

# Scripture Studies

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*"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord...* Isaiah 1:18

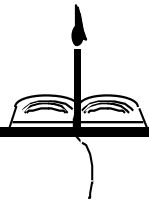
**Old Testament Study:**  
**Exodus 16**.....3  
*Manna - A Type of Christ, pt. 2, by A. W. Pink*

**A Classic Study:**  
**The Love of Money, pt. 3, by Thomas Chalmers**.....8

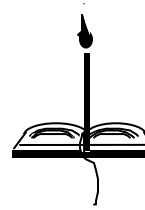
**New Testament Study:**  
**Matthew 25:14-30** .....11  
*Parable of the Talents, by Scott Sperling*

**A Topical Study:**  
**Contentment, pt. 5**.....17  
*The Art of Divine Contentment, pt. 5, by Thomas Watson*

**A Study in Wisdom:**  
**Job 1:5-6 (pt. 1)** .....19  
*Job's Offering, by Joseph Caryl*



## Old Testament Study: Exodus 16



### Manna - A Type of Christ, pt. 2, by Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

<sup>1</sup>And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. <sup>2</sup>And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: <sup>3</sup>And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. <sup>4</sup>Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. <sup>5</sup>And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. (Ex 16:1-5 AV)

<sup>13</sup>And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. <sup>14</sup>And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. <sup>15</sup>And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. <sup>16</sup>This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. <sup>17</sup>And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. <sup>18</sup>And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man

according to his eating.

<sup>19</sup>And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. <sup>20</sup>Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. <sup>21</sup>And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating; and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. <sup>22</sup>And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. <sup>23</sup>And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. <sup>24</sup>And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. <sup>25</sup>And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. <sup>26</sup>Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. <sup>27</sup>And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. <sup>28</sup>And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? <sup>29</sup>See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. <sup>30</sup>So the people rested on the seventh day. <sup>31</sup>And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. (Ex. 16:13-31 AV)

[Here we continue this article. Mr. Pink is enumerating ways in which Manna is typical of Christ.]

9. *The Manna met a daily need.* “Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate *every day*” (v. 4). The manna which they gathered today would not suffice them for tomorrow. They needed to obtain a fresh supply each day. It is just here that so many of the Lord’s people fail. We, too, need to feed upon Christ “*every day*.” Just as in the physical realm the food which I ate yesterday will not nourish me today, so my past experiences and attainments will not meet the exigencies of the present. Christ must be kept constantly before the heart. “Give us day by day our *daily bread*,” should be the prayer of every child of God.

10. *Appetite determined the amount gathered.* “This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded. Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons take ye every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so and gathered, some *more*, some *less*” (vv. 16, 17). Thus we see that the appetite governed the amount gathered. How strikingly and how solemnly true is this of the believer, “We all have as much of Christ as we desire, no more, no less. If our desires are large, if we open our mouth wide, He will fill it. We cannot desire too much, nor be disappointed when we desire. On the other hand, if we are but feebly conscious of our need, a little only of Christ will be supplied. The measure, therefore, in which we feed upon Christ as our wilderness food, depends entirely upon our felt spiritual need — upon our affections” (Ed. Dennett).

11. *The Manna was despised by those who were not the Lord’s people.* “And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting, and the children of Israel also went again, and said, ‘Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away; there is nothing left at all, beside this manna, before our eyes’” (Numbers 11:4-6). How these words remind us of the language of Isaiah 53 — “And when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire of Him. He is despised and rejected of men.” The sin-blinded eyes of the natural man are incapable of perceiving the attractiveness of the Lord Jesus: His wondrous perfections, he is unable to discern. So, too, he sees not his own deep need, and how Christ alone is able to meet that need. Hence he neither comes to Christ, nor desires Him.

12. *The Manna fell upon the dew, not upon the dust of the ground.* “And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it” (Numbers 11:9). Everything in the Scriptures has a spiritual meaning and application. What, then, is the significance of the above? Genesis 3:19 throws light on this passage — “dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return.” These words were spoken to fallen man and called attention to the corruption which sin had worked in him. “Dust,” here, and onwards, speaks of *fallen humanity*. Now the manna fell not upon “the dust,” but upon the dew. How clearly this foreshadowed the uniqueness and incorruptibility of our Lord’s humanity! The Word became flesh, but in His humanity the Lord Jesus shared not our corrupt nature. He took upon Him the form of a servant, but the body which was prepared for Him (Hebrews 10:5) belonged not to the “dust” of this earth. Before He was born the angel announced unto His mother, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that *holy thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

13. *The Manna was white in color.* We read in Exodus 16:31, “And the house of Israel called the name thereof manna; and it was like coriander seed, *white*.” This speaks of the spotless purity of our Lord as manifested outwardly in His daily walk. He “knew no sin” (2 Corin-

thians 5:21). **“He was without sin”** (Hebrews 4:13). **“He did no sin”** (1 Peter 2:22). He was **“holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners”** (Hebrews 7:26). In 1 Peter 1:19 we are told that He was a lamb **“without spot and without blemish.”** The former expression referring to the absence of outward pollution, the latter to the absence of inward defect. In His walk through this scene of corruption He contracted no defilement. He only could touch the leper without becoming contaminated. He was **“without spot,”** pure, white.

