

His Riches—Our Riches: A Gospel Message

by Arno C. Gaebelain

Introduction

We have known no time when the Lord had more need of Mr. Valiant-for-Truth and Mr. Hold-fast-the-Faith than now. Our friend who writes this book is one of the few who have determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

This little book touches the heart of the whole Gospel. In its first part, it renders an adoring tribute to His essential Deity who is rich with Divine glory; in the second, it follows Him in His humiliation, and portrays that mystery of vicarious suffering for which the Cross is the perpetual signal and symbol; and, in the third, we are led up to those Ephesian heights, from which we survey the ultimate Destiny of His Redeemed Saints.

This book is eminently adapted to assist in the salvation of sinners and to feed saints. We prayerfully commend it to the loving favor of our God and Father, as it goes forth on its solemn mission, persuaded that it will not return void. —Arthur T. Pierson



For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9

These beautiful words, which we find written in connection with Christian giving, contain the blessed Gospel in a most precious fullness. Like the great heart of the Gospel in John 3:16, it is so very simple and yet so very profound that its depths have yet to be fathomed.

Manoah had seen the angel of the Lord, and when he asked his heavenly visitor, What is thy name? He answered, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is "Wonderful"? (marginal reading). And then the angel of the Lord did wondrously before Manoah and his wife and ascended in the flame of the altar. Judges 13:18.

The Holy Spirit through the prophet Isaiah, announcing the birth of the Saviour and the gift of the Son, gives as one of His names "Wonderful." Isaiah 9:6.

Even so He is. He is wonderful in His Person and His Work. He is wonderful in all He has done, in what He is doing and in all He will yet do. His words, His acts, His Love, His Grace, His mercy, yes, all is wonderful. Three wonderful facts are found in 2 Corinthians 8:9. Each fact is more wonderful than the previous one.

First: The *wonderful* fact: He was Rich.

Secondly: The *more wonderful* fact: He Became Poor For Our Sakes.

Thirdly: The *most wonderful* fact: By His Poverty We Are Rich.



I. The Wonderful Fact that the Lord Jesus Christ was Rich.

This statement leads us back into eternity. The Riches of which this Word speaks are His eternal Riches. He ever subsisted in the form of God as the only Begotten of the Father, absolutely one with Him. With the Father before the world existed, "*He was rich.*" But who is able to penetrate the mysteries of eternity? The wisdom of man, his reasoning and imaginations are all folly in the presence of such a stupendous statement. As we turn to revelation to receive glimpses of that which "*eye has not seen, nor ear heard*" to listen to what God in His Word has to say of the riches of the Son of His Love. "*No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father.*" Luke 10:22 Thus He spake Himself. But it is also blessedly true that "*God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*" 1 Corinthians 2:10. What then do the Scriptures say about the eternal Riches of Him, who is our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ? The Word of God tells us that the Son of God was rich in all eternity in three things. He was rich in *Possessions*, rich in *Love* and rich in *Glory*. As far as we can learn from revelation His eternal Riches consisted in these three things. But how little we know what they all include! When at last Grace has brought us to the Father's house, where we shall behold His Glory, when we shall know as we are known, what knowledge of His Riches we shall then enjoy! And yet that which is made known about His Riches is sufficient to fill our hearts with wonder and our lips with praises.

Rich in Possessions. Our conception of riches in possessions are limited. If we fill the hands of a child full of glittering pennies, that little one looks upon them as great riches. The great ones of the earth only count themselves rich when they can add millions to millions, houses to houses and land to land. If the whole world were to belong at some time to one person and that one had possession of all the gold and silver, the precious pearls and costly stones, all the treasures of art,

yea, all the treasures yet hidden in the mountains and hills of the earth, how rich that person would be! It would be impossible to make known the riches of such a man. Still in comparison with Him who was rich, this person would be only a poverty stricken beggar.

What does it mean, He was rich in possessions? Let the Scripture give the answer. "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him."

In this blessed Word we find the description of the Riches of the Son of God. All things belong to Him, for He created them; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is the Creator of all things, and because He is, they belong to Him, they are His and consist by Him. "The earth is the LORD'S and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein." Psalm 24:1 None other than Jehovah, the One who ever was in the bosom of the Father, is it who speaks in another Psalm: "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." Psalm 50:10-13. Again He saith through one of His prophets, "The silver is mine and the gold is mine." Haggai 2:8. And then the great sea with its fearful and mysterious depths: of the sea with its mighty waves it is written, "The sea is His, and He made it." Psalm 95:5. How great His possessions; this earth He created with all its wonders and beauties belongs to Him. But His Riches are greater still. He created the things that are in heaven. What a wonderful world it is which is above! Well did the holy singer cry out through the Spirit of God, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." Psalm 19:1. But what are the things in heaven? What are these stars and suns?

The human eye can get a few glimpses of that wonderful creation. There are stars and planets hundreds and thousands of times larger than our earth. The Sun is over a million times larger than our planet. It is a marvelous, incomprehensible ocean of fire. And yet the star Sirius has, it has been calculated, a force of light equal to over 140 suns like ours. Stars there are in such wonderful distance from our planet that light, though traveling at 180,000 miles a second, ten million and eight hundred thousand miles a minute or six hundred and forty-eight million miles an hour, takes several thousand years to reach our earth. And oh! the mysteries hid in the impenetrable depths of the universe, which no telescope can reach!

