

## The Christian.

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## EDITORIAL.

## THE RICHES OF CHRIST.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.—Eph. iii. 8.

The Apostle Paul formed a new word meaning "less than the least of all saints" to express his feeling of himself. Knowing that he had had very "much forgiven" him and that he ought to "love much," the contrast between Jesus' love to him and his love to Jesus made him think with himself, "No other saint loves the Saviour proportionately as little as I do." Notwithstanding his unworthiness he was favored with a work not inferior to any ever committed to a created being. "To preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

God's creatures can enjoy the benefits of that which they do not understand. He can be warmed by the fire who can not tell how the fire warms, and he can eat and grow and be satisfied who can not tell how food gratifies the appetite; and although the riches of Christ are unsearchable, yet by grace divine we can think of it, talk about it, and share its blessings. We can know the love of Christ although it passeth all understanding.

The riches of Christ are seen in the men who have discovered nature's hidden laws, and thereby astonished and benefitted mankind. These secrets have been opened from time to time, and who can estimate their value? Were it possible to sell the knowledge of steam, or of electricity, or of gravitation, what price would pay the world for their loss? What would be a just remuneration for the loss of all the discoveries of the present and past ages? From Christ each of these discoverers and inventors received his key of knowledge which differs from all other keys in that it turns only one way—it opens secrets but never closes them, leaving them open for the benefit of all. Christ gave all these their knowledge, for "in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Kings and rulers, orators and poets, with all their powers to lead and startle and influence others, receive their talents from Christ, and when he returns to reckon with men, the talents will be taken from those who shall have abused them, and given to the faithful trader who will return his money with interest, and all will be poured back into the shoreless ocean of Jesus' wealth. How rich he is in the ownership of men and their talents.

But it was the unsearchable riches of Christ's redemption Paul was to preach among the Gentiles. Like other Jews he had intensely hated the Gentiles as abominable idolators, disowned and accursed of God. That hatred was manifest everywhere. When Jesus told a Jewish audience how God in past times favored certain Gentiles, the very people who had just before wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth now rose in rage to throw him over the brow of the hill to destroy him (Luke iv.) The zealous Paul lacked none of these bitter feelings. But, behold! he now had the grace given him to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. God's hidden purpose of making the Gentiles fellowheirs, and of the same body partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel, which had been unknown to the sons of men, was now revealed to the apostles by the Spirit, and Paul wrote this letter that the reader might understand his knowledge of that rich secret.

Prophets anxiously sought to know what the Spirit in them meant when it testified of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should

follow, but could only learn that they wrote for the benefit of New Testament saints. The angels, too, desired to look into the secret, but neither prophets nor angels could reach the unsearchable riches of Christ (I. Peter i. 10).

The Holy Spirit first revealed the grand secret to the astonished Peter, who told it to the Gentiles, and admitted them into the riches of Christ's salvation; and now Paul was to carry the glad tidings into all the Gentile world that all who believe in Jesus might be saved and have a share in his unsearchable wealth.

The riches of Christ's attributes in man's salvation is unsearchable. How rich the wisdom that devised a plan by which the very chief of sinners can be forgiven "all trespasses," made holy and happy, and at the same time strict law and justice honored more than if the sinner had suffered for his crimes. But such is the riches of Christ's wisdom.

How rich is the power that can turn the bitterest enemy into a friend, so loving, so true, that he would willingly die for the one he once hated and opposed. Christ's power was so unspeakable that he is constantly accomplishing this wondrous change in men. Paul stood as a monument of this power, and will stand forever to show the unsearchable riches of Jesus' power. "I am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him against that day."

What shall we say of the riches of Jesus' love? "God is love," and wherever God is there is love. Christ's love has no beginning, because God has no beginning. It has no end, because God has not. It is as wide as the universe! as lasting as eternity! Its riches are unsearchable. It "passeth all understanding."

The riches of Christ's joy over men's salvation is unsearchable. He tells us of angels' joy over one sinner that repents. But it's his joy that kindles the joy of angels. What, then, is his joy and theirs over ten sinners that repent? But when the number increases to ten thousand or to thousands of millions, the riches of that joy will be unsearchable. That joy set before him was so rich that for it he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For it "he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied."