14. *The Manna was sweet to the taste.* **“And the taste of it was like wafers of honey”** (v. 31). We need to go to the Song of Solomon for the interpretation of this. There we read, **“As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons. I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste”** (2:3). And again, **“His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers; His lips like lillies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.... His mouth is most sweet; yea, He is altogether lovely”** (5:13, 16). The Lord grant that *our* **“meditation of Him shall be sweet”** (Psalm 104:34).

15. *The Manna was ground and baked.* **“And the people went about and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it”** (Numbers 11:8). How this speaks to us of the *sufferings* of our blessed Lord! Such expressions as **“He groaned for their hardness of heart,”** He **“sighed”** because of their unbelief, He **“wept”** over Jerusalem, and many others, tell of the *grinding* of the manna. His treatment at the hands of the Jews and the brutal soldiers in Herod’s judgment-hall show us the *beating* of the manna. On the Cross we behold Him subjected to the fierce *fires* of God’s wrath. Thus we learn that the manna, ground and beaten, speaks to us of Him who **“was bruised for our iniquities.”**

16. *The Manna was preserved on the Sabbath.* **“And he said unto them, ‘This is that which the Lord hath said, ‘Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord, bake that which ye will bake, and seeth that ye will seeth, and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning.’”** And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade; and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein” (vv. 23, 24). On the Sabbath day the manna was preserved, and in this, too, it speaks to us of our blessed Lord. He is the only one who was preserved through death. He lay in the tomb on the Sabbath day and was **“kept,”** for God had said, **“Neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption”** (Psalm 16:10).

17. *The Manna was laid up before the Lord.* **“And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord”** (v. 33). Concerning the anti-type, we read, **“For Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us”** (Hebrews 9:24). The golden pot in which the manna was preserved tells of how God is glorified in Him whom it foreshadowed. **“Although the Son of Man it is that gives it to us; although it is humanity here that we know, and humanity in the form in which we shall not find it when we shall reach Him above, yet it is hu-**

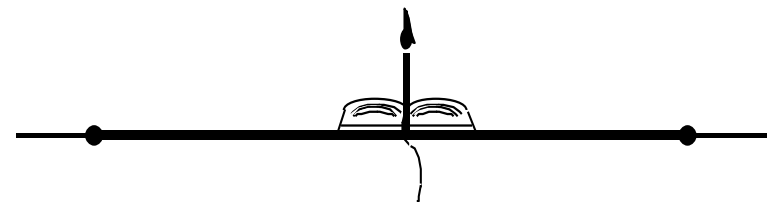
manity in which God is glorified now, and so He will be glorified in it forever. We shall find in the One upon the Throne of Glory, though no longer ‘with a face marred more than any man’s,’ and a form more than the sons of men — the very One whose face was marred — the very One whose heart put Him into the sorrow in which we, of necessity there, learned to know Him thus” (Mr. Grant).

18. *The Manna is called angel’s food.* We read in Psalm 78:25, man did eat *angel’s* food; **“He gave them meat to the full”**; the reference here is to the giving of the manna to Israel in the wilderness. The anti-type of this is brought before us in several passages in the last book of Scripture. Christ not only feeds the souls of those of His people who are upon earth, but He also satisfies the hearts of celestial beings. The unfallen angels find their chief delight in feeding upon Christ. They worship Him, they serve Him, and they tell forth His praises.

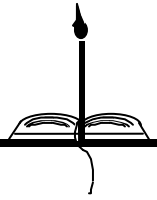
19. *The Manna was given in the night.* It was during the hours of darkness that the manna was sent to the Israelites. It is while they were asleep (picture of man’s helplessness, for we are never so helpless as when we are asleep) that the bread was given from Heaven. So, too, it was when we were in darkness and unbelieving impotent, **“without strength,”** that Christ came to us. Moreover it will be at the close of this world’s night, when **“the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people”** (Isa. 60:2), that the Bread of God shall return and give life to the world.

20. *The Manna is now hidden.* In Revelation 2:17 we read, **“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna.”** So, too, Christ, of whom the manna continually speaks, is now **“hidden.”** Unseen by the eye of sense, He remains in Heaven till that day when He shall be manifested before all the world. **“We shall not only ‘see’ the Heavenly manna, but we shall ‘eat’ of it again.** Fresher than ever will be our realization of His love and the perfection of the grace which is manifested toward us. It is then in fact, when we come to be there, that we shall have the full enjoyment; knowing as we are known, of all the experiences, which though they be experiences of the wilderness, yet, wait for the land to which we are hastening to find their full interpretation and blessing. The meat *endures* to everlasting life. The meat itself endures. We are enjoying that which shall be our joy for eternity. We are feeding on that which shall be our food for eternity” (Mr. Grant).

We are conscious that our treatment of this wonderful and precious type is most inadequate and unworthy. But if it leads our fellow-believers to a more careful study of the written Word, and to a deeper longing to become better acquainted with the incarnate Word, our feeble efforts will be well repaid.