And in the heavens are the innumerable angels; their number is "ten

thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." Revelation 5:11. And all this He, who is the image of God, created and by right of creation they are all His; all belongs to Him. How rich He was in all eternity!

Rich in Love. God did not become Love, but God *is* Love and has always been Love. Love needs an object. The object of the Love of God in all eternity was He, who is called "the Son of His Love." In that remarkable passage in the Book of Proverbs, which can only refer to that One, we read how He declares, "I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Psalm 8:30. In the fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John, in which the Holy Spirit portrays the Lord as the Son of God, we learn of this eternal Love relation between the Father and the Son. Here in the first chapter we read that "the Word was with God," and that He was "the only begotten Son, in the bosom of the Father." John 1:1-18.

But we have to listen to His own precious words as they came from His lips in His high priestly prayer to hear of that eternal Love He enjoyed, a Love without beginning.

"Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John 17. What words these are! Who dares to add to them or attempt to describe that Love? One hears almost the solemn caution of old given by the Lord. "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place where thou standest is holy." All attempts to describe that Love or to illustrate it must fail. What that Love was in all eternity, what Riches of Love He enjoyed in the bosom of the Father, what delight was His, no Saint has ever comprehended. It is enough to know before the world was He was "the Son of His Love," in the bosom of the Father enjoying the Riches of His Love.

Rich in Glory. Love puts Glory upon the beloved object. The Father's Love and the Father's Glory was His in all eternity. Again we have to turn to His own words to learn of His eternal glory. When He uttered that marvelous prayer in the presence of the Father, He made the following request, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory, which I had with thee before the world was." John 17:5. How simple and definite this statement is! He had a glory with the Father before the world was; yea, he was the effulgence of the Father's glory. Hebrews 1:3. But who can tell what that glory really was? What human eye could fully gaze upon that glory? Seers of old had visions of the Glory of the Lord. They saw the heavens opened and got faint glimpses of the glory of the Lord. Whose glory was it they beheld? A passage in the Gospel of John gives us the answer. "These things said Esaias when he saw His glory and spoke of Him."

John 12:41.

The prophet Isaiah saw the Lord and beheld His glory, and the New Testament tells us that it was the glory of the only begotten, the Son of God. What a glory place it must have been where He was in all eternity, which, while on earth, He called, the Father's house! John 14:3. What scenes of joy and praise, when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God, the holy angels, clapped their hands for joy! And He was the center of that Glory. To fully understand it all we must wait till we enter that place above when we with all His redeemed people are with Him and when He will show us His Glory.

We dare not add another word to that which we have written. Scripture gives us no other description of His eternal Riches, than these three—Riches in possessions; all is His; Riches in Love; Riches in Glory. But what a theme to meditate upon! What joy in believing in Him "who was rich!" Full enjoyment of the blessed Gospel is an impossibility unless we have His eternal Riches before the soul.



II. The More Wonderful Fact that He Became Poor for Our Sakes.

If we have wondered at His eternal Riches, how much greater must be our amazement that such a One, whose Riches are incomprehensible, became poor. Indeed it is more wonderful that He became poor and furthermore that He became poor for "your sakes." The precious Gospel text before us enlarges and expands and opens up the gracious, unfathomable depths of God's Love. We shall find that He, who was so rich, became so poor, that He was stripped of all He had. And it was for us, reader! it was for your sake. Ah! can we ever hear enough of it? Do we ever get tired of hearing the old, the blessed story of His Love? There are such who seem to have gotten beyond this precious Gospel. "We want something deeper than the Gospel," some people said to the writer some time ago. It did not take us long to find out that they never had fully tasted the sweetness of the old, old story of Jesus and His Love. The one who knows it and lives in fellowship with the Father and the Son can never hear it enough. The more we hear the more we realize its preciousness and its marvelous depths. No, we cannot get beyond the Gospel.

But let us look at the more wonderful fact, that He became poor for your sakes. What does it mean? Aye, what does it mean! The Holy Spirit in the Epistle to the Philippians gives us the story of this more wonderful fact, the path of Him, who came from Glory to this dark, sin cursed earth. Let us read His words first of all.

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:6-8.

And first of all we mention His incarnation. He made Himself of no reputation...He was made in the likeness of men, fashioned as a man. The mighty creator who in the hour of creation had formed the body of man out of the dust of the earth, took upon Himself that same form and entered the world He had called into existence. He did not empty Himself of his Deity; He came as Jehovah manifested in the flesh.

We read the holy, blessed facts of His entrance into the world in the Gospel of Luke. The angel Gabriel said to Mary after He had announced the coming birth of the Saviour, "The Holy Ghost 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. And then He was born. On the bosom of Mary rests He who ever was in the bosom of the Father. In miserable Bethlehem He begins His earthly life as a little babe.

"And she brought forth her Firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." Luke 2:7. What poverty it was, the poverty of incarnation! For Him who created all, who has all, whose glorious place was with the Father before the world was, for Him there was no room and His first resting place a manger. And yet this poverty in incarnation is far from being the fullest meaning of that, which is before us in this wonderful fact, He became poor for our sakes. All the poverty of the incarnation could not and cannot give peace and rest for the conscience of a guilty sinner. There is a deeper poverty of Him who was rich, than the poverty of incarnation.

