A person in an orange jacket and backpack stands on a snowy mountain peak, looking out over a vast valley. The valley is filled with green and yellow fields, and a small town is visible in the distance. The background features majestic, snow-capped mountains under a clear sky.

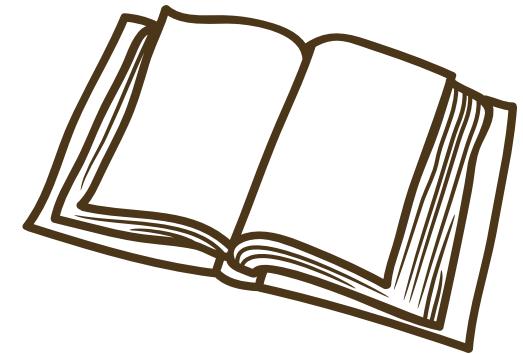
# Our high calling: using our God given talents & means

---

Present Truth Presentations

# Scripture reading

## Matthew 25:13-30



# Explanation of the scripture reading

The man traveling into a far country represents **Christ**, who, when speaking this parable, was soon to depart from this **earth to heaven**. The “bondservants” (R.V.), or slaves, of the parable, represent **the followers of Christ**. **We are not our own**. We have been “bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:20), not “with corruptible things, as silver and gold, ... but **with the precious blood of Christ**” (1 Peter 1:18, 19); “that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Corinthians 5:15).

**All men have been bought with this infinite price**. By pouring the whole treasury of heaven into this world, by giving us in Christ all heaven, God has purchased the will, the affections, the mind, the soul, of every human being. Whether believers or unbelievers, all men are the Lord's property. **All are called to do service for Him, and for the manner in which they have met this claim, all will be required to render an account at the great judgment day**. But the claims of God are not recognized by all. It is those who profess to have accepted Christ's service who in the parable are represented as His own servants.

Christ's followers have been redeemed for service. **Our Lord teaches that the true object of life is ministry**. **Christ Himself was a worker, and to all His followers He gives the law of service—service to God and to their fellow men**. Here Christ has presented to the world a higher conception of life than they had ever known. **By living to minister for others, man is brought into connection with Christ**. **The law of service becomes the connecting link which binds us to God and to our fellow men**.

**To His servants Christ commits “His goods”—something to be put to use for Him**. He gives “to every man his work.” Each has his place in the eternal plan of heaven. Each is to work in co-operation with Christ for the salvation of souls. Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God. *Christ Object Lessons, p. 325-226*

# **Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

**1 Corinthians 12:8-11**



**The special gifts of the Spirit are not the only talents represented in the parable. It includes all gifts and endowments, whether original or acquired, natural or spiritual.** All are to be employed in Christ's service. In becoming His disciples, we surrender ourselves to Him with all that we are and have. These gifts He returns to us purified and ennobled, to be used for His glory in blessing our fellow men.

The talents, however few, are to be put to use. The question that most concerns us is not, **How much have I received? but, What am I doing with that which I have?** **The development of all our powers is the first duty we owe to God and to our fellow men. No one who is not growing daily in capability and usefulness is fulfilling the purpose of life.** In making a profession of faith in Christ we pledge ourselves to become all that it is possible for us to be as workers for the Master, and **we should cultivate every faculty to the highest degree of perfection, that we may do the greatest amount of good of which we are capable.**

The Lord has a great work to be done, and He will bequeath the most in the future life to those who do the most faithful, willing service in the present life. The Lord chooses His own agents, and each day under different circumstances He gives them a trial in His plan of operation. In each true-hearted endeavor to work out His plan, He chooses His agents **not because they are perfect but because, through a connection with Him, they may gain perfection.** *Christ Object Lessons, p. 329-330*

And those who would be workers together with God must **strive for perfection of every organ of the body and quality of the mind.** True education is the preparation of the physical, mental, and moral powers for the performance of every duty; it is the training of body, mind, and soul for divine service. This is the education that will endure unto eternal life.

**Of every Christian the Lord requires growth in efficiency and capability in every line.** Christ has paid us our wages, even His own blood and suffering, to secure our willing service. He came to our world to give us an example of how we should work, and what spirit we should bring into our labor. **He desires us to study how we can best advance His work and glorify His name in the world, crowning with honor, with the greatest love and devotion,** the Father who “so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

But Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. **God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies.** We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected.