## *A Classic Study: The Love of Money*



### A Classic Study by Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847)

[Here, we conclude this study by Thomas Chalmers.]—*Ed.*

#### Discourse on the Love of Money, pt. 3

**“If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, ‘Thou art my confidence’; if I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; if I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand; this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the God that is above” (Job 31:24–28)**

We have the authority of that Word which has been pronounced a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, that it cannot have two masters, or that there is not room in it for two great and ascendant affections. The engrossing power of one such affection is expressly affirmed of the love for mammon, or the love for money thus named and characterized as an idol. Or, in other words, if the love of money be in the heart, the love of God is not there. If a man be trusting in uncertain riches, he is not trusting in the living God, who gives us all things richly to enjoy. If his heart be set upon covetousness, it is set upon an object of idolatry. The true divinity is moved away from His place; and, worst than atheism, which would only leave it empty, has the love of wealth raised another divinity upon His throne.

So then covetousness offers a more daring and positive aggression on the right and territory of the Godhead, than even infidelity. The latter would only desolate the sanctuary of heaven; the former would set up an abomination in the midst of it. It not only strips God of love and of confidence, which are His prerogatives, but it transfers them to another. And little does the man who is proud in honor, but, at the same time, proud and peering in ambition – little does he think, that though acquitted in the eye of all his fellows, there still remains an atrocity of a deep character than even that of atheism, with which he is chargeable. Let him just take an account of his mind, amid the labors of his merchandise, and he will find that the living God has no ascendancy there; but that wealth just as much as if personified into life, and agency, and power, wields over him all the ascendancy of God. Where his treasure is, his heart is also, and linking as he does his main hope with its increase, and his main

fear with its fluctuations and its failures, he has as effectually dethroned the Supreme from his heart, and deified an usurper in his room, as if fortune had been embodied into a goddess, and he were in the habit of repairing, with a crowd of other worshippers to her temple. She in fact is the dispenser of that which he chiefly prizes in existence. A smile from her is worth all the promises of the Eternal, and her threatening frown more fearful to the imagination than all His terrors.

And the disease is as near to universal as it is virulent. Wealth is the goddess whom all the world worships. There is many a city in our empire, of which with an eye of apostolical discernment, it may be seen, that it is almost wholly given over to idolatry. If a man look no higher than to his money for his enjoyments, then money is his god. It is the god of his dependence, and the god upon whom his heart is stayed. Or if, apart from other enjoyments, it, by some magical power of its own, has gotten the ascendancy, then still it is followed after as the supreme good; and there is an actual supplanting of the living God. He is robbed of the gratitude that we owe him for our daily sustenance; for, instead of receiving it as if it came direct out of His hand, we receive it as if it came from the hand of a secondary agent, to whom we ascribe all the stability and independence of God. This wealth, in fact, obscures to us the character of God, as the real though unseen author of our various blessings; and as if by a material intervention, does it hide from the perception of nature, the hand which feeds and clothes, and maintains us in life, and in all the comforts and necessities of life. It just has the effect of thickening still more that impalpable veil which lies between God and the eye of the senses. We lose all discernment of Him as the giver of our comforts; and coming, as they appear to do, from that wealth which our fancies have raised into a living personification, does this idol stand before us, not as a deputy, but as a substitute for that being, with whom it is that we really have to do. All this goes both to widen and to fortify that disruption which has taken place between God and the world. It adds the power of one great master idol to the seducing influence of all the lesser idolatries. When the liking and the confidence of men are towards money, there is not direct intercourse, either by the one or the other of these affections towards God; and in proportion as he sends forth his desires, and rests his security on the former, in that very proportion does he renounce God as his hope, and God as his dependence.

And to advert, for one moment, to the misery of this affection, as well as to its sinfulness. He over whom it reigns, feels a worthlessness in his present wealth, after it is gotten; and when to this we add the restlessness of a yet unsated appetite, lording it over all his convictions, and panting for more; when, to the fullness of his actual satisfaction in all his riches that he has, we add his still unquenched, and indeed, unquenchable desire for the riches that he has not; when we reflect that as, in the pursuit of wealth, he widens the circle of his operation, so he lengthens out the line of his open and hazardous exposure, and multiplies, along the extent of it, those vulnerable points from which another and another dart of anxiety may enter into his heart; when he feels himself as if floating on an ocean of contingency, on which, perhaps, he is only born up by the breath of a credit that is fictitious, and which, liable to burst every moment, may leave him to sink under the weight of his overlaid specu-

lation; when, suspended on the doubtful result of his bold and uncertain adventure, he dreads the tidings of disaster in every arrival, and lives in a continual agony of feeling, kept up by the crowd and turmoil of his manifold distractions, and so overspreading the whole compass of his thoughts, as to leave not one narrow space for the thought of eternity—will any beholder just look to the mind of this unhappy man, thus tossed and bewildered, and thrown into a general unceasing frenzy, made out of many fears and many agitations, and not say, that the bird of the air which sends forth its unreflecting song, and lives on the fortuitous bounty of providence, is not higher in the scale of enjoyment than he? And how much more, than the quiet Christian beside him, who, in possession of food and raiment, has that godliness with contentment which is great gain – who, with the peace of heaven in his heart, and the glories of heaven in his eye, has found out the true philosophy of existence; has sought a portion where alone a portion can be found, and in bidding away from his mind the love of money, has bidden away all the cross and all the carefulness along with it?