It has not pleased the Holy Spirit to give us a record of the Blessed One as He grew up to manhood. There is just one record at the close of the second chapter in the Gospel of Luke, when He spoke that significant word, "How is it that ye have sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Luke 2:49. What consciousness of His Personality and His Work they reveal!

And then we read. "He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject unto them." Luke 2:51. Nazareth was a poor little place with a poor reputation. There He went, He whose fellowship had been from everlasting with the Father.

Had the Holy Spirit given us the story of these years in Nazareth we would have to read, no doubt, a story of poverty, of toil and perhaps want. In the Gospel of Mark we hear Him mentioned as "the carpenter." He who later declared in the presence of the Jews in the Gospel of John "My Father worketh hitherto and I work," worked patiently, toiled on for years with His own hands. John 5:17. And yet these years of toil and poverty in Nazareth do not make known the full extent of His poverty. Were He still to labor and to toil upon the earth and live here in deepest poverty, all this could not save a single soul from death nor give a single sinner acceptance with God.

How poor He was we read too well in the Record of the Gospels. He had not where to lay His head. "The birds have nests and the foxes have holes, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head." Such was His mournful utterance; and there often in all probability was no resting place for that blessed, blessed head.

He hungered and came to a fig tree and found nothing there. His disciples, too, who had followed Him, were hungry and plucked the ears of corn on the Sabbath day. Women, the weaker vessel, ministered unto Him, and gave to Him, who, as we have seen before, saith, "The silver and gold is mine and the cattle upon a thousand hills." Great as this poverty was, it is not that poverty, into which He went, for our sake. He became infinitely poorer than that.

As he walked in humiliation upon the earth, in the likeness of man, though poor outwardly, poor in Nazareth, poor among His own. He was nevertheless rich. He still enjoyed the riches of the Father's Love. As a boy He speaks of "my Father." The Father's smile was ever about Him and upon Him. God could do nothing else but love Him, who had left His bosom and became man. There was never a moment in that holy spotless life, when the Father's presence and the Father's Love were lacking. How precious it must have been for Him in all the poverty He had taken upon Himself, to enjoy the presence and fellowship of Him, with Whom He was and is One.

And so as He walked among His own, the Father was with Him. The Riches of Love He still possessed. The Father opened His heavens above Him and said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:17. This was at the beginning of His ministry, when He came out of the waters. The same voice spoke on the holy mountain at His transfiguration, when His wonderful Glory is upon Him. In the nights He spent in the desert or upon the mountains alone He enjoyed the loving fellowship with the Father. When He was in the desert, tempted by the devil, walking among the wild beasts, the loving arms of His Father were about Him.

Beloved reader! the fullest meaning of this more wonderful fact, He became poor for your sake can only be learned in one place and that place is, the *Cross*.

In the story of the Cross do we find written the deepest poverty of Him who was rich. There alone we see what it did cost God to bring us to Himself.

But who is able to fully understand the poverty of the Cross? Jeremiah amidst the ruins of his beloved Jerusalem broke out in the most pathetic lament, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD has afflicted me in the day of fierce anger." Lam. 1:12. But what was Jeremiah's sorrow and suffering in comparison with the one the Man of Sorrows had? He alone could say, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." The sufferings of the blessed One had all been minutely predicted by His own Spirit throughout the Old Testament. They were foreshadowed in the sufferings of the Old Testament Saints, such as Abel, Isaac, Joseph, Job, David, Daniel and others. When He came He fulfilled them all and suffered in the shame and poverty of the cross. But who can measure the agony of the cross, through which that holy one had to pass?

The so called old masters, great painters, have pictured from their imagination the crucifixion scene. These paintings may be works of art from a human standpoint; spiritually considered they are miserable productions, almost blasphemies. "There they crucified Him," is all the Holy Spirit tells us of the awful act itself. Oh, what must it have been when He was delivered over into the hands of men, when He who was everlastingly clothed with the Father's Glory, was stripped and nailed cruelly to that cross! Bleeding with His face marred, carrying upon His Blessed head, the crown of thorns, He is lifted up, on that awful cross, a spectacle for human and supernatural beings. There He hung forsaken by His own, left alone in the hours of His suffering.

And yet if we were to stop with this and say that we have descended into the deepest place of the poverty of Him who was rich we would miss the mark. Though the suffering and the shame, the sorrows and the agony, were so great that they cannot be measured, yet do they not give us the fullest meaning of His poverty.

There is poverty still deeper than the physical suffering and shame on the cross. That deepest poverty came up before Him, when He was in the garden Gethsemane.

"And when He was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that ye enter

not into temptation. And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed, Saying Father, if Thou be willing to remove this cup from Me, nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto Him out of heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony He prayed more earnestly and His sweat was as if it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Luke 22:40-44.

Why all this agony? Did He shrink from physical suffering, from the cross and its shame? He did not, but was ready for the joy set before Him to endure the cross and to despise the shame. He knew the deepest poverty, the lowest depths into which He was to descend, the bitter cup He was to drink to the last bitter drop; on account of that He was in an agony. And what then is the deepest poverty of the Rich One, the Creator, the mighty, glorious Jehovah?

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, that is to say, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Matthew 27:45-46. In that darkness which enshrouded Him, whose garment was Glory before the foundation of the world, in that solemn, fearful cry which came from His lips out of that darkness, we are face to face with the poverty of Him who was rich.

