

Christian service whatsoever. At first, such despond. By-and-by they consent to this condition of things, and accept it as inevitable. Now, Christian brethren, I must have a word or two with those of you who belong to this department of Christian life. You see that God has given to some five talents; to others two; to others one. Very few of us have the five, not many of us have more than the two. But there is no Christian without a talent of some sort, the employment of which would bring good to himself and blessing to others. But, with the one talent, there is very often indeed a tendency to depreciate it. Having stated so much in a general way, let me now press upon your willing attention the thoughts of the text, not exactly in the order in which they are given, but beginning with the most important first; this, namely—

*Everything we possess is God's.* It was "his lord's money" that this man hid. It was something given him in trust. He had not created it. It could not, therefore, be his. He had no right to use it as he liked. "Have I not a right to do what I will with my own?" asks the ungodly man. Yes, sir, decidedly; but what is your own? To begin with, physical life is not your own. It was by God's law that it was originated. Mental life is not your own; it is God's gift. The earth you walk on is not your own. The air you breathe is not your own. It seems to me that such men commence with a wrong idea of things. And if the parent idea be wrong, all the children of it will be wrong too. But I am not speaking with infidels, but with seekers after truth, and with Christian men and women who are trusting in Christ. But are not we, my brethren, apt to forget that what we possess we hold in trust from God? The brain-power we have; the love-power we have; the money-power we have—these we hold in trust for God. They are ours, so to employ them as that He shall have the profit. This lower life is only the promise of a higher life. It is

the groundwork on which we are to build up a spiritual temple. Just as the rays of the sun in spring-time strike on the dead earth, so that the seed deposited in it begins to sprout and put forth, till a beautiful flower appears, so likewise the influences of the Holy Spirit are continually operating upon this human nature of ours. Out of it that celestial agent develops the graces of the Spirit and the fruits of holiness. And everything about us ought so to be ordered as that in it there shall be the confession, I am not my own: I am God's. Nothing have I that I have not received! Now, I am afraid that much of our life is utterly wanting in such confession. We forget God our Maker, and Christ our Redeemer. I believe that much of the non-success that many men meet with is attributable to this fact, that they practically forget God. Do we remember, in our domestic arrangements, that we belong to God? Is there a household acknowledgment of the fact? Do we daily confess before children and dependents that we are God's? And that, not by word simply! Do we confess it in the way we dispose of our gains? Nothing put by for Christ's kingdom? A paltry sixpence whenever there happens to be a collection is all with many who claim the title of Christian. How can such read the words of our Lord without feeling pangs of inconsistency!—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (about which ye are so anxious) shall be added unto you."

*But if everything we possess be the gift of God, since the life, health, and ability by which we obtain it is God's,* are we not under obligation so to use everything as that God's glory shall be promoted thereby? I cannot see how we can escape the inference. To dig in the earth and hide a talent is to dishonour God. It is to rob self also. Now many persons take to themselves credit for great humility, when they ought to reproach themselves with great indolence. There is a spiritual indo-