

THE TWO TALENTS

NO. 175

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 31, 1858
 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT THE MUSIC HALL ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

“He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, You delivered unto me two talents: behold I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter you into the joy of your Lord.”
Matthew 25:22, 23.

“EVERY good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights.” All that men have they must trace to the Great Fountain, the giver of all good. Have you talents? They were given you by the God of talents. Have you time? Have you wealth, influence, power? Have you powers of tongue? Have you powers of thought? Are you poet, statesman, or philosopher? Whatever is your position and whatever are your gifts, remember that they are not yours, but they are lent you from on high. No man has anything of his own except his sins. We are but tenants at will. God has put us into His estates and He has said, “Occupy till I come.”

Though our vineyards bear ever so much fruit yet the vineyard belongs to the King and though we are to take the hundred for our hire, yet King Solomon must have his thousand. All the honor of our ability and the use of it must be unto God, because He is the Giver. The parable tells us this very pointedly. It makes every person acknowledge that his talents come from the Lord. Even the man who dug in the earth and hid his Lord’s money did not deny that his talent belonged to his Master. For though his reply, “Lo, there you have that is yours,” was exceedingly impertinent, yet it was not a denial of this fact.

So that even this man was ahead of those who deny their obligations to God, who superciliously toss their heads at the very mention of obedience to their Creator and spend their time and their powers rather in rebellion against Him than in His service. Oh, that we were all wise to believe and to act upon this most evident of all truths—that everything we have we have received from the Most High.

Now, there are some men in the world who have but few talents. Our parable says, “One had five and another two.” To them I shall address myself this morning. And I pray that the few pointed things I may say may be blessed of God to their edification or rebuke. First, I shall notice *the fact that there are many persons who have but few talents* and I will try to account for God’s dispensing but few to them. Secondly, I shall remind them that *even for these few talents they must be brought to account*. And thirdly, I shall conclude, by making the comforting observation that *if our few talents are rightly used, neither our own conscience nor our Master’s judgment shall condemn us for not having more*.

I. First, then, GOD HAS MADE SOME MEN WITH FEW TALENTS. You very often hear men speak of one another as if God had made no mental differences at all. One man finds himself successful and he supposes that if everyone else could have been as industrious and as persevering as himself, everyone must necessarily have been as successful. You will often hear remarks against ministers who are godly and earnest men but who do not happen to have much attracting power. They are called drones and lazy persons because they cannot make much of a stir in the world, whereas the reason may be that they have but little talent and are making the best use of what they have. And therefore they ought not to be rebuked for the littleness of what they are able to accomplish.

It is a fact which every man must see, that even in our birth there is a difference. All children are not alike precocious and all men certainly are not alike capable of learning or of teaching. God has made eminent and marvelous differences. We are not to suppose that all the difference between a Milton and a man who lives and dies without being able to read has been caused by education. There was doubtless a difference originally and though education will do much, it cannot do everything. Fertile ground, when well tilled, will necessarily bring forth more than the best tilled estate, the soil of which is hard and sterile. God has made great and decided differences. And we ought, in dealing with our fellow men, to

remember this lest we should say harsh things of those very men to whom God will afterwards say, “well done, good and faithful servant.”

But why is it that God has not given to all men like talents? My first answer shall be because God is a Sovereign and of all attributes, next to His love, God is the most fond of displaying His sovereignty. The Lord God will have men know that He has a right to do what He wills with His own. Hence it is that in salvation He gives it to some and not to others. And His only reply to any accusation of injustice is, “No, but O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why have you made me thus?” The worm is not to murmur because God did not make it an angel. And the fish that swims the sea must not complain because it has not wings to fly into the highest heavens. God had a right to make His creatures just what He pleased and though men may dispute His right, He will hold and keep it inviolate against all comers.