Here we see Him stripped of all that He had. The Riches of Love, the Riches of Glory were gone. No longer is there above Him the Father's smiling face but in its place a holy, righteous God, whose hand smites the Sufferer on the cross. That Love which He always enjoyed as the Only Begotten, which was His delight while He walked the earth, is now turned into the fearful wrath of God. Stripped of all, smitten of God, He who knew no sin was made sin for us. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is the only time the Lord Jesus addressed the Father as "My God." But what did it mean? What did it mean for God to put His hand upon that beloved One who ever was His delight, who pleased Him? What must it have been for the Lamb of God to taste that awful death, He who had not deserved it; to be forsaken of Him with whom He ever was? Shall we ever know the depth of His suffering? Shall we ever find out in all eternity what it cost to redeem us? Perhaps we shall never know "the suffering of death" through which the Lamb of God had to pass, stripped of all His Riches, alone, forsaken on that Cross.

And now, think of it, "for your sake He became poor." For you, dear reader, He came into the world, for you He went to that cross, for you He drank that bitter cup, for you He was forsaken of God.

Well may we sing:

O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head!
Our load was laid on Thee;
Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead—
To bear all ill for me.
A victim led, Thy blood was shed;
Now there's no load for me.

Death and the curse were in our cup—
O Christ, 'twas full for Thee!
But Thou hast drained the last dark drop,
'Tis empty now for me.
That bitter cup—love drank it up;
Left but the love for me.

Jehovah lifted up His rod—
O Christ, it fell on Thee!
Thou wast forsaken of Thy God;
No distance now for me.
Thy blood beneath that rod has flowed:
Thy bruising healeth me.

The tempest's awful voice was heard,
O Christ, it broke on Thee;
Thy open bosom was my ward;
It bore the storm for me.
Thy form was scarred, Thy visage marred;
Now cloudless peace for me.

For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,
And I have died in Thee;
Thou'rt risen: my bands are all untied;
And now Thou liv'st in me.
The Father's face of radiant grace
Shines now in light on me.

And who are we that He should enter into such depths of poverty and be forsaken by God?

Who were these Corinthians let us ask. The First Epistle will give us an answer.

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor

covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." I Corinthians 6:9-11.

What an awful record this is! Yet for such the Son of God came down and became poor, even to the poverty of the Cross. What an awful record, I hear some one say, and adding, as it is done so often, so deep I have never fallen. In the language of the self-righteous Pharisee, the nominal Christians, righteous in their own eyes and despising others, they say "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers or even as this publican. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess." Luke 18:9-12. Reader, is this your language? Is this your confession? If so how little you know of yourself and how little of the sweetness of the precious Gospel.

"It is related of the late Bishop Brooks, that, having to preach in the Massachusetts penitentiary, he was stricken dumb as he saw the long lines of fellowmen clad in the livery of shame, shamle, lockstep, to their places in the chapel. For he said: "How may I preach to these men? What know I of thieves, murderers and forgers? I have done none of these things. Between them and myself is a chasm, hell deep, which I can neither overpass to get to them, nor they to get to me." And then God showed him his own natural heart. Down through layers of Puritan tradition, of moral habit, inherited from generations of God-fearing ancestors, the revealing ray shot and lighted up the real heart underneath, and the man of God saw there the possibility of every crime represented in the long rows of furtive-eyed, low-browed, bestial-faced humanity before him—and then he preached to them as a sinful man to sinful men."

Listen to the description of your heart, the natural heart of man, as given by Him, our blessed Saviour, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Matthew 15:19.

All these evil things are in our hearts. There is a murderer there and a fornicator, a thief and a robber. The Grace of God may have kept it back, from the fullest manifestation, but it is there. How true it was when Rowland Hill cried out when he saw a murderer with the rope around his neck led to the gallows, "There goes Rowland Hill, if it were not for the Grace of God." Such are we. Vile, corrupt sinners; enemies of God. Again let me point you to the Word of God, what God has to say of us, "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not

one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes...all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:11-23.

This is what we are by nature. God Himself tells us all this and He alone knows the depth of our degradation, of our vileness, our sinfulness, our enmity and ungodliness. And yet knowing it all He gave the best He could give. He gave up Him, the Son of His Love. Oh listen! listen!—He put His hand upon Him in that awful poverty of the cross and smote Him in our place. Oh! wonderful, wonderful Love! It passeth knowledge... "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. BUT GOD commendeth His Love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Romans 5:6-8.

Will you not now bow your head and heart in the Presence of God and believe the record! Take your place before Him as a vile, lost, guilty sinner. You have never done anything good; you can never do anything good. Unsaved reader, acknowledge yourself a vile sinner before God and believe on the Son of God. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16. What greater proof could God give of His Love than the one He has given, by putting His beloved Son in the place of the vilest sinner. He spared not His beloved Son so that He could be able to spare the sinner, who believes on the Son. He became poor for your sakes, for your sakes. Do you believe it? Will you accept Him as your Saviour?

O Thou who didst Thy glory leave,
Apostate sinners to retrieve
From nature's deadly fall,—
Thou, Thou hast bought us with a price;
Our sins against us ne'er can rise,
For Thou hast borne them all.