Death will soon break up every swelling enterprise of ambition, and put upon it a most cruel and degrading mockery. And it is, indeed an affecting sight, to behold the workings of this world's infatuation among so many of our fellow mortals nearing and nearing every day to eternity, and yet, instead of taking heed to that which is before them, mistaking their temporary vehicle for their abiding home, and spending all their time and all their thought upon its accommodations. It is all the doing of our great adversary, thus to invest the trifles of a day in such characters of greatness and durability; and it is, indeed, one of the most formidable of his wiles. And whatever may be the instrument of reclaiming men from this delusion, it certainly is not any argument either about the shortness of life, or the certainty and awfulness of its approaching termination. On this point man is capable of a stout-hearted resistance, even to ocular demonstration; nor do we know a more striking evidence of the derangement which must have passed upon the human faculties, than to see how, in despite of arithmetic—how, in despite of manifold experience – how, in despite of all his fathering wrinkles, and all his growing infirmities – how in despite of the ever-lessening distance between him and his sepulchre, and of all the tokens of preparation for the onset of the last messenger, with which, in the shape of weakness, and breathlessness, and dimness of eyes, he is visited; will the feeble and asthmatic man still shake his silver locks in all the glee and transport of which he is capable, when he hears of his gainful adventures, and his new accumulations. Nor can we tell how near he must get to his grave, or how far on he must advance in the process of dying, ere gain cease to delight, and the idol of wealth cease to be dear to him. But when we see that the topic is trade and its profits, which lights up his faded eye with the glow of its chiefest ecstasy, we are as much satisfied that he leaves the world with all his treasure there, and all the desires of his heart there, as if, acting what is told of the miser's deathbed, he made his bills and his parchments of security the companions of his bosom, and the last movements of his life were a fearful, tenacious, determined grasp of what to him formed the all for which life was valuable.



## *New Testament Study:* *Matthew 25:14-30*

### Parable of the Talents

<sup>14</sup>Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. <sup>15</sup>To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. <sup>16</sup>The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. <sup>17</sup>So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. <sup>18</sup>But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

<sup>19</sup>After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

<sup>21</sup>His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

<sup>22</sup>The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'

<sup>23</sup>His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

<sup>24</sup>Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup>So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

<sup>26</sup>“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? <sup>27</sup>Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

<sup>28</sup>“Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup>For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. <sup>30</sup>And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Jesus begins this section, **“Again”**, tying it contextually to the previous sections, which contained parables concerning the second coming of Christ. The previous parable, the parable of the ten virgins, spoke of the readiness of the Church for Christ’s return. This one speaks of the service required of God’s people while they wait for His return. “The story of the virgins calls on the Church to watch; the story of the talents calls on the Church to work” [Ryle, 336]. “The preceding parable has taught the importance of being ready; this one carries on that theme by showing what readiness means” [Morris, 627]. “This parable goes beyond the first three in that it expects the watchfulness of the servants to manifest itself during the master’s absence, not only in preparedness and performance of duty, even if there is a long delay, but in an improvement of the allotted ‘talents’ till the day of reckoning” [Carson, 515].

The parable begins: **“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey”** (vss. 14–15). Our Lord is pictured here as a Master of a large household, **“going on a journey”**. Followers of Christ are pictured as **“his servants”**. The Master, while on **“his journey”**, **“entrusted his property”** to his servants. So also, we are **“entrusted”** with the advancement of the work of Christ here on earth during His absence. “As all that slaves have belongs to their master, so Christ has a claim to everything which belongs to His people, everything which may be turned to good, and He demands its appropriation to His service” [JFB, 118].

The servants were given a varying number of **“talents”**. In that day, a talent was a sum of money; in fact, it was a great sum of money. “The talent was first a measure according to weight, between fifty-eight and eighty pounds (twenty-six to thirty-six kg), and then a unit of coinage, one common value assigned it being six thousand denarii... If a

talent was worth six thousand denarii, then it would take a day laborer twenty years to earn so much—perhaps three hundred-thousand dollars [in today’s values]” [Carson, 516]. And so, even the servant who was given but **“one talent”**, was given a very large sum of money. Note the great trust the master has committed to the servants, entrusting them with such a large sum of money.

In the parable, the **“talents”** represent “anything and everything that our Lord has given to us for use here as His stewards” [Spurgeon, 365]. I think it is quite fascinating, that our English word “talent” was derived from the interpretation of the word here in this parable (see OED). “As talents in the parable represent whatever God gives us to use and improve, and as beyond comparison the most important of such gifts are our mental powers, so it has become common in English to call a man’s mental powers his **‘talents’**, and hence to speak of a man of talent, or a talented man” [Broadus, 503]. “Anything whereby we may glorify God is **‘a talent’**. Our gifts, our influence, our money, our knowledge, our health, our strength, our time, our senses, our reason, our intellect, our memory, our affections, our privileges as members of Christ’s Church, our advantages as possessors of the Bible—all, all are talents” [Ryle, 337].

