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## Christ's Doctrine of Wealth.

**T**HE parable of the Rich Fool and its context, is an instruction of our Lord which is singularly pertinent to some of the controlling tendencies of our time. The world has never seen wealth accumulate in any country so rapidly as in our own since the close of the Civil War. The noted fortunes of antiquity look small in comparison with the resources at the command of a number of American millionaires, and the zest for the pursuit of wealth probably was never keener than it is in the United States in the closing year of this century. In view of such facts as these, it is of the greatest importance that our ministers and teachers should apprehend correctly the doctrine of Jesus in regard to material possessions.

A salient teaching of this passage is that the attainment of wealth should be strictly subordinate to the attainment of character. In "The Beatitudes" there is no blessing placed upon those who are simply rich. The grave error in the man described in the parable, and that which made him a fool, was that he thought that abundance of material possessions could minister to his soul. He not only put his wealth first, but he thought that riches were all-sufficing. A man's life, to a certain extent, is dependent upon things; but even as to the necessary things, Jesus inculcated an attitude of having trust in the goodness of the Father, who knows His children's need of them. Our Lord sharply enforced the truth that "abundance of things" does not make up "life." Man has capacities, affinities, and aspirations that cannot be satisfied with the ground, nor with anything that comes out of it.

Our Lord also suggests the great temptation of wealth. The peril of riches that was most prominently in His thought was not that they encouraged luxury and self-indulgence, but that they tended to make a man unsocial, unsympathetic, and independent of his fellows. It has been well said that man "finds his highest good in making his life a part of other lives." The possession of riches fosters independence of others, carelessness of their rights and interests, and self-centredness that leads to hardness of spirit.

In the parable of Lazarus and Dives, that was the fault of the rich man. He thought only of himself. The sight of Lazarus did not move him. The dogs of the street were more sympathetic than he. In his parable the man's whole thought is engrossed upon his own comfort. He has enough, and his only care is to keep it and enjoy it. When we are poor we think what a joy it would be to help others, and become a beneficent part of their lives. A true instinct leads us to imagine those pictures; but as riches increase we lose that vision, and we are tempted to think only of ourselves. As a general rule, the most cynical and unsocial people are not those who have been deceived oftenest by their fellows, but those who, because they have gained wealth and independence of others, think they are sufficient for themselves.

One of our Lord's utterances that throws much light on the use of wealth, is His declaration that if one cannot be faithful in the unrighteous mammon, he is unfit to be entrusted with the true riches. Material things are like the counters with which they trade in a business college. The discipline and insight acquired in those of these substitutes qualifies for the use of money, and the principles, the experience, and the motives developed in the pursuit and use of riches, form character and capacity to acquire and employ the "true riches." The wise management of pounds fitted for the rule of cities. Riches are not only an opportunity of those who possess them,—the use of them is a discipline of character, and a severer discipline of character than is sometimes imagined.—*Watchman.*

"Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

## "One of the Sweet Old Chapters."

Mother was dying, and we, her grown up children, were gathered in the old-fashioned room to witness the closing scene. We had known for some time that it was coming, for she walked with a feebler step each new day, and a sweeter smile rested upon her face every time we looked into it. Mother's smile had always been very sweet to us, but it seemed to become more tender and heavenly as the days went on, and we sometimes thought that she was looking right into the glory of the better life. Her eyes grew brighter at times, just as though unseen hands had lifted the thin veil between this world and the one to which she was going.

All that day we sat or stood around her couch of death, although it did not seem like death at all. The smile lingered constantly on her face, and her eyes were as clear and bright as the summer sky. She was evidently too happy to talk to us, and too much absorbed in heavenly things to notice earthly scenes. Sometimes her thin lips moved as if in prayer, and once she sang in a tremulous voice, "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

None of us dared to weep in mother's presence, even if we had felt like it for we caught, too, something of her holy joy and peace. So we could do nothing but smile also, as we stood around her bed.

Just as the light of the setting sun crept into the west window and fell upon her pillow, she suddenly said:

"Read to me one of the sweet old chapters."  
"Which one, mother?" we all asked in unison as the old family Bible was brought out.

She did not answer, and one of our number began to read the last chapter in the book that she loved so well. When the fifth verse was read she repeated the words.

"And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign forever and ever."

We thought that mother did not notice any more of the chapter as it was read, for a far-away absent look crept over her face, and she kept repeating that one verse.

