to cultivate the spirit of pride in friends or children, and for them to quarrel over after you are dead?

Our talents for use in the Lord's service consist of all those things and opportunities which are over and above what we need for the necessary and reasonable maintenance of ourselves or our families, if we have families, and the reasonable provision against distress in case of a sudden calamity or approaching old age, etc. Aside from these, all we have should be in active service, be they many talents or few. If we have five talents and are using only one or two, how can we expect the Master's "Well done, good and faithful servant"? Did we not covenant to give and to use *all* for him?--all our money, all our time, all our influence, all our mental activity, all our physical ability? How faithful have we been during the past year? How do we stand at the bar of our own judgment? And how faithful will we be during the coming year? After providing things decent and honest for ourselves and those dependent upon us, let us judiciously appropriate our talents to what we profess to consider the chief business of life. Here are the testing points of true loyalty and devotion. Let us ponder them well, and not lightly set them aside.

### FORMER OPPORTUNITIES LOST

But observe further what the Lord has to say about this "wicked and slothful servant." He says: "Take the talent from him and give it unto him which hath ten talents; for unto every one that hath [made use of his talents] shall be given, and he shall have

abundance; but from him that hath not [made use of his talent] shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into *outer darkness*; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The outer darkness here referred to is in contrast with the inner light of the holy place of favor and communion and instruction from God, symbolized in the Tabernacle. The testing comes on the return of the Master. Then the faithful servants shall enter into fuller joys and privileges and blessings, while the unfaithful will go into the outer darkness of error and ignorance concerning God's plans and ways, which envelops the world in general, and their neglected opportunities for more abundant service will go as a reward to those who are already earnest and active, and whose earnest and faithful labors will in due time be abundantly rewarded.

As we thus view our Lord's teaching, we see that our only security as sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ is in activity in the service of the truth. Well, says one, I see very few doing that. Very true: only a few will do it. But that precious few are the Lord's jewels. Are you one of them? Ah, that is the point to be considered. No matter how few they are, or whether you ever saw or knew of any such, that does not alter the conditions of our calling. "This is the way: walk ye in it." One, at least, has trodden it before. Look for his foot-prints and follow him, and "He will give strength unto his people," even though they walk alone, as he did, without the cheering companionship of fellow-travelers.

"LO, I AM WITH YOU"

But think not that you are traveling alone in this narrow way. The Lord has now

a consecrated people, a faithful band of servants who, with every talent consecrated, are steadily pursuing their course in the narrow way. We know some of them by name and by character and by their steady and progressive activity in the blessed work. Not many of them have five talents, but a good many have two or three, and some only one. Quietly and unobtrusively they go about from day to day preaching the wonderful words of life, and God is with them and is leading them on. Their hearts are full of joy and hope and they are kept securely amidst all the perils of this evil day. None are so clear in their apprehension and appreciation of truth as those who are fully enlisted in its service. Let all who would run the race successfully look well to their zeal and activity in the Lord's work. If we bury our one or our many talents under a weight of worldly cares and encumbrances which might be avoided or set aside; if we bury them under worldly ambitions for either self or family-- whether this be by wasting consecrated time upon science, philosophy, music or art; or upon business, politics or pleasures; or in pampering pride and appetite --then as unfaithful servants we will sooner or later go into outer darkness, by being caught in some of the snares of this "evil day," and will be led farther and farther into error and away from truth.

Mark well that it is not a case of such unfaithful servants being *liable* to get into outer darkness, into error: it is a case of *must*. The Master's orders are peremptory and decisive: "*Cast* the unprofitable servant into outer darkness." The light now shining is *not for* the unfaithful, but for the faithful servants; and no matter how clearly the unfaithful may have seen and understood

R5539 "All that we can render will be at best very, very little in return for all His bounties, for all His matchless grace toward us. But the measure of love and zeal that accompanies our little all will indicate the measure of our gratitude to our Heavenly Father and our great Redeemer."