Importantly, in the parable, the **“talents”** were distributed to each, **“according to his ability”** (vs. 15). Paul assures us that our **“talents”** too, are distributed according to our ability: **“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully”** (Rom. 12:6–8). “We learn, in the first place, from this parable, that all professing Christians have received something from God. We are all God’s **‘servants’**; we have all **‘talents’** entrusted to our charge” [Ryle, 336].

The parable continues: **“The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money”** (vss. 16–18). Notice that the man with five talents went **“at once and put his money to work”**. “Those that have so much work to do, as every Christian has, need to set about it quickly, and lose not time” [Henry]. And, no doubt, the servants worked hard. Anyone who runs a large (or even small) business, knows how much work it takes. The last servant, by stark comparison, was lazy: **“But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money”** (vs. 18).

Continuing: **“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them”** (vs. 19). The master did not return for **“a long time”**, so also we have plenty of time to make use of our God-given talents. The **“long time”** hearkens back to the theme of the previous parables, that Christ will return, and that we should long and wait for His return, but that it will be a **“long time”** coming.

Upon the master’s return came a review of the work of the servants: **“The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’ His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”** (vss. 19–20). Note the tone of joy that the servant had for serving his master well: **“See, I have gained five more.”** His joy and hard work was rewarded: **“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”** Note the elements of the reward. There are three. First, there is a commendation by the master: **“Well done, good and faithful servant!”** Will we not be overjoyed to hear those words from our Master, whom we have served in this life? The words themselves will be a treasured and great reward. Second, they are given further and greater responsibilities: **“You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.”** Interestingly, the “reward for good work is the opportunity of doing further work” [Morris, 629]. All indications are that we will be put to some use after this life. We won’t be just sitting around on clouds, as cartoons depict the heavenly life. Note also, that the master called the five talents **“few things”**, though they constituted (from an earthly perspective) a great sum of money. “The greatest sum of money is **‘few things’** from a heavenly perspective” [Morris, 629]. The third reward received was a share in the master’s happiness: **“Come and share your master’s happiness!”** Note that the faithful service of the servants brings joy to the master. Our service on earth does not go unnoticed, but brings joy to God, when well done.

**“The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’ His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”** (vss. 22–23). Note well that the rewards given to the man with two talents, after he had put them to good use, were identical to those of the man who was given five talents. The rewards were not based on the quantity returned, but rather they were based on what the servant did with what he

was given. “It is not the number of our talents, but the use we make of them, that is the essential matter. He does not expect as much from the man with two talents as from the one to whom he has given five; what he does expect is that they should both be faithful over the few things he has committed to their care” [Spurgeon, 366]. The man with two talents was not expected to make five talents. The two talents he made were enough, based on what he was given. The master was pleased with what he did, and gave him the exact same rewards that the man with five talents received.

It is an erroneous assumption made, at times, by those who are given lesser talents by God, that they are useless to God. We think that, well, if we cannot be that nationally-famous evangelist, or death-defying missionary, then there is no use in serving God. Poor excuse! We all, every one of us, have some sort of talent with which we can serve God. “Some make it an excuse for their laziness, that they have not the opportunities of serving God that others have; and because they have not the wherewithal to do what they say they would, they will not do what we are sure they can, and so sit down and do nothing; it is really an aggravation of their sloth, that when they have but one talent to take care about, they neglect that one” [Henry]. No one lacks talent to serve God; many lack desire to serve God.

This was the case in the parable for the man with one talent, though he claimed other excuses for not putting his talent to use: **“Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you’”** (vss. 24–25). There is no greater failure in life than for one to go through life never having utilized one’s God-given talent, to hide it in the ground. “To do no good in the world, to be simply useless and worthless, is to sin grievously against Christ; and only by incessant efforts to do good can we avoid doing positive evil” [Broadus, 507].

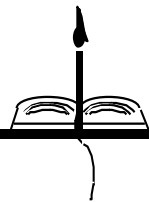
And note whom this man blames for his uselessness: **“Master, I knew that you are a hard man”**, he says. It is all-too common for men to blame God for their own shortcomings. What he said “bespeaks the common reproach which wicked people cast upon God, as if all the blame of their sin and ruin lay at his door, for denying them His grace” [Henry]. “The sense is obvious, ‘I knew You are one whom it was impossible to serve, one whom nothing would please; exacting what was impracticable, and dissatisfied with what was attainable.’ Thus do men secretly think of God as a hard Master, and virtually throw on Him the blame of their fruitlessness” [JFB, 119].

Then also, what this man said about his master was patently untrue. The master demonstrated that he was not a **“hard man”** at all, for he

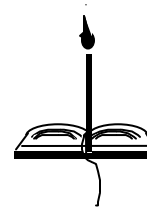
gave his other two servants great rewards for their reasonable service. Moreover, the master did not **“harvest where he had not sown”**. On the contrary, he sowed the seed of his harvest by staking the servants with the talents.

The master was, reasonably, upset with this last servant: **“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest’”** (vss. 26–27). The servant is chided for not even making minimal use of what he was given. “If we cannot trade directly and personally on our Lord’s account, if we have not the skill nor the tact to manage a society or an enterprise for Him, we may at least contribute to what others are doing, and join our capital to theirs, so that, by some means, our Master may have the interest to which He is entitled” [Spurgeon, 367].