The riches of Christ's possessions is unsearchable. Who can tell how many mansions are in his Father's house, or the number and glory of the angels and principalities and powers that inhabit these mansions. But they all belong to Jesus. He made and upholds them all, and for his glory they are and were created. But when Christ ascended through the realms of glory, passing through thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, he reached the grand culmination at the "Head of the Church" (see Eph. i. 21, 22, 23; Col. i. 18) because his vast wealth in the possession of the universe is far exceeded in "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph. i. 18). For them he was made flesh, dwelt on earth, and wept and bled and died. To them gave he power to become the sons of God, and while he stands far above his other happy dominions he is head over all to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. (Eph. i. 28). That body will be rich in numbers, rich in talents, rich in enjoyment, and uniting like its head the glory of the human and divine nature, and through it will redound to Christ "A FAR MORE EXCEEDING AND ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY."

But Christ is pleading with a lost world to be saved and share His boundless wealth. Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear My voice and open the door I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with Me. Rev. iii. 20. Blessed Redeemer, who would refuse Thee an entrance and keep back his little from Thee? Who would refuse Thy love or to be an eternal partaker of Thy unsearchable riches?

## Original Contributions.

## TEMPTATIONS OF INTELLECTUAL MEN.

We very often hear of the great temptations which the rich are subject to; but we seldom, if ever, hear anything said of the strong temptations which an intellectual man has to battle with. Yet I think that the temptations which accompany a great intellect are, if anything, stronger than those which arise out of the accumulation of wealth.

It seems to be a severe trial for man to stand extremes. We can readily see the wisdom of Solomon's prayer, "Give me neither riches nor poverty," because of the temptations both are surrounded with. But it is the extreme of abundance I wish to write about at present. While riches in the days of Solomon probably brought with them more temptations than any other kind of prosperity or natural gifts, yet it would appear that, while they still retain those temptations, that intellectual gifts are surrounded with even greater temptations to-day; and we might be persuaded that if Solomon were living in our age his prayer would be, "Give me neither a great intellect nor a weak one." And this, although we know that a great intellect, if rightly used, is the grandest gift which God bestows upon man.

No gift, I think, can compare with a great intellect if rightly guided. It is true that there are other gifts which God bestows upon man that are necessary to fully enjoy the benefits of a great mind, but if we were given our choice between a strong intellect and any other gift, I suppose we would always choose the former.

Would Milton, for instance, have exchanged his grand mind for sight, or Pope and Watts their intellects for more vigorous and healthy forms? Certainly not.

It requires an intellect to enjoy all other gifts; and the more brilliant that intellect the greater will be the enjoyment, provided, of course, we restrict its scope to its proper sphere. And what has the intellect not accomplished? Has not every department of life been benefited by it? Everywhere we see evidences of man's ingenuity and monuments erected to the glory of his intellectual powers. When employed in the interest of humanity, the mind of man has indeed been a great blessing.

But every blessing can be abused; and the gift which, when rightly used, is the greatest of all blessings, may become, when perverted, the greatest of evils. Man is so constituted and his surroundings are such that the powers which he possesses for doing good can be used with just as telling effect in the opposite direction; and great intellectual powers which may be used with such benefits for, may also be turned to the great injury of humanity. A mighty intellect, while a grand thing in a Plato, Paul, Luther, or Campbell, is a terrible instrument of destruction in a Voltaire, Payne, or Owen.

But with all its grandeur the intellect is by no means perfect. I suppose no proposition is more firmly settled or more universally acknowledged than this, viz., that the mind of man is fallible. Yet is there any one which is less acted upon or so seldom put into practical use! Probably not.

Man acknowledges that there are limits beyond which his reasoning powers cannot extend; and yet, notwithstanding this acknowledgment, he deliberately breaks down all limits and uses the greatest freedom.

God, who having given us reasoning powers to be used within certain limits—limits we can readily see if we honestly look for them—has also given us a will. A will implies freedom. We can therefore reason within these limits, or go beyond them if we choose. But if we go beyond these limits