R2764 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

## "TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS SEVERAL ABILITY"

--MATT. 25:14-30.--FEB. 10.--

"So, then, everyone of us shall give an account of himself before God."--Rom. 14:12

IT WAS ON the way from Jericho toward Jerusalem that our Lord gave the Parable of the Ten Pounds, delivered one each to ten servants. (Luke 19:11,12. See our issue of Dec. 1.) The Parable of the Talents which we are now considering is a different one in several particulars, tho bearing close resemblance to the other. It was part of our Lord's teaching to his disciples during the few days preceding his crucifixion, probably the Tuesday preceding it, on the evening journey from Jerusalem to Bethany. This parable illustrates to us the differing abilities of God's people in respect to his service, and how each is accountable according to his ability, and that the same results are neither required nor expected from all, but simply faithfulness by each in the use of that ability and opportunity which he possesses.

The Revised Version notes the fact that the words, "the Kingdom of Heaven," in the opening verse, are not found in the ancient MSS., but this does not interfere with the thought that it is the Kingdom of Heaven in embryo (the Church) that is discussed, and that is likened to these servants who receive the talents; for this parable, it is to be remembered, followed immediately the Parable of the Ten Virgins, which is declared to be an illustration of the Kingdom. The Parable of the Talents, therefore, merely continues the thought re-

the deep things of God, and no matter how he may have enjoyed them, if he has not loved them so as to serve them and sacrifice his conveniences for them, he is unworthy of them and *must* go out into the outer darkness of the world in general. With these as with the world the disappointment of theories and plans in the great time of trouble will ere long bring the weeping and gnashing of teeth foretold.

### FAITHFULNESS IMPLIES ACTIVITY

It is indeed a notable fact that in no single case have we seen one drift away from the truth into the snares of these perilous times who was very active and fully enlisted in the Lord's work, whose one aim and endeavor was to herald the truth and to bless others with it. To such the Lord says, "My grace is sufficient for thee"--"Ye shall never fall, for so an abundant entrance shall be ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us, then, dearly beloved, have for our watchword during the year the word "devotion," and let each of us write upon his heart the gracious promise-- "The Lord will give *strength* unto his people." Let us be faithfully "his people," and let us earnestly desire and faithfully use the *strength* promised. Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it. So, then, if you lack the strength to use faithfully your talent, the fault is yours, not God's. You either have not his service close enough at heart or else do not make use of the strength he provides. "The Lord will give strength unto *his people*"--his trusting, faithful servants--those who are using to his praise the talents consecrated to their Master, however many or few those talents may be.

specting the Kingdom class, making these fresh observations respecting it.

Altho a number of servants are implied, yet only a sample illustration of three is given, leaving it to be inferred that the others were more or less distinctly represented in these three, without attempting to show or to teach which of the classes would predominate. In this respect also this parable corresponds to the Parable of the Pounds. This parable was evidently, like the other, to prepare the minds of the apostles for our Lord's departure from the present life--to the "far country," heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God to present on behalf of mankind the sacrifice for sins which he was about to accomplish at Calvary; and incidentally to be crowned, highly exalted and honored far above angels, principalities and powers, at the right hand of divine favor, and there to remain till the appointed time for him to take possession of his Kingdom under the whole heavens, to subdue it and to bring it into full accord with the divine government, that God's will should be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

The expression "far country," would give the thought of a considerable time to elapse between the Master's leaving and his return to establish his Millennial Kingdom. Meantime the apostles were to

understand that they themselves were his servants to whom he entrusted his property, and that he would expect them to be faithful in guarding all of his interests and affairs, and promoting the same according to their several abilities. But since the parable covers the long period of eighteen hundred years, and looks down to certain servants living at the time of the Master's return, it is evident that it was intended to include, not the apostles only, but, as our Lord's prayer expressed the matter, "All those who shall believe on me through their word." We are to notice distinctly that the parable does not concern the world; nor do the decisions mentioned as taking place at the second coming of our Lord in any sense of the word represent decisions respecting the world, but merely decisions respecting the Church. Nor are we even to understand that the parable includes the general "household of faith;" but simply and only the specially consecrated servants of the Lord, to whom he has committed certain responsibilities; *viz.*, those only who have been begotten of the holy spirit.