This servant would live to regret his laziness: **“Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”** (vss. 28–30). Note, he was punished for merely not using his talent; it was not that he actively misused it; he was punished for burying his talent. He did not actively sin with it; he merely did nothing. “We should bear in mind that this is not here pronounced over someone who has done some particularly heinous crime. It is the final result for the man who had only one talent and who steadfastly refused to use it” [Morris, 632]. “To be **‘cast out’** at the great day, it is not necessary that we prostitute our powers to a life of positive wickedness: it is enough that our Christianity be merely negative, that we do nothing for Christ, that we are found to have been unprofitable, or useless servants of the Lord Jesus” [JFB, 120]. “Let us leave this parable with a solemn determination, by God’s grace, never to be content with a profession of Christianity without practice” [Ryle, 340].



## *A Topical Study: Contentment*



### **The Art of Divine Contentment, pt. 5 by Thomas Watson (1620-1686)**

**I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content** (Philippians 4:11, AV).

*[Here we continue Mr Watson’s study on contentment. In this article, he begins to answer some excuses for not being content. In the original text of Mr Watson’s book, these were called “Apologies”. We have changed the word to “Excuses”, for readability’s sake, to be in line with the modern meaning of the words.]*

#### **Excuses**

*The first excuse which discontent makes is this:*

*Excuse.* I have lost a child. Paulina, upon the loss of her children, was so possessed with a spirit of sadness, that she was near to entombing herself in her own discontent: our love to a relation is oftentimes more than our love to religion.

*Answer.* 1. We must be content, not only when God gives mercies, but when He takes them away. If we must **“in everything give thanks,”** (1 Thess. 5:18), then in nothing be discontented.

2. Perhaps God has taken away the cistern that He may give you the more of the spring; He has darkened the starlight, that you may have more sunlight. God intends you shall have more of Himself, and is not He better than ten sons? Look not so much upon a temporal loss as a spiritual gain: the comforts of the world run dregs; those which come out of the granary of the promise, are pure and sweet.

3. Your child was not given, but lent. **“I have,”** said Hannah, **“lent my son to the Lord”** (1 Sam. 1:28). She lent him? The Lord had but lent him to her. Mercies are not entailed upon us, but lent. What a man lends, he may call for again when he pleases. God has put out a child to you awhile to nurse; will you be displeased if He takes His child home again? O be not discontented that a mercy is taken away from you; but rather be thankful, that it was lent you so long.

4. Suppose your child be taken from you, either he was good or bad: if he was rebellious, you have not so much parted with a child, as a burden; you grieve for that which might have been a greater grief to you. If he was religious, then remember, he **“is taken from the evil to come,”** (Isa. 57:1), and placed in his center of felicity. This lower region is full of gross and hurtful vapors. How happy are those who are



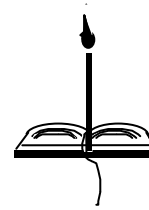
mounted into the celestial orbs! **“The righteous is taken away...”** (Isa. 57:1): in the original language it is, “He is gathered.” A wicked child dying is cut off, but the pious child is gathered. Even as we see men gather flowers, and preserve them by them; so has God gathered your child as a sweet flower, that He may cover it with glory, and preserve it by Him forever. Why then should a Christian be discontented? Why should he weep excessively? **“Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves”** (Luke 23:28). So also could we hear our children speaking to us out of heaven, they would say, “Weep not for us who are happy; we lie upon a soft pillow, even in the bosom of Christ; the Prince of peace is embracing us and kissing us with the kisses of His lips; be not troubled at our preferment. Weep not for us, but weep for yourselves, who are in a sinful, sorrowful world: you are in the valley of tears, but we are on the mountains of spices; we are gotten to our harbor, but you are still tossing upon the waves of inconstancy.” O Christian, be not discontented that you have parted with such a child, but rather rejoice that you had such a child to part with. Break forth into thankfulness. What an honor is it to a parent to beget such a child, that while he lives increases the joy of the glorified angels (see Luke 15:10); and when he dies, increases the number of the glorified saints!

5. If God has taken away one of your children, He has left you other things; He might have stripped you of all. He took away all Job’s comforts, his estate, his children; and indeed his wife was left but as a cross. Satan made a bow of this rib, as Chrysostom speaks, and shot a temptation by here at Job, thinking to have shot him to the heart, **“Curse God, and die”** (Job 2:9); but Job had upon him the breastplate of integrity; and though his children were taken away, yet not his graces, still he is content, still he blessed God. O think how many mercies you still enjoy: yet our base hearts are more discontented at one loss, than thankful for a hundred mercies. God has plucked one bunch of grapes from you; but how many precious clusters are left behind!

*Objection.* But it was my only child, the staff of my age, the seed of my comfort, and the only blossom out of which the honor of an ancient family did grow.

*Answer.* (1.) God has promised you (if you belong to Him) **“a name better than of sons and of daughters”** (Isa. 56:5). Is he dead, who should have been the monument to have kept up the name of a family? God has given you a new name: He has written your name in the book of life. Behold your spiritual heraldry; here is a name that cannot be cut off.