**Remember that you will never reach a higher standard than you yourself set.** Then set your mark high, and step by step, even though it be by painful effort, by self-denial and sacrifice, ascend the whole length of the ladder of progress. *Christ Object Lessons, p. 330-331*

**Be ambitious, for the Master's glory, to cultivate every grace of character.** In every phase of your character building you are to please God. This you may do; for Enoch pleased Him though living in a degenerate age. And there are Enochs in this our day.

Stand like Daniel, that faithful statesman, a man whom no temptation could corrupt. Do not disappoint Him who so loved you that He gave His own life to cancel your sins. He says, "Without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. Remember this. **If you have made mistakes, you certainly gain a victory if you see these mistakes and regard them as beacons of warning. Thus you turn defeat into victory, disappointing the enemy and honoring your Redeemer.**

**A character formed according to the divine likeness is the only treasure that we can take from this world to the next.** Those who are under the instruction of Christ in this world will take every divine attainment with them to the heavenly mansions. And in heaven we are continually to improve. How important, then, is the development of character in this life.

The heavenly intelligences will work with the human agent who seeks with determined faith that perfection of character which will reach out to perfection in action. **To everyone engaged in this work Christ says, I am at your right hand to help you.** *Christ Object Lessons, p. 332*



# TALENTS & MEANS

A 3D rendering of a human brain, viewed from the side, with a complex circuit board integrated into its surface. The brain's gyri and sulci are clearly visible, and the circuitry, including various chips and wiring, is depicted in a metallic, golden-brown hue. The background is a dark, gradient grey.

# 1. MENTAL FACULTIES

**God requires the training of the mental faculties.** He designs that **His servants shall possess more intelligence and clearer discernment than the worldling**, and He is displeased with those who are too careless or too indolent to become efficient, well-informed workers. The Lord bids us love Him with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and with all the mind. **This lays upon us the obligation of developing the intellect to its fullest capacity, that with all the mind we may know and love our Creator.**

**If placed under the control of His Spirit, the more thoroughly the intellect is cultivated, the more effectively it can be used in the service of God.** The uneducated man who is consecrated to God and who longs to bless others can be, and is, used by the Lord in His service. But those who, with the same spirit of consecration, have had the benefit of a thorough education, can do a much more extensive work for Christ. They stand on vantage ground.

**The Lord desires us to obtain all the education possible, with the object in view of imparting our knowledge to others.** None can know where or how they may be called to labor or to speak for God. Our heavenly Father alone sees what He can make of men. There are before us possibilities which our feeble faith does not discern. Our minds should be so trained that if necessary we can present the truths of His word before the highest earthly authorities in such a way as to glorify His name. We should not let slip even one opportunity of qualifying ourselves intellectually to work for God. *Christ's Object Lessons, p. 333*

Far more might be accomplished in the work of self-education if we were **awake to our own opportunities and privileges.** True education means more than the colleges can give. While the study of the sciences is not to be neglected, there is a higher training to be obtained through a vital connection with God. Let every student take his Bible and place himself in communion with the great Teacher. **Let the mind be trained and disciplined** to wrestle with hard problems in the search for **divine truth.**

**Those who hunger for knowledge that they may bless their fellow men will themselves receive blessing from God. Through the study of His word their mental powers will be aroused to earnest activity. There will be an expansion and development of the faculties, and the mind will acquire power and efficiency.**

**Self-discipline** must be practiced by everyone who would be a worker for God. This will accomplish more than eloquence or the most brilliant talents. An ordinary mind, well disciplined, will accomplish more and higher work than will the most highly educated mind and the greatest talents without self-control. *Christ's Object Lessons, p. 334-335*



## 2. SPEECH

**The power of speech is a talent that should be diligently cultivated. Of all the gifts we have received from God, none is capable of being a greater blessing than this.** With the voice we convince and persuade, with it we offer prayer and praise to God, and with it we tell others of the Redeemer's love. How important, then, that it be so trained as to be most effective for good.

On this point the Bible gives instruction. Of the Levites who read the Scriptures to the people in the days of Ezra, it is said, "They read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." Nehemiah 8:8.

