

88. True Riches.

If riches increase, set not your heart upon them. *Ps. 62, 10.*

We live in an age and in a land of money-worship. Earthly riches are considered mountains that will last forever. Yet how many are to-day poor that formerly were wealthy! And when death comes, the rich man cannot take a cent along with him. Look at the rich man in the gospel who said to his soul: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But God said to him: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" "So is he," says our Savior, "that layeth up treasures for himself and is not rich toward God." Is it, then, reprehensible in a man to be rich? By no means.

It is an honorable thing to have wealth as long as one has gotten it honestly. But because man is born flesh of the flesh and by nature is earthly-minded, the possession of riches is beset with great dangers to the soul, and therefore the Scriptures contain so many warnings against the temptation of riches. Paul says: "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." He writes to Timothy: "Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God." Of a beloved companion he writes: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." At many places the Scriptures plainly show that it is more difficult for the rich to be saved than for the poor.

And yet, although the possession of wealth is fraught with many and great temptations, it also brings many and great advantages. What glorious opportunities have the wealthy to become rich in good works! Blessed the rich who use their riches for works of charity! What they have done to the poor and needy they have done to the Lord.

Prayer.

O Lord, bless unto us Thy gifts that they may advance our health and well-being; but also grant that we do not misuse them to the injury of our soul and the multiplying of sins, such as intemperance and idleness, from which unchastity, adultery, cursing, swearing, murder, war, and all manner of ills come; but grant us grace that we may so use Thy gifts that their possession will not harm our soul and that our fellow-man may be benefited therewith, both his body and his soul. Amen.

Jesus, Thou art mine forever,
Dearer far than earth to me;
Neither life nor death shall sever
Those sweet ties which bind to Thee.

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