(2.) Has God taken away your only child? He has given You his only Son: this is a happy exchange. What needs he complain of losses who has Christ? He is His Father’s **“brightness”** (Heb. 1:3), His **“fullness”** (Col. 2:9), His **“delight”** (Prov. 8:30). Is there enough in Christ to delight the heart of God? And is there not enough in Him to enrapture us with holy delight? He is wisdom to teach us, righteousness to acquit us, sanctification to adorn us; He is the joy and triumph of saints, He is all in all (Col. 3:11). Why then are you discontented? Though your child be lost, yet you have Him for whom all things are loss.



## *A Study in Wisdom: Job 1:5-6 (pt. 1)*

*[Here we continue a reprint of a small portion of Joseph Caryl’s study in Job. Mr. Caryl wrote twelve volumes on the book of Job. His study is a great example of how deep one can dig into the truths of the Bible.]*

### **Job 1:5-6 (part 1) - Job’s Offering, by Joseph Caryl**

**<sup>5</sup>And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings, according to the number of them all. <sup>6</sup>For Job said, “It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did continually.**

**Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.**

Now follows the second act of Job’s holy care, He **“rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all”** (vs. 5).

It is ill to perform a holy duty with neglect of preparation; it is as bad to make preparation and then neglect the duty. We see both joined in Job, he is careful to prepare, and he is as diligent to perform.

He **“rose up early”**. This notes the extraordinary diligence and zeal of Job toward God in this duty. He was so zealous, that he riseth not only in **“the morning”**, but **“early in the morning”**. In Scripture, to do a thing in the **“morning”**, and to do a thing diligently are the same. For instance, in Psalm 101:8: **“I will early destroy the wicked of the land”**, the word is, *I will destroy the wicked of the land in the morning*, and the meaning is only this: *I will with all diligence and all care root out of the land all wicked persons*. So also there is an expression in Proverbs 7:15, which illustrates this. The wicked woman, the harlot, tells the young man that she came forth to meet him and diligently to seek his face: the original word there is, *to seek thy face in the morning*, and yet we know that in verse 9, it was in the twilight, in the evening, that she met him. But the Hebrew phrase is, *I*

came forth in the morning to seek thy face, that is (as it is rendered), **“I came forth diligently to seek thy face”**. So this coming forth of Job in the morning, besides the time, that it was at such an hour (the beginning of the day), notes the great diligence and exceeding care of Job about this work.

Yet more exactly, it is not only said, **“he rose in the morning”** (for there is a great latitude in the morning, there are many hours which are all called morning), but it is said he rose **“early in the morning”**, in the very beginning or first of the morning. As it is commanded, **“The first of the first fruits of the Land you shall bring into the house of the Lord”** (Ex. 23:19). God would not only have the first fruits, but the first of the first fruits, if there were any ripe sooner than others, God would have them; some fruits that ripened after, were first fruits, but God would have the very first of them. So here, Job gave God not only the first fruits of the day, but the earliest time, in the morning, which is the first of the first fruits of the day.

**“Early in the morning”**. Then observe,

1. *That it is God's due, and our duty to dedicate the morning, the first and best of every day, unto God.*

**“My voice shall you hear in the morning, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up”** (Psalm 5:3). We have a saying among us, that the morning is a friend to the Muses, that is, the morning is a good studying time. I am sure it is as true that the morning is a great friend to the Graces, the morning is the best praying time.

Again, in that Job did rise so early in the morning to offer sacrifice, and did this because he was afraid that his sons had sinned (as we shall see afterward), hence observe,

2. *That it is not safe to let sin lie a moment unrepented of or unpardoned upon our own consciences or the consciences of others.*

If a man's house be on fire, he will not only rise in the morning, or early in the morning, but he will rise at midnight to quench it; certainly when you have guilt on your souls, you have a fire in your souls. Your souls are on a flame: therefore you have need to rise and rise early, and get up as soon in the morning as you can to get it quenched and put out.

**“And offered burnt offerings.”** There were many sorts of sacrifices among the Jews, when the law of rules of sacrificing were established. There were, first, whole burnt-offerings. 2. Trespass-offerings. 3. Sin-offerings. 4. Peace offerings. That which Job is here said to offer was a whole burnt-offering, so called, because it was altogether consumed; there was no part of it reserved for the priest, or for the people, but all was offered up unto God. Of other sacrifices, as the sin-offering and trespass-offering, there were parts and portions reserved for the priest, and part of the peace-offerings for the people. The burnt offering was wholly consumed; the word in the Hebrew does signify, an ascension, or a thing lifted up. **“He offered burnt offerings”**, word for word out of

the Hebrew it is, **“He lifted up an elevation”**, he caused an ascension to ascend. And it was so called, because the sacrifice which was a whole burnt-offering was all-consumed upon the altar. And did as it were evaporate or ascend up unto God.

It was called a lifting-up or a thing lifted up for three reasons.

1. Because when the sacrifice was offered, the smoke of it did ascend, and besides there were sweet odors put upon the altar, which did fume up also with the sacrifice towards heaven, and so the sacrifice too: its denomination from ascending and going upwards.