That He may hedge His right and make vain man acknowledge it, in all his gifts He continually reminds us of His sovereignty. “I will give to this man,” He says, “a mind so acute that he shall pry into all secrets. I will make another so obtuse that none but the plainest elements of knowledge shall ever be attainable by him. I will give to one man such a wealth of imagination that he shall pile mountain upon mountain of imagery, till his language seems to reach to celestial majesty. I will give to another man a soul so dull that he shall never be able to originate a poetic thought.”

Why this, O God? The answer comes back, “Shall I not do what I will with My own?” “So, then, the children being not yet born neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, it was written, the elder shall serve the younger.” And so it is written concerning men, that one of them shall be greater than another. One shall bow his neck and the other put his foot upon it, for the Lord has a right to dispose of places and of gifts, of talents and wealth, just as seems good in His sight.

Now, most men quarrel with this. But mark, the thing that you complain of in God is the very thing that you love in yourselves. Every man likes to feel that he has a right to do with his own as he pleases. We all like to be little sovereigns. You will give your money freely and liberally to the poor. But if any man should impertinently urge that he had a claim upon your charity, would you give to him? Certainly not, and who shall impeach the greatness of your generosity in so doing? It is even as that parable, that we have in one of the Evangelists, where, after the men had toiled, some of them twelve hours, some of them six and some of them but one, the Lord gave every man a penny.

Oh, I wish that I could meekly bow my head and say, “My Lord, have You given me one talent? Then I bless You for it and I pray You bestow upon me grace to use it rightly. Have You given to my brother ten talents? I thank You for the greatness of Your kindness towards him. But I neither envy him, nor complain of You.” Oh, for a spirit that bows always before the sovereignty of God!

Again—God gives to one five and to another two talents because the Creator is a lover of variety. It was said that order is Heaven’s first Law—surely variety is the second. For in all God’s works there is the most beautiful diversity. Look towards the heavens at night—all the stars shine not with the same brilliance, nor are they placed in straight lines, like the lamps of our streets. Then turn your eyes below—see in the vegetable world how many great distinctions there are, ranging from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall, or the moss on the tree is smaller still.

See how from the huge mammoth tree that seems as if beneath its branches it might shade an army, down to the tiny lichen God has made everything beautiful, but everything full of variety. Look on any one tree, if you please—see how every leaf differs from its fellow—how even the little tiny buds that are at this hour bursting at the scent of the approaching perfume of spring differ from each other—no two of them alike. Look again, upon the animated world—God has not made every creature like unto another. How wide the range—from the colossal elephant, to the Coney that burrows in the rock—from the whale that makes the deep hoary with its lashings, to the tiny minnow that skims the brook. God has made all things different and we see variety everywhere.

I doubt not it is the same, even in Heaven, for there are “thrones and dominions and principalities and powers”—different ranks of angels, perhaps, rising tier upon tier. “One star different from another star in glory.” And why should not the same rule stand good in manhood? Does God cast us all in the same mold? It seems not so. For He has not made our faces alike. No two countenances can be said to be exactly the same, for if there is some likeness, yet is there a manifest diversity. Should minds, then, be alike? Should souls all be cast in the same fashion? Should God’s creation dwindle down into a great manufactory, in which everything is melted in the same fire and poured into the same mold?

No, for variety's sake, He will have one man a renowned David and another David's unknown armor bearer. He will have one man a Jeremy, who shall prophesy and another a Baruch, who shall only read the prophecy. One shall be rich as Dives, another poor as Lazarus. One shall speak with a voice loud as thunder, another shall be dumb. One shall be mighty in word and doctrine, another shall be feeble in speech and slow in words. God will have variety and the day will come when, looking down upon the world we shall see the beauty of its history to be mightily indebted to the variety of the characters that entered into it.