In the early Church, following the Pentecostal outpouring of the holy spirit, every consecrated believer received a gift or talent, and some received many of these, as the Apostle says: "The manifestation of the spirit [a portion, at least one talent] is given to every man [in this consecrated Church] to profit withal." Each had a responsibility in proportion as he had talents or gifts of the spirit, and hence the Apostle Paul, having more than the others, had a greater responsibility because he had greater opportunities; and we judge that he measured up to these responsibilities in a manner most acceptable to the Master. (1 Cor. 14:18.) But those gifts must have ceased within a short time after the death of the Apostles, because we most clearly find that the gifts of the spirit were imparted to believers only through the laying on of hands of the apostles --that they did not come supernaturally from God to every individual,--and that those who possessed the gifts themselves, except the apostles, could not communicate them to others.--Acts 8:12-20.

The object of those gifts, as we have already seen, was the establishment of the early Church, but with its establishment their necessity ceased, and hence the gifts ceased in that form, and have since continued with the Lord's people in a very different form; that is to say, since then the *natural* gifts or talents which each person possesses through birth, education and training are reckoned, when he is consecrated to the Lord and accepted by him, as being owned or possessed by the man's new or holy spirit, and hence are reckoned as talents or abilities committed to his care, and for the use of which he will be held responsible in the outcome. If he remained one of the world he would have other responsibilities, but no such as are implied in this lesson, which represents only the responsibilities of the consecrated servants in the use of their Master's spiritual goods.

We may safely say that there are comparatively few five-talent servants amongst the Lord's people: the majority of the saints may safely be considered as being of the one- and two-talent classes. There are not many five-talent people in the world anyway, and it would appear that the world, the flesh and the devil bid so high for the services of these few that the number of them to become the Lord's servants, and to make consecration of their five talents fully and exclusively to his service, is comparatively small--"not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble."

The parable shows that five-talent people amongst the Lord's servants are not to measure themselves with others and to say, I have done enough; certainly more than A., who has one talent, but as much as B., who has two talents. Rather, each disciple is to seek to know truthfully just what talents of natural ability and opportunity the Master has committed to his care, and to seek to use everyone of these as fully, as thoroughly and as constantly as possible, so that the results may be much fruit, much praise, much service, much honor to the Lord. And as this parable should be a check upon those servants who have five talents, to hinder them from taking a slothful view of the matter so it should also be an encouragement to those having fewer talents of ability and opportunity, showing them that the Lord will not expect as great things from them as he would expect from those having greater opportunities and greater natural talents. It teaches such that they should do with their might what their hands find to do, and realize that this reasonable service is what the Lord expects and what he proposed to reward in each. The serv-

ant who had only one talent of ability and opportunity should have felt equally his responsibility, and might equally have had the Master's approval had he been faithful, in which event, no doubt, his one talent would have increased to two.

Our Lord's arrangement of the parable, that the person who received the one talent was the one who digged in the earth and buried it, should not be understood to mean that the one-talented people are more likely than others of the Lord's servants with more talents to thus neglect and misuse them. So far as observation teaches, we might conclude that proportionately as many of the two-talented and five-talented dig in the earth and hide their talents, as of those who possess only one; and of course their so doing would be proportionately more blameworthy than that of the one-talented man. <sup>(1)</sup>Why, then, is the one-talented man chosen as an illustration of these talent-burials? We answer, that it is to show the responsibility of those who have least--that the Lord expects even the least of his consecrated people to know of, and to use the talents he has in his possession, and that he will not hold guiltless even those who have the smallest ability to serve him and his brethren and his truth and who neglect to use it. As the responsibilities accompanying a larger number of talents would be greater, so the losses in their case would be greater, and thus the punishment more severe.

"After a long time the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them." By these words our Lord gave to the disciples as clear an intimation as was proper of the fact that they were not to expect him to return and reckon with them in a very few days, a few months or a few years; but when they subsequently asked him respecting the particular time, he refused them, saying that it was not for them to know the times and the seasons, which the Father had put in his own power. And so for eighteen hundred years the Lord's people have been left without clear information on this subject. This, however, does not militate against the thought that it is the privilege of God's people *now* to know something of the times and seasons, because the due time has come in which the Father wishes to communicate these;--the time mentioned through the Prophet Daniel, when the [truly] wise shall understand, as we saw in the preceding lesson.--Dan. 12:10; 1 Thess. 5:4; John 16:13.

