

The Treasure, and the Heart

Matt. 6: 21.

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The moral principle here laid down by our Lord calls for our deep and constant heed; and the more, because the flesh ever deceives, and struggles against it, to indulge itself under fair disguise and for reasons seemingly strong and excellent. But we walk by faith, not by sight, and only so rightly.

"For where thy treasure is, there thy heart will also be."

Where faith is not, a present object engages the heart, and becomes the treasure. It is self in one shape or another, whereby Satan is the master, and not God: what then must be the end for eternity? The most prevalent is what our Lord calls "filthy lucre"; for money is the readiest means of gain for gratifying carnal lusts. It may be the heart abandoned to the pleasures of sin for a season. Power again is the ambition of some, as fame is of others. Also it may take a religious direction as readily and more dangerously than a literary one, or for worldly honour. In such ways men perish, even where no grossness appears, but the nicest refinement.

Christ alone delivers and preserves from all such snares. He is given and sent by God to win the heart by His ineffable grace, adapting itself to our guilt and misery and worthlessness through sin, to save the vilest from his evil, to reconcile unto God, to be life as well as righteousness to him who had neither, to associate with heaven, and thus separate from the world not only in all that is evidently bad but in all that claims to be good or its best, that we should no longer live to ourselves, but to Him who for our sakes died and rose again. And as this is for the Father's glory, so is it by the Spirit's power who is here, sent forth now from heaven on and since Pentecost, to glorify Him who never sought His own will but at all cost that of God.

Christ is therefore the true treasure, and in and by Him the riches of God's grace, yea and far beyond all question of need, to the praise of the glory of His grace which will make us like Himself before Him, not only in nature but in relationship as far as this can be. But we have this treasure meanwhile in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves. "Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our momentary light affliction worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Hence our Lord urges our not laying up for ourselves treasures upon the earth where moth and rust spoil, and where thieves dig through and steal; but to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust spoils, and where thieves do not dig through nor steal. "For where thy treasure is, there thy heart also will be"! The heart follows necessarily the object of its affection; and Christ, the treasure of the Christian, was not of the earth but comes from above, from heaven, and above all. "What He hath seen and heard, this He testifieth; and none receiveth His testimony. He that received His testimony set to his seal that God is true. For He whom God sent speaketh the words of God; for He giveth not the Spirit by measure. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things [to be] in His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath life eternal, but he that obeyeth not (or, is not subject to) the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3: 32-36).

It is not only then *what* the treasure is, but *where* that the Lord presses on our heed. And this truth of the treasure in heaven derives great accession and force from our Lord's ascending where He was before (John 6: 62), no longer Son of God only as He came down, but Son of man as He is now also in heavenly glory. For this is the proper and full way in which the Christian knows Him. Wherefore we henceforth know no one according to flesh; but if even we have known Christ according to flesh, yet now we know [Him] no longer. So if any one [be] in Christ, [it is] a new creation.

To Christ glorified is the Christian united by the Spirit, now that he rests on redemption accomplished. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Only then and there could it be. Hence having died with Christ and being raised together with Him, we are exhorted to seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, to set our mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For we died, and our life is hid with Christ in God. And we wait that, when Christ our life shall be manifested, we too shall then be manifested with Him in glory.

We may notice that in Luke 12 the connection of this truth expressed more broadly ("For where your treasure is, there your heart also will be"), is not only with the warning of the precariousness of all save a treasure in the heavens, but with the Lord's coming as a proximate hope. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and ye like men waiting for their own lord whenever he may leave the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately." It would be scarce possible to conceive words more clearly indicating the call to be constantly looking out for Him.

Altogether the aim is unmistakable if we are walking in the Spirit. We are now "heavenly" in title (1 Cor. 15: 48, 49), and we expect on the surest authority to realise it even for our bodies at His coming. Let us see to it meanwhile to live, serve, walk, and worship, consistently with our faith and our hope. Nothing short of this is the Christianity of the N.T. when the many things were known which the disciples could not bear till they had redemption through His blood and the gift of the Spirit. When the Spirit was come from Him on high, He did not fail to guide them into all the truth.

Reader, beware of being deceived. If you are not a disciple of Christ, if not born of the Spirit, the Lord's exhortations are inapplicable to you: you are not yet one of His. Own your evil and guilty state before God. Own Him the only efficacious Saviour, the Son of man come to seek and to save the lost. Then indeed such words as His to the disciples will be precious and blessed by grace to your soul. But you must be born anew, born of God, to receive and understand them. Beware of those who deify ordinances to Christ's disparagement, and their own vain pride of a baseless office.