But a little further. God has a deeper reason than this. God gives to some men but few talents because He has many small spheres and He would have these filled. There is a great ocean and it needs inhabitants. O Lord, you have made Leviathan to swim therein. There is a secret grotto, a hidden cavern, far away in the depths of the sea. Its entrance is but small. If there were nothing but a Leviathan, it must remain untenanted forever. A little fish is made and that small place becomes an ocean unto it. There are

a thousand sprays and twigs upon the trees of the forest. Were all eagles, how would the forests be made glad with song and how could each twig bear its songster? But because God would have each twig have its own music, He has made the little songster to sit upon it.

Each sphere must have the creature to occupy it adapted to the size of the sphere. God always acts economically. Does He intend a man to be the pastor of some small parish with four or five hundred inhabitants? Of what use is it giving to that man the abilities of an Apostle? Does He intend a woman to be a humble teacher of her own children at home, a quiet trainer of her own family? Would it not even disturb her and injure her if God should make her a poetess and give her gifts that might electrify a nation? The littleness of her talents will to a degree fit her for the littleness of her sphere.

There is some youth who is quite capable of assisting in a Ragged School—perhaps if he had a higher genius he might disdain the work and so the Ragged School would be without its excellent teacher. There are little spheres and God will have little men to occupy them. There are posts of important duty and men shall be found with nerve and muscle fitted for the labor. He has made a statue for every niche and a picture for every portion of the gallery. None shall be left vacant. But since some niches are small, so shall be the statuettes that occupy them. To some He gives two talents, because two are enough and five would be too many.

Once more—God gives to men two talents because in them very often He displays the greatness of His grace in saving souls. You have heard of a minister who was deeply read in sacred lore. His wisdom was profound and his speech graceful. Under his preaching many were converted. Have you ever heard it not quite said, but almost hinted, that much of his success was traceable to his learning and to his graceful oratory? But, on the other hand, you have met with a man rough in his dialect, uncouth in his manners, evidently without any great literary attainments.

Nevertheless, God has given that man the one talent of an earnest heart. He speaks like a son of thunder. With rough, stern language he denounces sin and proclaims the Gospel. Under him hundreds are converted. The world sneers at him. "I can see no reason for all this," says the scholar. "It is all rubbish—cant. The man knows nothing." The critic takes up his pen. Nibs it afresh, dips it in the bitterest ink he can find and writes a most delightful history of the man in which he goes so far as to say not that he sees horns on his head, but almost everything but that.

He is everything that is bad and nothing that is good. He utterly denounces him. He is foolish, he is vain, he is base, he is proud, he is illiterate, he is vulgar. There was no word in the English language that was bad enough for him, but one must be coined. And now what says the Church? What says the man himself? "Even so, O Lord. Now, must the glory be unto You forever, inasmuch as You have chosen the base things of this world and the things that are not, to bring to nothing the things that are."

So it seems that out of the little, God sometimes wins more glory than He does out of the great. And I doubt not that He has made some of you with little power to do good, with little influence and with a narrow sphere, that He may, in the Last Great Day, manifest to angels how much He can do in a little space. You know, dear Friends, there are two things that always will attract our attention. One is skill embodied in a stupendous mass. We see the huge ship, the Leviathan and we wonder that man could have made it. At another time we see an elegant piece of workmanship that will stand upon less than a square inch and we say, "Well, I can understand how men can make a great ship, but I cannot comprehend how an artist could have the patience and the skill to make so minute a thing as this."

And ah, my Friends, it seems to me that God is not a greater God to our apprehension, when we see the boundless fields of ether and the unnumbered orbs swimming therein, than when we see a humble cottager and behold God's perfect word carried out in her soul and God's highest glory wrought from her little talent. Surely if in the little, man can honor *himself* as well as in the great, the Infinite and the Eternal can most of all glorify Himself when He stoops to the littleness of mankind.