2. Because the priest when he offered the sacrifice, did lift it up upon the altar, and hold it toward heaven, to God.

3. Because at that time when the sacrifice was burning, all the people that were present did lift up their hands and their eyes, but especially their souls and their spirits, heavenwards and powered themselves forth in prayer unto God. That of David, in Psalms 141:2, will give some light to this, **“Let”** (said he) **“my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”** David at that time (as interpreters note upon the psalm) was barred the enjoyment of the public ordinances; he could not come to sacrificing as formerly he had done. Now he seeks unto the Lord that he would accept the lifting up of his hands and heart, instead of sacrifice; as if he should say, “Lord I have not a sacrifice now to offer unto Thee; I am hindered from that work. I cannot lift that up. But I will lift up what I have, and what will please Thee better than a bullock that has horns and hooves. I will lift my hands and my heart unto Thee, and let these be accepted for sacrifice and all.” Prayer (which is a sacrifice of the gospel) is nothing else but a lifting up of the soul, an elevation of the spirit unto God. So some of the ancients call prayer, an ascending of the soul unto God. And in allusion unto this, Hezekiah, when he sent to Isaiah the prophet to pray for him in that time of distress and day of trouble, said, **“Go and desire the prophet to lift up his prayer for the remnant that are left,”** (II Kings 19:4), alluding to the sacrifices which were wont to be lifted up. The like expression prayer you have in Psalm 25:1: **“Lord”** (said David) **“I lift up my soul unto Thee.”** Hence, prayers not answered, not accepted, are said to be stopped from ascending: **“Thou has covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through.”** (Lam 3:44). When you meet with such expressions in the Old Testament concerning prayer, you must still understand them as allusions to the sacrifices, because the sacrifices were lifted up and did ascend. That for the act.

For the person, it is said that *Job offered* these sacrifices: *Job rose early and offered...* Was not this to usurp upon the priest office? Was it not this for which King Uzziah was reprehended and told by the Priests: **“It appertains not to thee, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron”** (II Chron. 26.18); and was he not smitten

with leprosy for doing of it?

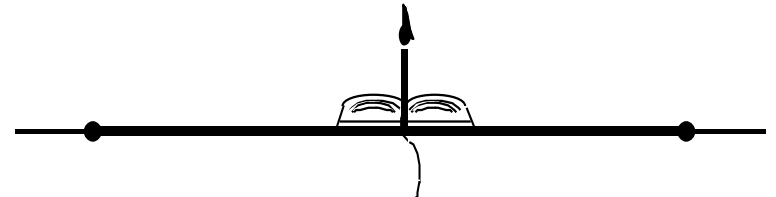
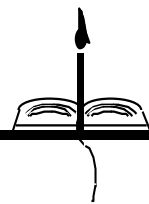
I answer in a word by that rule of the ancients. Distinguish the times and Scriptures will agree: it was Job that offered and Job had right to offer. The time wherein Job offered sacrifice does reconcile this; it was before the giving of the law (as we have showed in the opening of the former points about the time when Job lived). Now in those times, the Father or the elder of the family was as a priest to the whole family: and he had the power, and the right to perform all holy family duties; as the duty of sacrificing and the like. This you may see carried along in all the times before the law was given in the holy stories of the patriarchs; they still offered up the sacrifice.

But it may here be further inquired, If it were before the law was given, who taught Job to offer sacrifice? Where had he the rule for it?

I answer, this was not will-worship, though it was not written worship. For howsoever Job did offer sacrifice before the law of sacrificing was written, yet he did not offer a sacrifice before the law of sacrificing was given; for the law of sacrificing was given from the beginning, as all the other parts of worship used from the beginning were. God could never bear it that men should contrive Him a service; therefore Job did not offer up an offering unto God according to his own will, a thing that he had invented to pacify and to please God with: God had been so far from accepting, that He could not have born such a devised worship. God does never trust man with the making of holy institutions. There is nothing does please Him in any act of worship, unless He sees Himself obeyed, **“Obedience is better than sacrifice,”** and therefore a sacrifice which is not out of obedience cannot be accepted; he that sacrifices does but offer up a beast, but he that obeys, offers up himself, sacrifices his own will. It could not be therefore, but that Job had a word, a word as all the world had at that time; a word given by God, and so carried down from one to another by tradition (as it was for more than 2,000 years). All the will that God would reveal or had revealed to them was carried from hand to hand, or from heart to heart, from the Fathers to the children, till at the last of law was written, and the scripture penned by Moses. So then Job offered sacrifice according to an institution, though it was not an institution written, yet it was an institution sent forth and given by God himself.

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May God bless you as you study His Word.

**God's Incomprehensible Will**

"Take a straight stick, and put it into the water; then it will seem crooked. Why? Because we look upon it through two mediums, air and water... Thus the proceedings of God, in His justice, which in themselves are straight, seem unto us crooked: that wicked men should prosper, and good men be afflicted; that the Israelites should make the bricks, and the Egyptians dwell in the houses; that servants should ride on horseback, and princes go on foot: these are things that make the best Christians stagger in their judgments. And why? Because they look upon God's proceedings through a double medium of flesh and spirit, so that all things seem to go cross, though indeed they go right enough. And hence it is that God's proceedings, in His justice, are not so well discerned, the eyes of man alone being not competent judges thereof.

-- Thomas Fuller (1608-1661)

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