

The Father's Wealth

F.B. Meyer:

THE Epistle to the Ephesians is full of the wealth of God's nature. It is set to that master-chord struck centuries before by a temple minstrel, "Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all those that call upon Thee." The apostle struggles with the inadequacy of human language in his attempt to convey some conception of what God is willing to expend upon the heirs of salvation.

We are all familiar with God's prodigality in Nature. Every common hedgerow with its wealth of vegetation; every lazy trout-stream; where the fish lie in the cool depths, and the flowers dip down their dainty cups; every square foot of the midnight sky, set thick with rare jewels --attest the unsearchable resources of his power. But these are for all the world to see. And as the man of wealth opens richer stores to those that share his love than he displays to the casual visitor, so God has prepared for those that love Him, things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived. There are riches of grace in the heart of God, of forgiveness, and pitifulness, and mercy, of which the foremost of the saints in the heavenly ranks, and the chief of sinners on earth--however heavily they have drawn on them--know comparatively nothing. We have no standard for computing infinity; and infinity is the orbit in which God lives and loves.

This is what the apostle means when he speaks of the riches of God's grace.

OUR TRESPASSES ARE FORGIVEN, ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF GOD'S GRACE (Ephesians 1:7)

"Trespass" is the term used by our Lord of the negligence, sins, and ignorance's, which mark the lives even of those who can look up into God's face and say, Our Father. The conjunction and which links the prayer for the forgiveness of these with the petition for daily bread, suggests that we need to plead for the one as often as we ask for the other. And our Father instantly and freely forgives us according to the riches of His grace. He is only too ready to forgive. He yearns over the wayward and stubborn, who keep their faces averted from his. He sorrows for their sins; but sorrows most of all that they will not take the only position in which his tender, forgiving grace can come to them.

As the hungry sea frets down the line of cliff to find an aperture through which to pour itself, and seethes and sobs until it find room; so does the love of God wait impatiently outside our hearts till we open to it in confession and repentance. Then God forgives, not meagerly or stingingly, but royally, gracefully, abundantly. His forgiveness is worthy of Himself, proportioned to the wealth of his glorious being, and according to the riches of his grace. He does more than forgive; He "remembers no more." He does more than forget: He sets the joybells ringing, and cries, "Let us make merry." He does more than this: He insets the scars of our sins with jewels--where sin abounded his grace abounds much more--and all because of the Blood that has set free this wealth of mercy.

GOD INDWELLS US WITH THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY (Ephesians 1:18)

His inheritance in the saints is not what they have in God, but what God has in them. "The Lord is the portion of my soul" is one side of the truth; but "the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" is the other, and is equally important. We settle on the nature of God as our estate, living on its abundant crop, and mining for its hidden treasures; and God comes into possession of us, as a man might of an estate which had lain for long years exhausted and barren.

Ah, what gladness rings through the deserted acres when the tidings fly from hedge to hedge, and from field to field, as though the birds carried them, that one has come into possession who is well able to pour in tons of enriching soil; and to continue doing so for long years, if need be, until corn replaces weeds, fir-trees thorns, and myrtle-trees briars. It may be that some soul, reading these lines, is sick at heart, and cries, "I am that barren thorn-cursed soil." Nevertheless, lift up thy head and rejoice! for the Lord has come in to dwell, never to depart; and He will do great things. He will create all that He commands. He will put in what He calls out. He will pour into thee wealth on wealth; as though a millionaire should put ten fortunes into an unproductive mine. He will make thee know the riches of the glory of his indwelling in the heart; and He will not forsake thee until the revenues of thy life begin to repay Him in love and adoration. But of this we shall have more to say ere this treatise has reached its close, (see Chapter 14)

WE ARE MONUMENTS OF GOD'S WEALTH (Ephesians 2:4-8)

That He could love us when we were dead like Lazarus, in trespasses and sins; that He has linked us in the bonds of indissoluble union with his Son; that He had made it possible for us to share his Resurrection, his Triumph, and his Throne; that we, the poor children of earth and sin, should be admitted into the inner circle of Deity--this will be, to all eternity, the mightiest proof of the exceeding riches of his grace.

The word "exceeding" might be rendered "beyond throwing distance." Fling your thoughts forward as far as you can, and there will always be an immense beyond; throw them as high as you may, till they out soar the stars, and there will always be an above; let them sink for ever, and there will always be a beneath--in the exceeding riches of God's grace.

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork"; but the glory of the position and character of the saints, contrasted with the degradation from which they were raised, will be accounted in coming ages a more extraordinary exemplification of the riches of Divine grace than the splendour of the heavens is of the wealth of his skill.

GOD'S WEALTH IS FOR ALL (Ephesians 3:8)

The special note of this Epistle, and of that to the Colossians, is Paul's desire to express his conviction of the universality of God's bounty. It is not for Jews only, but for Gentiles. His commission was to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. The mine is inexhaustible; in it are the precious things of heaven above, and of the depth beneath, of the fruits of the sun, of the fulness of the earth, of the abundance of the seas, and of the hidden treasures of the sand: and it is all for all who believe.

OUR STRENGTH MAY BE IN PROPORTION TO OUR FATHER'S WEALTH (Ephesians 3:16)

Who is there of us all that does not long for strength, whether to suffer or to do? The sapling says, "Let me be strong, to bear the harvest of the rich autumn fruit." The child says, "Let me be strong, that I may help mother carry her burdens, and do her work." The invalid says, "Let me be strong, that I may tread again the heather, and roam the woods, and carry light into darkened homes." "Let me be strong," the Christian cries, "that I may not faint nor be weary; that I may launch the Master's boat; or that I may gather in the golden sheaves." Who would not wish to be strong for his sake, who speaks as a Lamb from the Throne?

The strength of God awaits us, through his Spirit pouring into the inward man. Reader, I implore you, in moments of weakness and discouragement, to appropriate that strength in that measure; but remember that it is only perfected in weakness, and consummated in them that have no might.