II. Our second proposition was that even A FEW TALENTS MUST BE ACCOUNTED FOR. We are very apt when we think of the Day of Judgment to imagine that certain characters will undergo a more trying process than others. I know I have often involuntarily said, when reading the history of Napoleon, "Here is a man of tremendous ability, the world's master. A dozen centuries might be required to produce such another man. But here is a man who prostitutes all his ability to ambition, carries his armies like a destroying deluge across every country. He widows wives and renders children fatherless, not by hundreds but by thousands, if not by millions. What must be his solemn account when he stands before the Throne of God? Shall not the witnesses rise up from the fields of Spain, of Russia, of Italy, of Egypt, of Palestine and accuse the man who, to gratify his own bold ambition, led them to death?"

But will you please remember that though Napoleon must be a prisoner at the bar, each of us must stand there also? And though our position is not very high and we have not stood upon the pinnacle of fame, yet we have stood quite high enough to be borne under the observation of the Most High. And we have had just ability enough and power enough to have done mischief in the world and to be accountable for it. "Oh," said one, "I thought that surely in the Day of Judgment He would pass me by. I have been no Tom Paine. I have not been a leader among low and vulgar infidels. I have been no murderer. I have not been a prince among sinners. I have not been a disturber of the public peace. What few sins I have committed have taken place quietly.

"Nobody has heard of them. I don't think my bad example has gone far. Perhaps my children have not been much blessed by my behavior, but, nevertheless, mine has been a very small quantum of mischief—too small to have poisoned anyone beside myself. I have been, on the whole, so tolerably moral, that though I cannot say I have served God, yet my straying from the path of duty have been light indeed!" Ah, truly, Friends—you may think yourselves never so little, but your making yourselves insignificant will not excuse you.

You have had but little entrusted to you! Then the less trouble for you to make use of your talents. The man who has many talents requires much hard labor to use them all. He might make the excuse that he found five talents too many to put out in the market at once. You have only one. Anybody can lend out his one talent to interest—it will cost you but little trouble to apply that—and inasmuch as you live and inasmuch as you die without having improved the one talent—your guilt will be exceedingly increased by the very fact that your talent was but little and, consequently, the trouble of using it would have been but little, too. If you had but little, God required but little of you. Why, then, did you not render that?

If any man holds a house at a rental of a pound a year, let it be never so small a house for the money, if he brings not his rent, there is not one half the excuse for him that there would be if his rent had been a hundred pounds and he had failed to bring it. You shall be the more inexcusable on account of the little that was required of you. Let me, then, address you and remind you that you must be brought to account.

Remember, my Hearer, that in the Day of Judgment your account must be *personal*. God will not ask you what your *Church* did—He will ask you what *you* did yourself. Now there is a Sunday-School. If God should try all members of the Church in a body, they would each of them say, O Lord, as a body we had an excellent Sunday-School and had many teachers—and so they would excuse themselves. But no—one by one—all professors must come before Him. "What did you do for the Sunday-School? I gave you a gift for teaching children—what did you do?"

"O Lord, there was a Sunday-School." That has nothing to do with it? What did you do? You are not to account now for the company with which you were united, but for yourself as an individual. "Oh" says one, "there were a number of poor ministers. I was at the Surrey Hall and so much was done for them." No—what did you do? You must be held personally responsible for your own wealth, for your own ability. "Well," says one, "I am happy to say there is a great deal more preaching now than there used to be—the churches seem to be roused." Yes, Sir, and you seem to take part of the credit to yourself. Do you preach more than you used to? You are a minister—do you make any greater efforts?

Remember, it is not what your Brethren are doing, but it is what *you* do that you will be called to account at the bar of God. And each one of you will be asked this question, “What have you done with your talent?” All your connection with Churches will avail you nothing. It is your *personal* doings—your personal service towards God that is demanded of you as an evidence of saving grace. And if others are idle—if others pay not God His due—so much the more reason why you should have been more exceedingly diligent in doing so yourself.

Remember, again, that your account will have to be *particular*. God will go into all the items of it. At the Day of Judgment you will not have to cast up a hurried recount in the gross, but every item shall be read. Can you prove that? Yes. “For every idle word that man shall speak, he shall be brought unto account at the Day of Judgment.” Now, it is in the items that men go astray. “Well,” says one, “If I look at my life in the bulk, I am not very much ashamed, but it is those items, those little items—they are the troublesome part of the account—that one does not care to meddle with.”

