

hearsay reports, but with full knowledge of each case shall the "nobleman" in person hear each man's report. **Every man gained**—Personally responsible in full measure of the gifts, blessings and privileges enjoyed (Matt. 12: 36; Rom. 14: 12; 2 Cor. 5: 10). **16. Thy pound**—"He gives the Master all the profit and all the credit too." "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory" (Ps. 115: 1). Gained the pound. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich (Prov. 10: 4). The story of the successful merchant of Bristol is full of interest, the beginning of whose merchant life was the horseshoe that he picked up one day on his way to school, and carried three miles, and sold to the blacksmith for a penny. That penny was the foundation of a business pronounced after his death the largest in the west of England, turning nearer millions than thousands in the course of the year. All was the result of the judicious use of what he had. (Pulpit Com.) **17. Well done** (R. V.)—The delight and satisfaction of the "nobleman," a sense of which he expressed in these words of approval and admiration. **Good servant**—reliable, manly and trustworthy. **Faithful**—Not great endowments, not great achievements, not great opportunities, not a great reputation, but true faithfulness in the path of duty secures the divine approval and wins the crown of life (Rev. 2: 10). **A very little**—Faithfulness in little things is the true path leading to promotion. Many are anxious to do great things, forgetting that the great things of life consist in the faithful performance of the little ministries and duties of everyday life in the home, in the field, in the market, anywhere and everywhere (Luke 16: 10). **Ten cities**—Archelaus had given the government and revenues of cities to adherents who had remained faithful to him. When Christ returns in his glory he will reward his servants on a nobler and more munificent scale (2 Tim. 2: 12). **18. The second came**—He, too, had won for himself a high and responsible position in the kingdom. **19. Five cities**—He did not earn "the noble title, Well done" and "good servant." He was rewarded not praised. His cup of enjoyment was full. Some are capable of greater enjoyments than others; "some an hundredfold, sixtyfold, thirtyfold" (Matt. 13: 8). "Very accurately, indeed, it seems, will places and names and power be awarded in the heaven-life, exactly in proportion to merits and deserts."

III. THE TRUST NEGLECTED. 20. Here is thy pound—gifts unused, opportunities neglected, powers lying dormant, faculties uncultivated, laid up in a napkin. He was commanded to trade with his pound. He simply folded it in a "handkerchief" and laid it aside. All are held guilty that do not use their abilities and opportunities faithfully. **21.**

I feared—The secret of this servant's trouble was that he failed to understand his master's character, hence his unmanly, unworthy conduct. Had he truly feared his master he would have been the more careful to make a diligent use of the pound entrusted to him. Unworthy thoughts about God always lead to unworthy actions. The service of God is a service of love, not of slavish fear. **Austere**—harsh, severe, stern, inconsiderate about the interests and rights of others. **Takest up**—exactingly and unlawfully more of a servant than lay in his power to render. **22. Out of thine own mouth**—With thine own words. His plea for excuse groundless, he now stood before his master self condemned. **Judge thee**—"It is not the atheist, or the criminal, or the perpetrator of vicious deeds; it is not the outward and flagrant transgressor who is here judged and condemned: it is the man who made nothing of his life." The man who plays the hypocrite, proclaims that to be good and valuable which he counterfeits. (Howe). **23. Wherefore**—introduces a very simple, practical and pointed question. **Into the bank**—to the money exchanger. How many opportunities and fields lay open, where we can use all our gifts and talents in advancing the interests of Christ's kingdom "at home and abroad." **Usury**—simply the interest for the use of money. **24. Take from him the pound**—He whose it is to give has the right to take it from his unprofitable servant and punish him. Idle Christians will grow more and more careless and unspiritual. Gifts or members unused will in due time lose the power for service at first possessed. **Give to him that hath**—The same law of growth or increase holds good in the spiritual world as in the natural world. A diligent use of what one has tends to increase his capital. **25.** Evidently the words of Jesus were a matter of considerable surprise to his hearers as is clearly indicated in their words of reply. **26. For I say**—The "nobleman" is here represented as proceeding to lay down the principles upon which he will distribute the rewards of his kingdom, and the punishment that would be meted out to those "citizens" who would not that he "should reign over them." **Shall be given**—He that turns to good account that which he has now, though it be "a very little," shall find enlarged opportunities for greater service. "Aptitude comes with effort and exercise." **Shall be taken away**—Lukewarmness and indifference in the matter of religion lead to spiritual poverty and ruin (Rev. 3: 15-17). **27. Slay them**—The awful and impending doom awaiting all faithless souls. We should diligently use every means to increase and cultivate our Christian graces, and carefully guard against the spirit of indolence and slothfulness.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *God commits to every one a certain amount of capital.* This capital consists of

life—the time, circumstances, condition and surroundings of our being; *reason*—that power