**By diligent effort all may acquire the power to read intelligibly, and to speak in a full, clear, round tone, in a distinct and impressive manner.** By doing this we may greatly increase our efficiency as workers for Christ. **Every Christian is called to make known to others the unsearchable riches of Christ; therefore he should seek for perfection in speech.** He should present the word of God in a way that will commend it to the hearers. God does not design that His human channels shall be uncouth. It is not His will that man shall belittle or degrade the heavenly current that flows through him to the world.

The right culture and use of the power of speech has to do with every line of Christian work; it enters into the home life, and into all our intercourse with one another. **We should accustom ourselves to speak in pleasant tones, to use pure and correct language, and words that are kind and courteous.** Sweet, kind words are as dew and gentle showers to the soul. The Scripture says of Christ that grace was poured into His lips that He might "know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." Psalm 45:2; Isaiah 50:4. And the Lord bids us, "Let your speech be alway with grace" (Colossians 4:6) "that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29). *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 335--336



As followers of Christ we should make our words such as to be a help and an encouragement to one another in the Christian life. Far more than we do, we need to speak of the precious chapters in our experience. **We should speak of the mercy and loving-kindness of God, of the matchless depths of the Saviour's love. Our words should be words of praise and thanksgiving.** If the mind and heart are full of the love of God, this will be revealed in the conversation. It will not be a difficult matter to impart that which enters into our spiritual life. Great thoughts, noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth, unselfish purposes, yearnings for piety and holiness, will bear fruit in words that reveal the character of the heart treasure. When Christ is thus revealed in our speech, it will have power in winning souls to Him.

We should speak of Christ to those who know Him not. We should do as Christ did. Wherever He was, in the synagogue, by the wayside, in the boat thrust out a little from the land, at the Pharisee's feast or the table of the publican, He spoke to men of the things pertaining to the higher life. **The things of nature, the events of daily life, were bound up by Him with the words of truth.** The hearts of His hearers were drawn to Him; for He had healed their sick, had comforted their sorrowing ones, and had taken their children in His arms and blessed them. When He opened His lips to speak, their attention was riveted upon Him, and every word was to some soul a savor of life unto life. *Christ's Object Lessons, p. 338*

A 3D rendering of dark blue puzzle pieces arranged in a circular pattern on a grey surface. The pieces are interlocking, with some already connected and others floating nearby. The lighting creates soft shadows, giving the pieces a three-dimensional appearance.

# 3. INFLUENCE

Through Christ, God has invested man with an influence that makes it impossible for him to live to himself. Individually we are connected with our fellow men, a part of God's great whole, and we stand under **mutual obligations**. No man can be independent of his fellow men; for the well-being of each affects others. It is God's purpose that each shall feel himself necessary to others' welfare, and seek to promote their happiness.

**Every soul is surrounded by an atmosphere of its own**—an atmosphere, it may be, charged with the life-giving power of faith, courage, and hope, and sweet with the fragrance of love. Or it may be heavy and chill with the gloom of discontent and selfishness, or poisonous with the deadly taint of cherished sin. **By the atmosphere surrounding us, every person with whom we come in contact is consciously or unconsciously affected.**

This is a responsibility from which we cannot free ourselves. Our words, our acts, our dress, our deportment, even the expression of the countenance, has an influence. **Upon the impression thus made there hang results for good or evil which no man can measure. Every impulse thus imparted is seed sown which will produce its harvest.** It is a link in the long chain of human events, extending we know not whither. If by our example we aid others in the development of good principles, we give them power to do good. In their turn they exert the same influence upon others, and they upon still others. Thus by our unconscious influence thousands may be blessed.