Do you know that all yesterday was made up of little things? And the things of today are all little and what you do tomorrow will all be little things? Just as the tiny shells make up the chalk hills and the chalk hills together make up the range, so the trifling actions make up the whole account and each of these must be pulled asunder separately. You had an hour to spare the other day—what did you do? You had a voice—how did you use it? You had a pen—you could use that—how did you employ it? Each particular shall be brought out and there shall be demanded an account for each one.

Oh, that you were wise, that you did not slur this matter but would take every note in the music of your behavior and seek to make each note in harmony with its fellow, lest, after all, the psalm of your life may prove to be a hideous discord. Oh, that you who are without God would remember that your life is assuredly such—that the trial of the Last Great Day must end in your condemnation.

Again—that account will be very exact and there will be no getting off without those little things. “Oh, there were a few peccadilloes and very small matters, indeed. I never took stock of them at all.” But they will all be taken stock of then. When God comes to look into our hearts at last, He will not only look at the great but at the little. Everything will be seen into, the penny sins as well as the pound iniquities—all must be brought against us and an exact account given.

Again remember—in the last place upon this point—that the account will be very impartial at the Day of Judgment, when all will be tried without any reference to their station. The prince will be summoned to give an account of his talents and side by side must stand his courtier and his slave. The mightiest emperor must stand at God’s bar, as well as the mean cottager. All must appear and be tried according to the deeds they have done in the body. As to our professions—they will avail us nothing. We may have been the proudest hypocrites that ever made the world sick with our pride, but we must be searched and examined, as much as if we had been the vilest sinners.

We must take our own trial before God’s eternal tribunal and nothing can bias our Judge, or make Him give an opinion for or against us, apart from the evidence. Oh, how solemn this will make the trial, especially if we have no blood of Christ to plead! The great Advocate will get His people an acquittal, through His imputed merits, even though their sin in itself would condemn them. But remember, that without Him we shall never be able to stand the fiery ordeal of that last dread assize.

“Well,” said an old preacher, “when the Law was given, Sinai was on a smoke and it melted like wax. But when the punishment of the Law is given, the whole earth will quake and quail. For who shall be able to endure the day of the Lord, the day of God’s fierce anger?”

III. The last point is, IF BY DIVINE GRACE—(and it is only by Divine Grace that this can ever be accomplished)—OUR TWO TALENTS ARE RIGHTLY USED, THE FACT THAT WE HAD NOT FIVE, WILL BE NO INJURY TO US.

You say, when such a man dies who stood in the midst of the Church a triumphant warrior for the Truth, the angels will crowd to Heaven’s gates to see him, for he has been a mighty hero and done much for his Master. A Calvin or a Luther, with what plaudits shall they be received!—men with talents, who have been faithful to their trust. Yes, but know you not that there is many a humble village pastor whose flock scarcely numbers fifty, who toils for them as for his life—who spends hours in praying for their welfare—who uses all the little ability he has in his endeavor to win them to Christ? And do you imagine that his entry into Heaven shall be less triumphant than the entry of such a man as Luther?

If so, you know not how God deals with His people. He gives them rewards, not according to the greatness of the goods with which they were entrusted, but according to their fidelity. “Hereunto and he that has been faithful to the least, shall be as much rewarded as he that has been faithful in much.” I want you briefly to turn to the chapter to see this. You will note, first, that the man with two talents came to his Lord with as great a confidence as the man that had five.

“And he said, Lord, You delivered unto me two talents. Behold, I have gained two talents beside them.” I will be bound to say, that while that poor man with the two talents was trading with them, he frequently looked upon his neighbor with the five talents and said, “Oh, I wish I could do as much as he is doing! See now, he has five talents to put out and how much interest he has coming every year. Oh, that I could do as much!” And as he went on he often prayed, “O my Lord, give me greater ability and greater grace to serve You, for I long to do more.”