See Him for our transgressions given;
See the blest Lamb of God from heaven,
For us, His foes, expire;
Rejoice! rejoice! the tidings hear!
He bore, that we might never bear,
Th' Almighty's righteous ire.

And we who have believed and know Him, know that He died for us, we who confess with the great apostle "who loved me and gave Himself for Me," how we need a greater conception of that mighty Love, which gave Him, that Love which went to the cross into such a poverty. We should look upon every unsaved one, the lowest, the most miserable, the most unloveable from a human standpoint, as one for whom the Son of God gave up His eternal Riches and became so poor.

Look at the ones in yonder street of our great cities. How often we see them tottering along or in the gutter. There he lies covered with the filth of the street, perhaps with his own blood sunk beneath the beast. Ah! look upon that miserable one, that homeless tramp, as one for whom the Son of God cried upon the cross "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?" For Him His precious blood was shed, for that one He tasted that awful death. How else can we but love that poor, miserable sinner, that homeless outcast, whom God loved, for whom God gave His Son, for whom Christ died. We are a debtor to that one. The Lord fill our hearts with that burning love which He has for poor lost sinners that we may yearn, yea agonize for the salvation of those for whom Christ became poor.



III. By His Poverty We Are Rich.

What a theme we have for our contemplation. The great, the deep, the unfathomable poverty of the Son of God on the cross has procured us riches. How great must these riches be, which are for poor lost sinners, for whom He died and who believe on Him? We shall find indeed that while the Riches of Christ He had with the Father before the world was were wonderful and the fact that such a One became so poor put something still more wonderful before our hearts, yet the most wonderful of all is the riches God has given us in Him.

This is the *fulness* of the blessed Gospel, a fullness which is but little preached and less believed in these days. Some emphasize in Gospel preaching the fact of the forgiveness of sin, how the believing sinner is freely justified from all things. A great blessing it is indeed to know sins are forever put away. That blessedness David knew when he wrote the Thirty-second Psalm.

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Psalm 32:1-2.

But forgiveness is only a small part of that blessed salvation. Others make prominent the impartation of the new life, the eternal life, the

certainty of salvation and the deliverance from the wrath to come. All these and other precious things are some of the most blessed results of the finished work of the Son of God on the cross. There is however a higher revelation of what the believing sinner, saved by Grace has in that blessed One, who became poor. The fullest blessing in Him our beautiful text reveals. We have become rich by Him.

And what are the riches, which belong to us on account of the poverty of the Lord Jesus Christ?

How rich are we in Him? Have you ever thought of your Riches in the Lord Jesus Christ? In what do they consist? I will not keep you longer from that which cheers the heart of the writer, that which should fill all our hearts with constant praise and worship.

We are, saved by Grace, through the poverty of the Lord Jesus Christ, when He was forsaken on that cross, *just as rich as He now is in Glory up yonder.*

This is a great assertion. It is a wonderful claim and yet it is true, true now, true forever and ever, throughout the countless ages of a never ending eternity.

And let us first of all ascertain how rich He is who was our substitute on the cross.

Where is He now? The tomb could not hold Him; He could not see corruption. The Father raised Him from the dead and after He showed Himself after His passion, He was received up into Glory. What a scene it must have been in heaven when He came again into the presence of the Father. He passed through the heavens. With that cloud, which took Him out of sight of the gazing disciples, He was ushered into the presence of the Throne, that glorious Throne, the great center of the universe. How wonderingly the angelic hosts must have stood about as He returned to the Father. They knew Him there before He took upon Himself the form of man. They had seen Him down on the earth. They were with Him in the desert in His journeys, in His toil and service. He might have commanded a legion of them in the hour when the power of darkness came upon Him. How they must have watched Him as He hung on that cross! They were present when the resurrection morn dawned and they gave the disciples the good and glorious news that He would come again in like manner. What must it have been to the Father, our loving God and Father, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, when His beloved Son returned to Him? He gave Him up, He smote Him on that cross, in the sinner's place and now He comes back to Him and appears in His presence in

the form of Man, the glorified Man. A human being with a body of glory, and still a body of flesh and bones, comes into the presence of the throne of God and that One is the Son of God, raised from the dead, the head of a new creation. How unspeakably grand and glorious it must have been when He came thus to the Father.

And now He advances to that Throne and the Father welcomes Him. "Sit Thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." And perhaps under the shouts and praises of the heavenly hosts, He sat down. Where is He now? He is back with the Father, He is in the Father's presence as the glorified man. And did God do anything else besides welcoming Him, giving the glorified One, with that body in which the nail prints are still seen, a place upon His throne? Yea, He did!

God appointed Him heir of all things. God made Him heir of all creation. He gave over into the hands of the glorified man the entire universe. All power in heaven and on earth He gave to the Son of His Love. How rich is He then? All creation belongs to Him. He is the rightful Lord over it all.

And what else does He possess? The Father's Love. The Love of God is centered upon Him once more. That eternal Love He ever knew and enjoyed, the riches of that Love are His once more. Oh! how God must love Him, that lovely One, who did His will, who exalted His eternal righteousness and made known His Love to a lost and guilty world!

Is there anything else, which He has received, when He ascended upon high? I look again and cry out: "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with Glory and Honour." Hebrews 2:9. There is Glory upon Him. The Father put Glory upon the Lord Jesus Christ. And what a Glory it must be! Who can tell out His Glory? Who can describe the Glory which He has upon the Father's Throne, which He will have in the day of His power, when He comes again as Lord of lords and King of kings?