**Character is power.** The silent witness of a true, unselfish, godly life carries an almost irresistible influence. **By revealing in our own life the character of Christ we co-operate with Him in the work of saving souls.** It is only by revealing in our life His character that we can co-operate with Him. **And the wider the sphere of our influence, the more good we may do.** When those who profess to serve God follow Christ's example, practicing the principles of the law in their daily life; when every act bears witness that they love God supremely and their neighbor as themselves, then will the church have power to move the world. *Christ's Object Lessons, p. 339-340*

**It is only through the grace of God that we can make a right use of this endowment. There is nothing in us of ourselves by which we can influence others for good. If we realize our helplessness and our need of divine power, we shall not trust to ourselves.**

We know not what results a day, an hour, or a moment may determine, and never should we begin the day without committing our ways to our heavenly Father. His angels are appointed to watch over us, and if we put ourselves under their guardianship, then in every time of danger they will be at our right hand. When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, prompting us to a better course, choosing our words for us, and influencing our actions. Thus our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world. *Christ's Object Lessons, p. 341*

# 4. TIME





**Our time belongs to God.** Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. **Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time.**

The value of time is beyond computation. **Christ regarded every moment as precious**, and it is thus that we should regard it.

We are admonished to redeem the time. But time squandered can never be recovered. We cannot call back even one moment. The only way in which we can redeem our time is by making the most of that which remains, by being co-workers with God in His great plan of redemption. In him who does this, a transformation of character takes place. He becomes a son of God, a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King. He is fitted to be the companion of the angels.

Now is our time to labor for the salvation of our fellow men. There are some who think that if they give money to the cause of Christ, this is all they are required to do; the precious time in which they might do personal service for Him passes unimproved. **But it is the privilege and duty of all who have health and strength to render to God active service. All are to labor in winning souls to Christ. Donations of money cannot take the place of this.**

**It is the duty of every Christian to acquire habits of order, thoroughness, and dispatch.** There is no excuse for slow bungling at work of any character. When one is always at work and the work is never done, it is because mind and heart are not put into the labor. The one who is slow and who works at a disadvantage should realize that these are faults to be corrected. **He needs to exercise his mind in planning how to use the time so as to secure the best results.** By **tact and method**, some will accomplish as much in five hours as others do in ten. Decide how long a time is required for a given task, and then bend every effort toward accomplishing the work in the given time. The exercise of the will power will make the hands move deftly. *Christ's Object Lessons, p. 342-344*



The life of Christ from His earliest years was a life of earnest activity. He lived not to please Himself. He was the Son of the infinite God, yet He worked at the carpenter's trade with His father Joseph. His trade was significant. He had come into the world as the character builder, and as such all His work was perfect. Into all His secular labor He brought the same perfection as into the characters He was transforming by His divine power. He is our pattern.

Whatever the line of work in which we engage, the word of God teaches us to be “not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.” “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might,” **“knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ.”** *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 345-346

# 5. HEALTH



**Health is a blessing of which few appreciate the value; yet upon it the efficiency of our mental and physical powers largely depends.**

Our impulses and passions have their seat in the body, and it must be kept in the best condition physically and under the most spiritual influences **in order that our talents may be put to the highest use. Anything that lessens physical strength enfeebles the mind and makes it less capable of discriminating between right and wrong.** We become less capable of choosing the good and have less strength of will to do that which we know to be right.

**By allowing ourselves to form wrong habits, by keeping late hours, by gratifying appetite at the expense of health, we lay the foundation for feebleness (a state of being very weak, lacking strength or being ineffective). By neglecting physical exercise, by overworking mind or body, we unbalance the nervous system.** Those who thus shorten their lives and unfit themselves for service by disregarding nature's laws, are guilty of robbery toward God. And they are robbing their fellow men also. The opportunity of blessing others, the very work for which God sent them into the world, has by their own course of action been cut short. And they have unfitted themselves to do even that which in a briefer period of time they might have accomplished.

**Transgression of physical law is transgression of the moral law;** for God is as truly the author of physical laws as He is the author of the moral law. His law is written with His own finger upon every nerve, every muscle, every faculty, which has been entrusted to man. And every misuse of any part of our organism is a violation of that law.

**The relation of the physical organism to the spiritual life is one of the most important branches of education.** It should receive careful attention in the home and in the school. **All need to become acquainted with their physical structure and the laws that control natural life.** He who remains in willing ignorance of the laws of his physical being and who violates them through ignorance is sinning against God. Know ye not," says the apostle Paul, "that your body is **the temple of the Holy Ghost** which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20. *Christ's Object Lessons, p. 346-347*

## 6. STRENGTH



We are to **love God**, not only with all the heart, mind, and soul, but **with all the strength**. This covers the full, intelligent use of the physical powers.

