

worthy to be called a Christian country. That would imply a Christian Parliament, Christian laws, New Testament principles incorporated in acts of legislation. Let me see a country taking the New Testament as a book of last appeal in its legislation, and I will own it is a Christian country; but not till then. To say that all who have had the water of baptism sprinkled on their brows are Christians *because* of that is utterly to misuse the ordinance, which *declares* something about God, not something about the child—nothing further than this, at any rate, that it has a right to all the privileges of Christ's Kingdom. A Christian is one who witnesses to Christ in his daily life. Life includes speech and action. To be as are they who make no claim of relationship to our Lord would be strange inconsistency. If we use ourselves, our time, our powers, our money, our property of any kind even as they who, by their conduct, declare they have no soul to be saved, then it is better for us to have done with calling ourselves Christians. We are lowering the name in the eyes of the world around us. We make it stand for nothing. It is like a swindler's forged bill; there is nothing to represent it. It remains for the Evangelical Churches of England to rescue the name of Christian from its fallen condition. "Ye are my witnesses," saith our Divine Head. "Ye are the salt of the earth!" "Ye are the light of the world!" Is a witness dumb? Is salt inactive? Is light valueless? The least we dare ask of you, my brethren, is that you would discard these loose applications of the word "Christian," which are as frequent as they are misleading, and stick resolutely to the New Testament. Let us leave mere ecclesiastics to their squabbings, and for our doctrines, our opinions, our practices go to the New Testament. If we would only give the same implicit obedience to the New Testament principles which the Romish Church claims from her children, instead of being bound in fetters and

chains, we should rise to the dignity of Christ's freemen.

A second reason for that fear, which makes a Christian "dig in the earth" and hide his Lord's gifts, is this—*distrust of God's grace*. "I shall never be able to do so and so." But who goeth a warfare at his own charges? If you are Christ's soldier, fighting His battles, wearing His regimentals, and marching under His flag, will He, who has called you to be a soldier, not provide all things necessary? Venture on Him, venture wholly. Suppose a *student* were to begin his studies with, "I shall never reach such a point?" Suppose a *tradesman* were to begin his business with, "I shall never succeed?" Suppose a *labourer* were to begin his day's work with, "I shall never get through?" Would there not be universal stagnation all around us? Everywhere men *must* walk by faith, and the more faith the more success. How often do we hear that confidence is half the battle! We must trample on distrust. We must crush down despondency. Take thou, oh timid one, God's promises, and they shall be as bread, as meat, as water of life to thee.

But now, as a final word—our own spiritual life requires that we shall not bury our one talent, whatever it be. There is a penalty attached to sloth as well as to positive wickedness. It is so in relation to *this* world's welfare, and so in respect to the soul's interests. We can only keep what we have by using it. "Take, therefore, the talent from him"—the unused talent—was the master's verdict. The other day I met with a curious myth illustrative of this point. It comes from the East, from Mahomedanism; but is very expressive. A tribe of men, says the story, dwelt on the shores of the Dead Sea. They had forgotten all about truth, and had taken up with lies; and were fast verging towards the saddest possible condition. Whereupon, it pleased a kind Providence to send them the prophet Moses with an instructive word of warning.