There is no intimation in the parable that the disciples would die and *go to* their Lord, and be reckoned with and rewarded then, as many believe to have been the case. The Scriptures are harmonious and consistent with themselves in their teachings, and not only declare that "David is not ascended into the heavens," and that "no man hath ascended up to heaven" save Jesus, but they declare also that *our Lord will come* a second time, to receive his people unto himself and to then reward them. The Apostle Paul, who was one of these five-talented servants, declares respecting himself, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me [in reservation, in waiting] a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me *in that day*, and not to me only, but also unto all them that love his appearing."--2 Tim. 4:7,8; John 3:13; 14:3; Acts 2:34.

To our understanding we are now living in "the days of the Son of Man," and he is now reckoning with his servants in this the day of his revelation. We understand, according to the Scriptures, by faith and not by sight, that the reckoning was to begin with those servants who had fallen asleep, and that "we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" should not prevent or hinder them, nor take precedence to them in this matter of being reckoned with and rewarded. (1 Thess. 4:15-17.) To our understanding, as already shown in the MILLENNIAL DAWN series, 1878 marked the date for our Lord's assumption of Kingly authority and his judgment upon Babylon the Great, characterizing her as "fallen," and calling for all the people of God to come out of her: and that it marked also the date for the faithful overcomers of the past to have a share in the first resurrection--to enter into the joys of their Lord, and hear his words, "Well done, good and faithful servants." In harmony with this, it is our understanding that all of this class are now enjoying the glory, honor and immortality promised to the faithful. This work of judging the *servants* is totally distinct from the judging of the *world*--the

<sup>(1)</sup> Mar. 17 Manna, Mat. 25:28-29

world's judgment is very different every way, and is to take place during the Millennial age, and is represented in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, the scene of which is located "when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory," at which time the faithful servants of the present age, whose trial is now in progress, and whose reckoning and rewards are shown in the parable of the lesson, will sit with the Lord in his throne as he has promised.--Rev. 3:21.

As other Scriptures show, "we who are alive and remain unto the presence of the Lord" will not be omitted from the company of the glorified, altho our being alive will not give us precedence to them. The inspection and rewarding of the Lord's servants having begun in 1878 as respects those that had fallen asleep, is since progressing in respect to those who remain: these are granted a reasonable time in which to finish up their contract of full consecration,--to become *ripe* "wheat"--and to render up their accounts. Each of the elect now, as he finishes his course, reports immediately, and does not need to "sleep" in death, to wait for the coming of the King, but is immediately, in the moment of death, changed, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," experiencing fully and instantly the first resurrection blessing of glory, honor and immortality --in the moment of death.

Realizing from this view of the parable that the Lord's people of today are represented in it, it is for each one of the consecrated (while yet it is called day --before the night cometh) to make a full and thorough inspection of himself: and to determine to what extent he has talents, abilities, privileges, opportunities, to serve the Lord, and to what extent he is using these; and to remember that his share in the reward depends upon his faithfulness in the use of his talents. There may be instances in which persons of five talents will use three of them faithfully in the Lord's service, and bury the other two in business and cares of this life-- "in the earth," in earthly affairs. There may be instances in which those who have two talents use one for the Lord's service and bury the other one; but the fact that our Lord does not give such illustrations would lead us to question the probability of such a course. Some might *plan* certain things respecting two talents for heavenly things and three for earthly things; or of one for earthly things and the other for heavenly things; but the result probably would be either that he would become thoroughly immersed in the earthly things, and bury all his talents there, or else that his heart would become so thoroughly infused with the Lord's spirit and the desire to serve his cause that all of his talents would be thus employed. This tendency and result is implied by our Lord's statement on another occasion: <sup>[2]</sup>"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." "No man can serve two masters." Experience and observation corroborate this; and hence as a rule we find that people are either cold or hot in spiritual things; either it is the Kingdom of heaven first and far above all other considerations, demanding and receiving the very best we have of time, energy and influence; or else the Kingdom of heaven is neglected and forgotten, and time and influence are spent in money-getting or other selfish and earthly occupations of mind and body.