And now pause, dear reader. He was rich in all eternity in three things—in Possessions, all belonged to Him; in Love, the Only begotten of the Father; in Glory, the Glory of God. These three things He gave up. He laid them down. In that dark period when He hung naked, alone, forsaken on the cross, He was stripped of all. And now in resurrection, we see Him the risen Son of Man and Son of God back with the Father. All power is given to Him and He is the heir of all things; the Father's Love is upon Him and Glory enshrouds Him once more. Then He has exactly the same riches, which He had before the world was only with this difference, He is now as Man in the Glory.

Just as rich as He is the glorified One *so rich* is the vilest sinner, who has believed on Him, who is washed in that precious blood. The eternal Riches of Him are your Riches, child of God!

Open your eye and heart wide and get just a faint glimpse of the Love and Grace of God.

He saw this world ruined; men rebels and enemies of Him. He was not taken by surprise when men fell. He knew it in all eternity. He had made provision for it. There is that lovely One in His bosom, by whom and for whom all things were called into existence. He purposes to have others in the place of sons with that One. These vile, lost sinners are to be taken out of the power of darkness and placed alongside of that only One to share His inheritance, the Father's Love, the Glory in all eternity. How could He do it? He gave Him up. He let Him depart into that dark, dark world. He smote Him, as we saw, on the cross. And then He raised Him up, victor over death and grave, and took Him into His presence again, seating Him at His own right hand in the Heavenly. And in Him He has accomplished His wonderful purpose to have sons in that Son, sharers of His Riches. Could man ever have conceived such a plan? Could all the wisdom of this world ever have discovered such a scheme? The Only begotten of the Father (Hebrews 1:5), the rich One, who created all things was made a little lower than the angels and now He is made so much better than the angels, obtaining by inheritance a more excellent name than they. And all was done for us lost sinners that we might be sons with Him and share that place, which He has in highest Glory.

Just as rich as He is in the Father's presence so rich are you, so rich is every believing sinner.

Are we anything less in Him than Sons of God and as sons Heirs of God? "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Romans 8:16-17.

Sonship and Heirship are inseparately connected. We are Heirs of God because as believers we are sons. Our inheritance is nothing less than the inheritance of Him who is the Firstbegotten from the dead. God appointed Him the heir of all things and we are the joint heirs, the fellow heirs of Christ. Can there be anything plainer than that?

God told Abraham to walk through the land which He had promised to him and to his seed. We can readily imagine with what joy the father of the faithful walked through that goodly land, with its green pastures, springs of water, rivers and lakes, how his eyes delighted in gazing

upon the beautiful mountains. Yet he did not actually possess it then, but in faith he enjoyed it. Our God and Father does not ask us to walk through a land here in this world. He tells us more than that. He has given all to the Son of His Love, the whole earth belongs to Him, the whole universe; and because it belongs to Him it belongs to us. Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens above with its wonderful mysteries, its countless heavenly bodies, its unfathomable space, its solar systems beyond the reach of the most powerful telescope. It all belongs to Him. He holds it in His blessed hands and it belongs to us. It is your inheritance. With Him we shall be in the possession and enjoyment of the heavens and the earth. What it all will be, how great our riches are, who can tell? There will never be reached in all eternity a time when we have come to the end of our riches in Him, with whom we shall spend the eternal ages.

The Father wants you now to enjoy in faith your riches. What are all possessions here upon this earth, though men may call them riches, what are they in comparison with our riches as sons of God? They are but soap bubbles, miserable toys of poverty, which ere long will pass away. Child of God, look beyond. In wealth or poverty, in abundance or want, yea every day remember your eternal, your abiding riches in the Lord Jesus Christ. Rejoice in faith and triumph in it, over all earthly conditions and circumstances as the future Heirs of God.

The riches of Love, He enjoys, the Love wherewith He is loved of the Father is the love with which we are loved. We are the sharers of the same love; that is why believers are addressed in the New Testament as "Beloved of God." We have to listen to His own high priestly prayer in John 17 to realize that it is even so. Here He tells the Father all about Himself and His redemption work and all about His own, who are given to Him by the Father. It is a wonderful thing that all the great fact of our salvation, our standing before God, our present responsibilities and privileges, our future glory are all revealed by Him, the author and finisher of the faith, in this prayer. This prayer with its blessed depths may be called the germ of all the subsequent unfoldings of the Gospel of Grace, all the great salvation truths as revealed in the great Pauline epistles are herein mentioned. These teachings in the 17th of John may be grouped around seven words and these are: Salvation; Manifestation; Representation; Identification; Sanctification; Preservation and Glorification.

Here we hear Him say to the Father: "That the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me." John 17:23.

And again: "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in

them and I in them." John 17:26.

Then it is truly so, the love wherewith the Father loves the Son, is the love wherewith He loves each who belongs to Christ, who by believing on Him is in Christ. God is Love and oh! how He loves! It was love which gave the Only Begotten and the object in view that He might be able to have us poor sinners sharing that eternal love.