And when he sat down to read his diary, he thought, “Ah, this diary does not tell much. There is no account of my journey through fifty counties. I cannot tell how I have traveled from land to land as Paul did to preach the Truth of God. No—I have just had to keep in this parish and been pretty well starved to death, toiling for this people and if I have added some ten or a dozen to the Church, that has been a very great deal to me. Why, I hear that Mr. So-and-So was privileged to add two or three hundred in a year. Oh, that I could do that! Surely when I go to Heaven I shall creep in at the door somehow, while he by grace will be enabled to go boldly in, bringing his sheaves with him.”

Now stop, poor Little-Faith, stop. Your Master will not deal with you thus. When you shall come to die you will, through His grace, feel as much confidence in dying with your two well-used talents as your Brother with his ten. You will, when you come there, have your Lord’s sweet presence and you will say, “I am complete in Christ. Christ’s righteousness covers me from head to foot and now in looking back upon my past life, I can say, Blessed be His holy name. It is little that I could do, but I have done as much as I could for Him. I know that He will pardon my defects and forgive my miscarriages and I shall never look back upon my humble village charge without much joy because the Lord allowed me to labor there.”

And, oh methinks that man will have even a richer commendation in his own conscience than the man who has been more publicly applauded, for he can say to himself after putting all his trust in Christ, “Well, I am sure I did not do this for fame for I blushed unseen—I have lost my sweetness on the desert air. No one has ever read my deeds. What I did was between myself and my God and I can render up my account to Him and say, ‘Lord, I did it for You and not to honor myself.’”

Yes Friends, I might tell you now of many a score of earnest evangelists in this our land who are working harder than any one of us and yet win far less honor. Yes, and I could bring you up many a score of city missionaries whose toil for Christ is beyond all measure of praise who never get much reward here. No, they rather meet with slights and disrespect. You see the poor man start as soon as he goes from his place of worship today. He has got three hours this afternoon to go and spend among the sick and then you will see him on Monday morning. He has to go from house to house, often with the door slammed in his face—often exposed to mobs and drunken men. He is sometimes jeered and scoffed at, meeting with persons of all religious persuasions and of no persuasion. He toils on. He has his little evening meeting and there he gets a little flock together and tries to pray with them and he gets now and then a man or a woman converted. But he has no honor.

He just takes his convert off to the minister and he says, “Sir, here is a good man. I think He is impressed—will you baptize him and receive him into your Church?” The minister gets all the credit of that, but as for the poor city missionary, there is little or nothing said of him. There is, perhaps, just his name, Mr. Brown, or Mr. Smith, mentioned sometimes in the report. But people do not think much of him, except, perhaps, as an object of charity they have to keep, whereas *he* is the man that gives them the charity, giving all the sap and blood and marrow of his life for some poor sixty pounds a year, hardly enough to keep his family above want. But he, when he dies, my Friend, shall have no less the approval of the conscience than the man who was permitted to stand before the multitudes and raised the nation into excitement on account of religion. He shall come before the Master clothed in the righteousness of Christ and with unblushing face shall say, “I have received two talents. I have gained beside them two talents more.”

Furthermore and to conclude, you will notice there was no difference in his Master’s commendation—none in the reward. In both cases, it was, “Well done good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter you into the joy of your Lord.” Here comes Whitfield, the man that stood before twenty thousand at

a time to preach the Gospel—he in England, Scotland, Ireland and America has testified the Truth of God and could count his converts by thousands, even under one sermon! Here he comes, the man that endured persecution and scorn and yet was not moved—the man of whom the world was not worthy, who lived for his fellow men and died at last for their cause. Stand by angels and admire, while the Master takes him by the hand and says, “Well done, well done, good and faithful servant. Enter you into the joy of your Lord!”

