

ble are of universal application. They come home to every man, and he cannot evade them. "*Occupy till I come*," are the solemn words addressed by the ascended Lord to every soul who receives the Gospel message.

I. "OCCUPY."

This word is significant, and sharply defines and expresses a truth that we are prone to forget and disregard. It does not imply ownership, simply use, and use with particular reference to the actual owner, and the account we are to render to Him. The talents intrusted to His servants were not given to them, only "delivered to them" for lawful use till His return. All the ten servants but one so understood it and acted accordingly, and were generously rewarded. The one delinquent did not steal or misappropriate his Lord's money, only hid it in a napkin, and so it gained nothing, and his Lord was wroth and punished him sore.

The sad truth is, the most of us use the talents which Providence intrusts to us as if we had a *right* to them, an *ownership* in them, and so can dispose of them as we please. The idea that we are simply "stewards" and must render a rigid account, and may be called to do it any hour, does not possess our minds and rule our conduct.

II. "OCCUPY" WHAT?

Whatsoever the Lord sees fit to intrust to our keeping. The trusts are different in kind and different in degree. To some "ten talents," to others "five," and to others but "one talent," is bestowed. To some the trust may consist in wealth, or in the capacity and opportunity to acquire wealth in an honorable way. To some is given mental powers, or spiritual gifts of a high order. To others social qualities and personal attractions, which give them extraordinary influence in society. No matter what the nature or measure of the endowment—one and the same principle runs through them all. "Occupy" them, whatever they be: fully enter into and discharge the duties of the Divine trust. The man of one talent is just as sure to be called to ac-

count and rewarded or punished as the man of ten talents. No one will be excused on any plea whatsoever.

III. OCCUPY TILL I COME.

There are three things which deserve special consideration under this head. We cannot enlarge upon them, only state them.

1. The coming of the Lord to every servant is a matter of *absolute certainty*. The plain import of Scripture teaching leaves no doubt on this subject. Whether it be a speedy, visible coming, to set up a personal reign on the earth, as some teach, or the coming to each in the hour of death and the day of judgment, it matters little.

2. The day and the hour of the Lord's coming is *known to no man*. It may not be in many years, and it may be to-day. It is a point that admits of no speculation even. "*Occupy till I come*." The dictate of prudence, of wisdom, is, to be always ready and waiting.

3. This coming, whenever it be, is *associated with a personal accounting to the Lord of all*. He knows the exact number of talents intrusted to each, and each will be required to give an exact account of how he has used them; and the measure of his reward will be the measure of his faithfulness.

JAN. 19.—THE CHURCH AND THE FAMILY.—1 Eph. iv: 1-16; Col. iii: 18-25.

The passages referred to clearly outline the object, the scope and the fundamental principles of these two great agencies, which God has established for the government and the salvation of mankind. The single point of the broad subject that we shall consider at present, is the *intimate and radical relation of the two*. This is not clearly understood and duly emphasized, especially in our day. The family compact as a Divine institution and as an essential agency in society, both in Church and State, has not been sedulously guarded from profanation, and its integrity is now assailed by manifold influences that are fast weakening its power and threatening its overthrow.

It is well for us to keep in mind the