**Christ was a true worker in temporal as well as in spiritual things**, and into all His work He brought a determination to do His Father's will. The things of heaven and earth are more closely connected and are more directly under the supervision of Christ than many realize. It was Christ who planned the arrangement for the first earthly tabernacle. He gave every specification in regard to the building of Solomon's temple. The One who in His earthly life worked as a carpenter in the village of Nazareth was the heavenly architect who marked out the plan for the sacred building where His name was to be honored.

**God desires that His workers in every line shall look to Him as the Giver of all they possess. All right inventions and improvements have their source in Him who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.** The skillful touch of the physician's hand, his power over nerve and muscle, his knowledge of the delicate organism of the body, is the wisdom of divine power, to be used in behalf of the suffering.

**He has entrusted men with talents, and He expects them to look to Him for counsel.** Whatever we do, in whatever department of the work we are placed, He desires to control our minds that we may do perfect work.

*Christ's Object Lessons, p. 348-349*

**Religion and business are not two separate things;** they are one. **Bible religion is to be interwoven with all we do or say.** Divine and human agencies are to combine in temporal as well as in spiritual achievements. They are to be united in all human pursuits, in mechanical and agricultural labors, in mercantile and scientific enterprises. There must be co-operation in everything embraced in Christian activity. **God has proclaimed the principles on which alone this co-operation is possible. His glory must be the motive of all who are laborers together with Him. All our work is to be done from love to God and in accordance with His will.**

It is just as essential to do the will of God when erecting a building as when taking part in a religious service. **And if the workers have brought the right principles into their own character making, then in the erection of every building they will grow in grace and knowledge.** But God will not accept the greatest talents or the most splendid service unless self is laid upon the altar, a living, consuming sacrifice. **The root must be holy, else there can be no fruit acceptable to God.**

The Lord made Daniel and Joseph shrewd managers. He could work through them because they did not live to please their own inclination but to please God. **The case of Daniel has a lesson for us.** It reveals the fact that a businessman is not necessarily a sharp, policy man. He can be instructed by God at every step. Daniel, while prime minister of the kingdom of Babylon, was a prophet of God, receiving the light of heavenly inspiration. Yet the Lord desires to have in His service intelligent men, men qualified for various lines of work. There is need of businessmen who will weave the grand principles of truth into all their transactions. **And their talents should be perfected by most thorough study and training.** Of Daniel we learn that in all his business transactions, when subjected to the closest scrutiny, not one fault or error could be found. He was a sample of what every businessman may be. **His history shows what may be accomplished by one who consecrates the strength of brain and bone and muscle, of heart and life, to the service of God.** *Christ's Object Lessons, p. 349-350*



# 7. MONEY



God also entrusts men with means. He gives them power to get wealth. He waters the earth with the dews of heaven and with the showers of refreshing rain. He gives the sunlight, which warms the earth, awakening to life the things of nature and causing them to flourish and bear fruit. **And He asks for a return of His own.**

**Our money has not been given us that we might honor and glorify ourselves.** As faithful stewards we are to use it for the honor and glory of God. Some think that only a portion of their means is the Lord's. When they have set apart a portion for religious and charitable purposes, they regard the remainder as their own, to be used as they see fit. But in this they mistake. All we possess is the Lord's, and we are accountable to Him for the use we make of it. In the use of every penny, it will be seen whether we love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves. Money has great value, because it can do great good. In the hands of God's children it is food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, and clothing for the naked. It is a defense for the oppressed, and a means of help to the sick. **But money is of no more value than sand, only as it is put to use in providing for the necessities of life, in blessing others, and advancing the cause of Christ.**

**Hoarded wealth is not merely useless, it is a curse.** In this life it is a snare to the soul, drawing the affections away from the heavenly treasure. In the great day of God its witness to unused talents and neglected opportunities will condemn its possessor. The Scripture says, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall bear witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth." James 5:1-4. But Christ sanctions no lavish or careless use of means. His lesson in economy, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost," is for all His followers. (John 6:12.) He who realizes that his money is a talent from God will use it economically, and will feel it a duty to save that he may give. The more means we expend in display and self-indulgence, the less we can have to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. Every penny used unnecessarily deprives the spender of a precious opportunity of doing good. It is robbing God of the honor and glory which should flow back to Him through the improvement of His entrusted talents. *Christ's Object Lessons, p. 351-352*





