

use of property. I assume that the readers of this article believe that the inspired Word of God is designed to direct the daily life of Christians in our own time. We all know that it is possible so to wrest a text of Scripture as to pervert the spirit and the purpose of the Gospel, in the use made of cited texts. But the whole trend of Scripture is so clear upon this matter of the responsibility which attends the use of property by a Christian, that it will be well for us to consider a series of texts like the following :

"The rich man is wise in his own conceit" (Prov. xxviii. 11). "Thou fool ! this night thy soul shall be required of thee. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God" (Luke xii. 20). "The deceitfulness of riches chokes the word" (Matt. xiii. 22). "But they that will to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Tim. vi. 9). "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil : which some, reaching after, have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. vi. 10). "Let not the rich man glory in his riches." "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly" (the Greek is *duskolos*, meaning, literally, that his diet and his digestion are such as to put his life entirely out of harmony with the heavenly life, which "goes against his stomach ;" before he can enter in he must be fed upon other food)—"shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xix. 23). "How hardly shall they that have riches" (the Greek is *chremata*, not necessarily great riches, but possessions enough to trust in) "enter into the kingdom of God" (Luke xviii. 24). "Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in the uncertainty of riches, but in the living God ; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate—that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. vi. 17, 18). "Go to, now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted ; your gold and your silver are rusted, and their rust shall be for a testimony against you" (James v. 1-3). It is *the rust*, not the gold, that is the witness against them. Their means are not used for Christ, and the selfish rust on them "shall eat your flesh as it were fire." "There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun—namely, riches kept by the owner thereof to his hurt ; and those riches perish by evil adventure" (Eccl. v. 13).

Can there be any question that these clear declarations of God cut sharply across the tacit assumptions of many of the Christians of our time ?

The point to be noted is, first, that the parables and teachings of our Lord, time after time, hold up the property relation as the basis of a lesson in Christian living. Nothing can be clearer than that our Divine Master holds every Christian responsible for the right use of all his possessions, however small, however large they may be. For the man who had five talents and the man who had two, Christ has the same commendation, the same relative reward, for each used faithfully the property he had ;