The lesson of this to every one of the Lord's consecrated people is plain: <sup>[3]</sup>we are to "seek first [chiefly] the Kingdom of God." It is to be our chief concern and to receive from us all the time, attention, thought, energy, influence and means we have--the things *needful* for the present life being understood to be excepted; and our love and zeal will be manifested by the proportion of these even, which we are willing to sacrifice in the interest of heavenly things.

The reward given to the faithful servants was the same in each case--the entering into the joys of the Lord; and we may reasonably understand that this will mean that the cup of joy to each will be full. In this, too, we have a great encouragement for all, and one which perhaps is specially needed by the majority of the Lord's servants, who possess only one or two talents of opportunity, etc. They have an equally good opportunity of entering into the joys of the Lord as tho they had five or ten talents; and the reward, "Well done, good

and faithful servant," will be truly meant for, and as fully appreciated by the one as the other.

The reward to these servants is in full harmony with the foregoing application of the parable, and shows that during the Millennial age the faithful servants, the "elect" of this Gospel age, will be the rulers of the world, "joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord" in his Kingdom, and upon his throne of rulership; for the reward specifies, "Thou has been faithful over a few things; I will make thee *ruler over* many things." If the parable were intended to represent the world's judgment, such a conclusion would be inappropriate, because by the time the world's judgment will have ended there will no longer be necessity for rulership in this sense; for, as the Apostle declares, Christ shall reign [during the Millennium] until he shall have put down all authority, etc., and then he shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father. The *rule*, or reign of righteousness, the Mediatorial Kingdom, is to be established during the Millennial age,--thus to overthrow the rule of unrighteousness now prevailing amongst men, and to lift mankind in general out of the present condition of sin and death--to deliver as many of them as will accept the deliverance from the power of Satan into the liberty of sons of God. And with the accomplishment of this work the time for all such ruling will be at an end; hence this parable is a strong lesson in support of the pre-millennial coming of our Lord and exaltation of his faithful, the elect Church.

The servant who hid his talent in the earth, and who failed to use it, endeavored to justify his course by blaming the Master with being too hard and exacting. And so it is with many, who, having taken upon themselves the vows of consecration to the Lord, subsequently fail to perform them. They are disposed to blame the Lord rather than to blame themselves; and this course indicates what their real lack is,--Love. They do not love the Lord fully, truly, sufficiently, and their course reveals this fact. Had they loved him they would have delighted to do to their ability his will; and only such are blessed with rewards.

The punishment of those who failed to perform their covenant as servants, who failed to use the talents provided for them under this covenant, is shown to be great loss;--but not the loss which many suppose, whose minds are blinded by the theory that eternal torment is the wages for sin, and that it is visited upon all except the "overcomers" of this Gospel age. Such claim that the unfaithful servant would be delivered over to Satan and be tortured in flaming fire, and so blind are many of the advocates of this theory that they read all this into our Lord's statement in this very parable; but instead of mentioning flames of fire, which would surely make the place *light*, our Lord mentions *darkness* as his portion--"outer darkness." Neither does our Lord mention the demon-tormentors, generally believed in.

We offer another and much more reasonable, much more consistent, interpretation of our Lord's words. The servant who fails to use present privileges of consecration and service and sacrifice will find the opportunity taken from him. He will have it no more; neither will he have any share in the reward given to the overcomers;--he will suffer this great loss. He is represented as going into "outer darkness," implying that he had already been in the light of divine favor, blessing, privilege, knowledge of divine things;--that he would lose this enlightenment, and that his understanding would become darkened as respects spiritual things. It is "outer darkness," because it is the darkness common to and resting upon the whole world of mankind;--only the consecrated, accepted of the Lord, being permitted to come fully into the clear light of the knowledge of the Lord and of his plan now shining. Any others than these, upon whom this light may temporarily fall, have it only in a secondary sense, at very most, and see not the glorious things themselves, but merely, so to speak, their reflections. The unfaithful servant is to be cast completely out of all favor; even the reflected light will be obscured from his vision, and he will find himself, now or shortly, in the darkness of the world as respects the divine plan, work, etc. And there he will share with the world in its great time of trouble with which this age is about to close, a time of trouble which is fittingly pictured in the parable by the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>[2]</sup> ½ Oct. 30 Manna, Mat. 6:24

<sup>[3]</sup> ½ Oct. 30 Manna