Soon a sweet, solemn stillness settled down upon her, and we knew that her happy soul had gone home. At first we thought that the sunlight upon the pillow had stolen up to her face and thus glorified it, but we soon saw that it was a fairer light than of setting sun. The peace of heaven was hers at last, and she would never need to listen again "to one of the sweet old chapters," for all of its precious promises had been fulfilled and blossomed out into eternal joy.

How sweet to meet the Master with the wedding garment on—how blessed to drift out upon the pulsing sea with every white sail unfurled in the pure breeze! Mother was ready to go, and this was why she went so sweetly away with the King of Glory.

MRS. M. A. HOLT.

## Made Like Unto God.

A crystal is sometimes formed in the embrace of a boulder of granite. To clear it of its rough inclosure, and to bring its beautiful facets to the light, nature submerges it in deep waters, shatters it by tempest, and abrades it by contact with stones and mud and the rubbish of the sea. Thus a redeemed soul is, by the plan of God, immersed in the cares and toils and enticements and usefulness of a world of sin, so that by sheer resistance to evil, and abrasion with depravity, it may be polished to the transparent image of Him who made it.

AUSTIN PHELPS, D. D.

It is a significant and undoubted fact that no one was ever sorry for making the Christian decision. The only grief of converts is that they did not make it earlier.

## Cost and Value.

BY CORA S. DAY.

"The value of kind deeds is out of all proportion to their cost," some one has wisely said.

A sympathetic, kindly smile is easily bestowed upon some timid, hesitating one. It is cheap—it costs no money and little effort; yet its value to the recipient may be beyond computation.

A cordial handshake and a pleasant word are easy to give. All they cost is a little of the love for our neighbor that was enjoined so long ago by One who put only the higher love to God before it. But only He who knows the hearts of men can reckon the value of the renewed faith that may spring in the downcast heart, at the warm touch and the kindly word.

You do the little, kindly deed of helpfulness that comes to your hand, and go on your way forgetting the service that was so easily performed for another. Yet that soul remembers; and because of that unselfish service, done without hope or thought of reward, believes once more in the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God.

You all know the story of the man who helped one in distress and afterwards refused all recompense, saying simply: "Pass it on to some one else." Suppose that man, out of the fullness of his gratitude, had "passed it on," not to one alone, but to many others, and each one of these in turn had "passed it on," in the same way, how gloriously out of all proportion to the cost would be the value of the sum total of fellowship and good will that would thus come about!

From Pastor Snell.

We clip the following from the *Acton and Chiswick Gazette*, of October 12th, which may interest the many friends of Bro. Snell, formerly pastor at Havelock. We are glad to hear of his settlement at Acton, within eight miles of the city of London, and trust that much blessing may follow his labors there.

"At a large and representative meeting of the members of the Acton Evangelistic Church, on Tuesday evening, a resolution was unanimously passed to invite the Rev. Frederick T. Snell to the pastorate, which had been vacant since early in May by the resignation of Mr. Outey. The resolution was at once conveyed to Mr. Snell, who, coming into the meeting, expressed his willingness to accept the invitation. His decision was received with much satisfaction and pleasure, and it is now hoped that bright and prosperous times will come to the church, which has shown in the past that it has a work to do, and can do it. Expression of thanks were passed to the officers who have during the recent anxious months done so much to maintain the work and institutions of the church.

We are able to give our readers some information respecting the Rev. F. T. Snell, who comes with good credentials, and by whom it is anticipated a useful and successful work will be accomplished in Acton. He has, since his arrival from Canada, preached in the Evangelistic Church on six Sundays. He is an associate of the Pastors' College, was for many years an evangelist, and led a very busy life in this branch of Christian work for a long period under the direction of the late C. H. Spurgeon. During four years of this time he edited a monthly magazine called "The King's Messenger." In 1888, at the desire of Mr. Spurgeon, Mr. Snell commenced a work on the island of Guernsey, which so rapidly grew that by the end of that year a Baptist church was formed, and a church edifice purchased. Thus under his leadership was founded the first English Baptist church on that island. At the end of 1890, Mr. Snell left England for America, and settled in Augusta, Wisconsin. At this time C. H. Spurgeon wrote of him: "He is a splendid pioneer, full of energy and sense," and gave him the following testimonial.—"This is to certify that Mr. Snell has been an evangelist under