

money, but to increase and use it for the Lord. How largely he was prospered in so doing need not be told ; but in our judgment his success clearly betokened the Divine approbation of the principle upon which he conducted his business. He used faithfully the *one pound*, and the Master gave him *ten* !

That this is the aim with which every Christian merchant and artizan should prosecute his calling, none, we presume, will dispute. How many there are who actually adopt it, and endeavour to carry it out, only the great Master himself can know. That many do so, we doubt not. We fear there are more, however, who, while honourable and just in their dealings, have no higher object in the pursuit of their daily avocations than that of earning a living, or becoming rich. They are doing business *for themselves*, not for the Lord, except in a very secondary sense.

The question has been much discussed of late as to what proportion of our income should be devoted to religious and charitable purposes, and various have been the answers which, in the absence of any New Testament rule in regard to the matter, have been offered towards its solution. The problem, however, is as far from being solved as ever, for it is manifest that a *tenth*—supposing that to be the rule—would be a much larger proportion, relatively, to the poor man than to the rich. Hence the matter has been left to be decided in each individual case by the measure of our LOVE which, whether it can command three hundred pence to bring its box of fragrant spikenard, or only the two mites of the poor widow, may equally hope for acceptance from Him who still “sits over against the Treasury.”

But do we not really *invert* the question as left to us by the New Testament, when we state it in the form in which it is generally put ? Do we not assume—contrary to the teaching of Holy Scripture and the spirit of the early Christians—that “the things which we possess” are “our own” ? And is not the right way to settle the question to begin by the recognition of the fact that *all* our income and worldly goods are *the Lord's*, and then ask what proportion of *His* money we may properly spend upon *ourselves* ? King David, the most liberal giver the world ever saw, was penetrated, apparently, with this conviction, for he accompanies his munificent offerings for the building of the Temple with the devout acknowledgment, “All things come of Thee, and of *Thine own* have we given Thee.”

If this view be correct, it follows that money is a sacred trust, for the