Take hold of it in faith, Beloved of God; in Christ Jesus, where Grace has put you, there is for you from the side of God the Father nothing but love. In all reverence we say, God can do nothing but love those who are His children by faith in Jesus Christ. Learn to consider all, even the darkest and the strangest experiences, in the light of His love. Nothing, nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

By nature and by practice, far—
How very far from God!
Yet now, by grace, brought nigh to Him,
Through faith in Jesus' blood.

So nigh—so very nigh to God,
I cannot nearer be;
For in the person of His Son,
I am as near as He.

So dear—so very dear to God,
More dear I cannot be;
The love wherewith He loves the Son,
Such is His love to me.

And what about the Glory? How great the Glory He has revealed! It belongs to us in Him and with Him. We but need to remind ourselves of another utterance in His prayer. How good of Him that He spoke all these words before He left the world. His disciples heard Him utter these words and from them they learned His love and their glorious destiny. And we, in reading the 17th of John can hear Him still praying. Here then is the word which tells us of Glory: "And the Glory which Thou gavest me I have given them"—"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given, me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my Glory, which Thou hast given me." John 17:22-24.

Is this not sufficient? We shall share His glory! We shall forever be with Him! Our bodies of humiliation will be fashioned like unto His glorious body. We shall see Him as He is and shall be like Him. Our glorious destiny is to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He

might be the firstborn among many brethren. At last glorified with Him God will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.

What a Glory that will be! Forever with the Lord who loved Me and gave Himself for Me.

And soon that Glory will be upon us. The Lord is at hand! The blessed moment for which He has waited upon the Father's throne to have us all with Him, for which generations after generations waited, is very nigh, even at the door. Soon we shall hear the voice of the Bridegroom calling His beloved Bride to come away, to come into His presence and then we shall share His Riches.

And is it so—I shall be like Thy Son?
Is this the grace which He for me has won?
Father of glory, (thought beyond all thought!)—
In glory to His own blest likeness brought!

Oh, Jesus, Lord, who loved me like to Thee?
Fruit of Thy work, with Thee, too, there to see
Thy glory, Lord, while endless ages roll,
Myself the prize and travail of Thy soul.

Yet it must be: Thy love had not its rest
Were Thy redeemed not with Thee fully blest.
That love that gives not as the world, but shares
All it possesses with its loved coheirs.

Nor I alone; Thy loved ones all, complete
In glory, round Thee there with joy shall meet,—
All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee, Lord,
Object supreme of all, by all adored.

But alas! how poor and weak our words are! How dull the mind, how slow of heart to believe all and to enjoy it all!

How often we go about cast down, disappointed because earthly conditions, the things temporal, did not turn out to our comfort. Perhaps we are murmuring or complaining. If our hearts were fixed constantly upon the Christ of God, upon the wonderful Riches which are His in Glory, which belong to us, there would be no room for care or sorrow, impatience or distress, it would be all praise and thanksgiving.

It is this which the Father wants, in which He delights. He loves to

hear the voice and praise of such, who were once afar off and now brought nigh, giving thanks in that precious, adorable name. He loves to see His blood bought people rejoicing in His Son.

A mother in Israel came to praise Him once. Her prayer had been answered. And as she pours out her heart the Spirit of God opens her vision. In holy joy she cries out: "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory; for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's and He has set the world upon them."

A great conception it was and yet it does not express our glorious inheritance, our riches in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Poor beggars upon a dunghill we are by nature and that blessed One who came down to our misery took us from the dunghill to where He is into His Riches, to His Glory, to share His Throne. Ah! how little it is real to us! How little our hearts enter into it all. And yet our God wants us to enter in faith into these wonderful thoughts of love towards us in Christ. More than anything else the true conception of our Riches in Christ, which we shall before long share with Him in Glory, will keep us in the place of separation and teach us to walk worthy of the Lord. With such Riches in view and such a destiny, how holy our lives should be! If these Riches are ever before our soul we shall be satisfied to walk in His path, the path of humility and suffering, satisfied to be nothing now and sharing His reproach. How easy it would be to take the lowest place and with joy we would welcome all that humbles us. For His sake who gave up all, constrained by His mighty love with the knowledge of the joy set before us, to be with Him as joint heirs, we too would more and more endure the cross and despise the shame. It is our greatest need. Oh! for a greater vision of Him, His Glory, His Riches and our place in Him now and with Him in all His Riches and Glory before long.

But not only are we to share all that with Him, but while here on earth, as saved ones passed from death unto life, waiting for Him and for Glory, we are rich. At the close of that lovely Epistle to the Philippians we read this word: "But my God shall supply all your need according to His Riches in Glory in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19. And in the beginning of Ephesians we read: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Ephesians 1:3. In Colossians we hear that in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and that we are complete in Him. Let us also remember that precious word which we find on the summit of the Epistle to the Romans: "He that spared

not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32. All we need in spiritual blessing, in strength, in power, anything and everything, we have in Him who paid for it on the cross, who became so poor that we might be so rich. How dreadful if we, in possession of such riches, with every spiritual blessing at our disposal, with a Lord who is ready to fill us with the very fullness of Himself, if we do not use these riches, if we neglect so great salvation. We are all guilty of it. But few of God's people, if any, live up to their fullest riches in Christ.