See how free grace honors the man whom it enabled to do valiantly. Hark! Who is this that comes there? A poor thin looking creature that on earth was a consumptive. There was a hectic flush now and then upon her cheek and she lay three long years upon her bed of sickness. Was she a prince’s daughter, for it seems Heaven is making much stir about her? No, she was a poor girl that earned her living by her needle and she worked herself to death!—Stitch, stitch, stitch—from morning to night! And here she comes. She went prematurely to her grave, but she is coming like a shock of corn fully ripe, into Heaven. And her Master says, “Well done you good and faithful servant, you have been faithful in a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter you into the joy of your Lord.”

She takes her place by the side of Whitfield. Ask what she ever did and you find out that she used to live in some back garret down some dark alley in London. And there used to be another poor girl come to work with her. And that poor girl, when she first came to work with her, was a happy and volatile creature. And this consumptive child told her about Christ. And they used, when she was well enough, to creep out of an evening to go to Chapel or to Church together. It was hard at first to get the other one to go, but she used to press her lovingly. And when the girl went wild a little, she never gave her up. She used to say, “O Jane, I wish you loved the Savior.” And when Jane was not there she used to pray for her and when she *was* there she prayed *with* her. And now and then when she was stitching away, she read a page out of the Bible to her, for poor Jane could not read.

And with many tears she tried to tell her about the Savior who loved her and gave Himself for her. At last, after many a day of hard persuasion and many an hour of sad disappointment and many a night of sleepless tearful prayer—at last she lived to see the girl profess her love to Christ! And she left her and took sick and there she lay till she was taken to the hospital where she died. When she was in the hospital she used to have a few tracts and she used to give them to those who came to see her. She would try, if she could, to get the women to come round and she would give them a tract.

When she first went into the hospital, if she could creep out of bed, she used to get by the side of one who was dying and the nurse used to let her do it, till at last she got too ill. And then she used to ask a poor woman on the other side of the ward who was getting better and was going out, if she would come and read a chapter to her. Not that she wanted her to read to her on her own account, but for her sake, for she thought it might strike her heart while she was reading it. At last this poor girl died and fell asleep in Jesus’ arms. And the poor consumptive needle-woman had said to her by her Master, “Well done”—and what more could an archangel have said to her?—“she has done what she could.”

See, then, the Master’s commendation and the last reward will be equal to all men who have used their talents well. Ah, if there are degrees in glory, they will not be distributed according to our talents but according to our faithfulness in using them. As to whether there are degrees or not, I know not—but this I know—he that does His Lord’s will shall have said to Him, “Well done good and faithful servant.”

And now, Friends, this one word only. I have told you that there are many in our denomination who are preaching the Gospel continually. I should bring some few of the letters, written by the poor ministers to us to read. But sometimes I think this a violation of delicacy and I do not like to do it. But when I did that one year the collection was almost twice as good. So I think I might almost commit a breach of etiquette in order to help them. However I can solemnly assure you that if there is poverty anywhere, it is to be found among the ministers in the Baptist Churches and I am sorry to say that one cause of it is the fault of the people themselves. They are so little in the habit of giving that their ministers are starved.

Now, if Christ will say, “Well done,” hereafter, to many a humble preacher, do you think He intends the Church to starve them while they are here on £30 or £40 a year? Now, Brethren, if Christ will say, “Well done,” at last, we may anticipate His verdict and say, “Well done today.” And can we better say, “well done” than by unmuzzling the ox that treads out the corn and give these poor ministers something out of our own wealth, as God may help us, that their necessities may be supplied? There will be pretty well a score of persons who will be dependent during the next year upon what you give this year. Perhaps you will remember that and assist them. One kind gentleman, who usually comes here, says “I could not come today, so I forward my pound to be put into the box by the minister.” And I trust, if there are any not here today who will be here next Sabbath that they will not forget this collection. It is always very dear to the heart of my Church. Amen.