## 8. KINDLY IMPULSES AND AFFECTIONS

**Kindly affections, generous impulses, and a quick apprehension of spiritual things are precious talents**, and lay their possessor under a weighty responsibility. All are to be used in God's service. But here many err. Satisfied with the possession of these qualities, they fail to bring them into active service for others. They flatter themselves that if they had opportunity, if circumstances were favorable, they would do a great and good work. But they are awaiting the opportunity. They despise the narrowness of the poor niggard who grudges even a pittance to the needy. They see that he is living for self, and that he is responsible for his misused talents. With much complacency they draw the contrast between themselves and such narrow-minded ones, feeling that their own condition is much more favorable than that of their mean-souled neighbors. **But they are deceiving themselves.** **The mere possession of unused qualities only increases their responsibility. Those who possess large affections are under obligation to God to bestow them, not merely on their friends, but on all who need their help. Social advantages are talents, and are to be used for the benefit of all within reach of our influence.** The love that gives kindness to only a few is not love, but selfishness. It will not in any way work for the good of souls or the glory of God. Those who thus leave their Master's talents unimproved are even more guilty than are the ones for whom they feel such contempt. To them it will be said, Ye knew your Master's will, but did it not.

*Christ's Object Lessons, p. 352*

# FINAL WORD

## Talents are multiplied by use.

Talents used are talents multiplied. Success is not the result of chance or of destiny; it is the outworking of God's own providence, the reward of faith and discretion, of virtue and persevering effort. The Lord desires us to use every gift we have; and **if we do this, we shall have greater gifts to use.** He does not supernaturally endow us with the qualifications we lack; **but while we use that which we have, He will work with us to increase and strengthen every faculty.** By every wholehearted, earnest sacrifice for the Master's service our powers will increase. While we yield ourselves as instruments for the Holy Spirit's working, the grace of God works in us to deny old inclinations, to overcome powerful propensities, and to form new habits.

**The humble worker who obediently responds to the call of God may be sure of receiving divine assistance.** To accept so great and holy a responsibility is itself elevating to the character. It calls into action the highest mental and spiritual powers, and strengthens and purifies the mind and heart. Through faith in the power of God, it is wonderful how strong a weak man may become, how decided his efforts, how prolific of great results. **He who begins with a little knowledge, in a humble way, and tells what he knows, while seeking diligently for further knowledge, will find the whole heavenly treasure awaiting his demand. The more he seeks to impart light, the more light he will receive.** The more one tries to explain the word of God to others, with a love for souls, the plainer it becomes to himself. The more we use our knowledge and exercise our powers, the more knowledge and power we shall have.

**Every effort made for Christ will react in blessing upon ourselves. If we use our means for His glory, He will give us more.** As we seek to win others to Christ, bearing the burden of souls in our prayers, our own hearts will throb with the quickening influence of God's grace; our own affections will glow with more divine fervor; our whole Christian life will be more of a reality, more earnest, more prayerful.



Looking unto Jesus we obtain brighter and more distinct views of God, and **by beholding we become changed.** Goodness, love for our fellow men, becomes our natural instinct. We develop a character which is the counterpart of the divine character. Growing into His likeness, we enlarge our capacity for knowing God. More and more we enter into fellowship with the heavenly world, and we have continually increasing power to receive the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of eternity.

*Christ's Object Lessons, p. 353-355*

### **The one talent**

The man who received the one talent “went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.”

It was the one with the smallest gift who left his talent unimproved. **In this is given a warning to all who feel that the smallness of their endowments excuses them from service for Christ.** If they could do some great thing, how gladly would they undertake it; but because they can serve only in little things, they think themselves justified in doing nothing. In this they err. The Lord in His distribution of gifts is testing character. **The man who neglected to improve his talent proved himself an unfaithful servant. Had he received five talents, he would have buried them as he buried the one. His misuse of the one talent showed that he despised the gifts of heaven.**

**“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.”** Luke 16:10. The importance of the little things is often underrated because they are small; but they supply much of the actual discipline of life. There are really no nonessentials in the Christian's life. Our character building will be full of peril while we underrate the importance of the little things.