Israel failed with that earthly land and did not take possession of it; we fail in not entering into the riches we have. And if Israel had gone in and possessed the whole land it would have come to an end of the land, for there was a limit. It is far different with the riches we have in Christ; we can never exhaust them; they are like Himself, like God, infinite. Oh, my soul, praise Him, praise Him! And, oh, how feeble is our praise. That Love, these riches, pass praises indeed.

It passeth *praises!* that dear love of Thine,
Lord Jesus! Saviour! yet this heart of mine
Would sing a love so rich—so full—so free,
Which brought a rebel sinner, such as me,
Nigh unto God.

But though I cannot tell or sing or know
The fullness of Thy love while here below,
My empty vessel I may freely bring—
O Thou who art of love the living spring,
My vessel fill.

I *am* an empty vessel—scarce one thought
Or look of love to Thee I've ever brought;
Yet I may come, and come again to Thee
With this, the needy children's only plea—
"Thou lovest me!"

Fill me, Lord Jesus, Saviour, with Thy love;
Lead, lead me to the living fount above!
Thither may I in simple faith draw nigh,
And never to another fountain fly,
But unto Thee.

Lord Jesus, when Thee face to face I see,
When on Thy lofty throne I sit with Thee;
Then of Thy love in all its breadth and length,

Its height and depth, its everlasting strength,
My soul shall sing.

And how true it is that we understand, like the little children we are, but little of all the Riches which await us. We are children, but when He comes we shall be full grown sons; what a revelation we shall have then of His Riches and our Riches! What a Glory it will be when He has His completed church with Him and with it His full inheritance in the Saints. What a Glory when He comes as the Firstborn, bringing the many sons with Him to glory! We shall share His Throne. We shall reign with Him over the earth and have control with Him over the works of His hand. And then it shall roll on, the mighty song of praise, but feebly uttered here below by a feeble few: "Unto Him that loveth us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God His Father, to Him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever." Revelation 1:5-6.

Let us turn more to the Word of Prophecy. What we read here in the Old Testament and in our New Testament prophetic Book, His own Revelation, which He received from God, concerning the coming Glories does not alone concern Him, but it concerns us as His joint heirs.

And now, my dear reader, are you saved? Do you belong to the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you know this marvelous Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, for your sakes became poor that you might be rich? If you are not a Christian, not yet saved, still a stranger to that Grace, what hinders you from accepting Him now? Let me tell you that God wants you, that God more than wants you, He loves you. It was for you He gave His beloved Son; for you He forsook Him on the cross. Could God do anything more than that? And now the good news, the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished all for you and God invites you to come. He tells you that all is ready. He wants to welcome you home. God wants you to come out of all your poverty and your want, out of your sin and guilt, shame and confusion into the Riches of His own Son. Can you doubt this? I am persuaded you cannot. It is too clear, too simple to doubt that God does want the lowest and the vilest, to give them the Riches of Himself.

Do you ask the conditions? There are none. God does not ask you to do anything, for He has done it all. All He asks that you come just as you are, as a poor sinner and that you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, by trusting in Him, by casting yourself upon Him. Are you willing to do it now ?

Just as I am—without one plea

But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And Thou bidst me come to Thee
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am—poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,—
Yea, all my need in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am—Thy love, I own,
Has broken ev'ry barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am—of that free love,
The fullness and the depth to prove,
Here for a season, then above—
O Lamb of God, I come!

The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting [eternal life]." All God asks is that you accept the Riches, which the Son of His Love purchased for guilty sinners on the cross. Is this too good to be true? as some one said. If you say so and add a single thing to it, trying to do your share by good works or repentance, then you shut yourself out from that Grace. Oh, believe it. Christ died for the ungodly; He died for you.

His anguish of soul on the cross hast thou seen?
His cry of distress hast thou heard?
Then why, if the terrors of wrath He endured,
Should pardon to thee be deferred?

We are healed by His stripes. Wouldst thou add
to the word?
And He is our righteousness made;
The best robe of heaven He bids thee put on;
O couldst thou be better arrayed?

Then doubt not thy welcome, since God hath declared
There remaineth no more to be done;
Christ once in the end of the world hath appeared,
And completed the work He begun.

O take, with rejoicing, from Jesus at once
The life everlasting He gives;
And know with assurance thou never canst die,

Since Jesus thy righteousness lives.

And should you reject God's offer of free salvation; what then? It is almost impossible for the writer of these words to believe that any one can reject such an offer, such riches, such love. And yet it is sadly true; thousands turn their backs upon Him who died for them. God grant that not one who reads these lines may reject the Lord Jesus Christ. Reader, if you should reject Christ and go on in unbelief, in self-righteous religiousness, what then? You live on in the poverty, misery, discontent, unrest of the natural man. You could have rest, peace, joy happiness and contentment in the Lord Jesus. You chose the unrest. But is that all? What about eternity? You pass into eternity having rejected that which God did for you. Deliberately you said, No, to God, and instead of the eternal Riches, with Him who loved you so, you have chosen eternal poverty, eternal wrath, eternal shame. Far be it to enlarge upon these solemn, solemn facts of an eternity of misery. Such it must be for everyone who dies rejecting God's offer of salvation. God's righteousness demands it.

Once more we repeat the text: "For ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich;" "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Copied by Stephen Ross for WholesomeWords.org from *His Riches—Our Riches: A Gospel Message* by Arno C. Gaebelin. New York: Gospel Publishing House, [192-?].

www.WholesomeWords.org 2013