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If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget its cunning."---Psalm 137, v.5.

A Sermon

PREACHED

By the Rev. Alfred Blomfield,
IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, LONDON,
On Sunday Evening, Feb. 11th, 1866.

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

"The kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one: to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey."
---Matt. xxv. 14-15

What is a talent? In its first and simplest sense, it is a considerable sum of money, large enough, if properly invested in trade, to produce, in the course of years, a considerable fortune, or if placed in the hands of usurers, the bankers of those times, to accumulate a considerable sum as interest. In its secondary and derived sense, taken from this parable, it is any gift, moral, physical, or spiritual, which God gives to his creatures, and of which He will require an account from them. Now when we look at this parable, we find that, more than some other of our Lord's parables, it is applicable to all classes of Christians, and therefore, is suited to the most miscellaneous congregation, or the most mixed assemblage, or body of men, because although there are many servants, and those differing in ability and station, yet every one has a talent given him, whether it is large, or whether it be small. There is none without something. And our Lord would teach us that although Almighty God assigns His gifts

to mankind in different proportions, yet he does not withhold them altogether from any one. Everyone has something which is the talent committed to His charge. Now, this is a most admitted truth—we all know that we have a talent; but it need not be the less profitable for us to meditate upon it, because we all admit it. Almighty God, although His avocations are so numerous and so complicated, finds time to suit His gifts to the capacity of him to whom he gives them, and to fit the talent to the recipient. It only remains that we should know that we have a talent, and that we should know how to use it.

Now, my brethren, there are two kinds of talents which, because they are so great, and because they make so much show, are apt to obscure all other talents, and to make us look at them as if they were the only talents—I mean the gift of wealth, and the gift of intellectual excellence. These, doubtless, are very great talents. Humanly speaking, these two things together will always rule the world. Separately even they are powerful; but when they are combined, they are irresistible—Everyone, therefore must admit the greatness and the responsibility of these gifts. It is not a serious thought, when we know that every year in our own country wealth is increasing, that there are more rich men next year than there are this, to reflect that there is increasing at the same time the number of those whose responsibilities are not small and low, but great and high; the number of those who have not one talent but five. It deserves to be dinned into the ears of rich men, lest they should forget it, "Your wealth is your talent. You will be required to give an ac-