“He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.” By unfaithfulness in even the smallest duties, man robs his Maker of the service which is His due. This unfaithfulness reacts upon himself. He fails of gaining the grace, the power, the force of character, which may be received through an unreserved surrender to God.

Living apart from Christ he is subject to Satan's temptations, and he makes mistakes in his work for the Master. **Because he is not guided by right principles in little things, he fails to obey God in the great matters which he regards as his special work.** The defects cherished in dealing with life's minor details pass into more important affairs. He acts on the principles to which he has accustomed himself. Thus actions repeated form habits, habits form character, and by the character our destiny for time and for eternity is decided. Only by faithfulness in the little things can the soul be trained to act with fidelity under larger responsibilities.

**Christ in His life on earth taught the lesson of careful attention to the little things.** The great work of redemption weighed continually upon His soul. As He was teaching and healing, all the energies of mind and body were taxed to the utmost; yet He noticed the most simple things in life and in nature. His most instructive lessons were those in which by the simple things of nature He illustrated the great truths of the kingdom of God. He did not overlook the necessities of the humblest of His servants. His ear heard every cry of need. He was awake to the touch of the afflicted woman in the crowd; the very slightest touch of faith brought a response. When He raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus, He reminded her parents that she must have something to eat. When by His own mighty power He rose from the tomb, He did not disdain to fold and put carefully in the proper place the graveclothes in which He had been laid away.

**Great truths must be brought into little things. Practical religion is to be carried into the lowly duties of daily life.**

The greatest qualification for any man is to obey implicitly the word of the Lord. However small your talent, God has a place for it. That one talent, wisely used, will accomplish its appointed work. By faithfulness in little duties, we are to work on the plan of addition, and God will work for us on the plan of multiplication. These littles will become the most precious influences in His work.

**Let a living faith run like threads of gold through the performance of even the smallest duties.** Then all the daily work will promote Christian growth. There will be a continual looking unto Jesus. Love for Him will give vital force to everything that is undertaken. Thus through the right use of our talents, we may link ourselves by a golden chain to the higher world. This is true sanctification; for sanctification consists in the cheerful performance of daily duties in perfect obedience to the will of God. *Christ's Object Lessons, p. 355-360*

### **3. The talents returned**

**But when the Master receives the talents, He approves and rewards the workers as though the merit were all their own.** His countenance is full of joy and satisfaction. He is filled with delight that He can bestow blessings upon them. For every service and every sacrifice He requites them, not because it is a debt He owes, but because His heart is overflowing with love and tenderness.

“Well done, thou good and faithful servant,” He says; “thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Our heavenly Father requires no more nor less than He has given us ability to do. He lays upon His servants no burdens that they are not able to bear. “He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.” Psalm 103:14. All that He claims from us we through divine grace can render.

# Philippians 3:13-14

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

**We should not talk of our own weakness and inability.** This is a manifest distrust of God, a denial of His word. When we murmur because of our burdens, or refuse the responsibilities He calls upon us to bear, we are virtually saying that He is a hard master, that He requires what He has not given us power to do. *Christ's Object Lessons, p. 360-363*

#### **4. The talent removed**

Upon the slothful servant the sentence was, "Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents." Here, as in the reward of the faithful worker, is indicated not merely the reward at the final judgment but the gradual process of retribution in this life. As in the natural, so in the spiritual world: every power unused will weaken and decay. Activity is the law of life; idleness is death. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." 1 Corinthians 12:7. Employed to bless others, his gifts increase. Shut up to self-serving they diminish, and are finally withdrawn. He who refuses to impart that which he has received will at last find that he has nothing to give. He is consenting to a process that surely dwarfs and finally destroys the faculties of the soul.

Many who excuse themselves from Christian effort plead their inability for the work. But did God make them so incapable? No, never. This inability has been produced by their own inactivity and perpetuated by their deliberate choice. Already, in their own characters, they are realizing the result of the sentence, "Take the talent from him." The continual misuse of their talents will effectually quench for them the Holy Spirit, which is the only light. The sentence, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness," sets Heaven's seal to the choice which they themselves have made for eternity. *Christ's Object Lessons, p. 356-365*