

TREASURES LAID UP IN HEAVEN

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

– Matthew 6:19-21.

PLEASURE, delight, joy, comfort – all these sentiments are suggested to us by the word treasure. Our thoughts, our hopes, our plans, center there. Our treasure is the inspiration of our lives, the incentive to energy, perseverance and endurance, for the hope which it enkindles. Most people have treasures, but they are generally such as yield slight satisfaction, because they are transitory and disappointing. How many have built their hopes upon earthly things only to find them but illusive baubles, mocking delusions, leaving the heart at last broken, crushed and barren! The treasures of wealth, fame, social distinction, of houses and lands, of friends and home and family, of power and influence, are subject to change and decay! And if the heart be centered in them, they are liable in a moment to be swept away, leaving the life desolate and despairing, all the more so because of the high hopes which they had inspired.

The wealth, laboriously gathered and husbanded with great care, may vanish in a night. The fame so dearly won may change to censure and reproach at the caprice of fickle public sentiment. The social prestige which bade you to the uppermost seats may a little later relegate you to the lowest seat, and your name may be cast out as evil and you be ostracized. Houses and lands and carefully hoarded belongings may disappear under the sheriff's hammer. Friends long trusted may suddenly grow cold and turn their backs upon you, and even become your enemies. The home you love must some time break up, the family be scattered or invaded by death.

The love that glows upon the home altar may flicker and become dim or extinct. How many have found the high hopes of youth and early life turn to ashes in a few short years or months!

THE BALM OF GILEAD FOR BROKEN HEARTS

To all of these the Word of the Lord should appear with special force, when calling them to come to Him with their burdens and their broken hearts. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." (Psalm 34:18.) His love and His precious promises come like the sweet balm of Gilead to those who, sad and disappointed in the struggle of life, come to Christ for rest and comfort, for life and healing. Many storm-tossed mariners upon life's ocean, discouraged and despairing, bereft of all hope, have found that these very experiences were the means of leading them to the Haven of eternal Refuge. There alone true blessing and safety can be found; there alone is the *real treasure*, far exceeding the choicest treasures of earth.

We think of the experience of a dear brother who recently found the Lord, when his earthly treasures had been swept away from him, all the savings of years, through conditions brought about because of the European war. He had lost all hope and was about to end his life by his own hand, when Present Truth was brought to his attention. He listened, then embraced it with joy, securing the **SCRIPTURE STUDIES**. Afterward he stated that he now knew why the Lord had permitted him to meet with such reverses – it was to lead him to Himself. How this dear one can now rejoice in his sorrowful experiences and realize that he has gained in exchange the "Pearl of great price," beside which all other treasures pale into insignificance!

Truly, in this our day, as never before perhaps, would all who have the spirit of a sound mind to any degree be longing for a treasure which will be secure, a rock upon which they may plant their feet, one which will securely hold in these days of stress and

uncertainty, when men feel that everything is slipping from beneath their feet, when nothing earthly is sure, when fear with distress is on every hand. At such a time as this, how blest are we who are safe-sheltered in the cleft of the Rock of Ages, which cannot be shaken by the mightiest earthquake shock! How unspeakably precious is the treasure which we have laid up in Heaven; for we know our treasure is safe, where no storms nor billows can touch it.

THE TREASURES WE LAY UP IN HEAVEN

The all-important question for those who seek this great treasure then is, How can we lay up treasure in Heaven, and what kind of treasures are those which are to be stored up in the Heavenly depository? We have the assurance of the Divine Word that everything that is pure, holy and good is acceptable there. The very chiefest of all treasures is the personal love and friendship of God and of Christ. Jesus becomes to us "the fairest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely." He is an unfailing Refuge in every time of need, our daily Joy and Solace and Comfort.

When we have gained this Treasure, we have gained the One that never changes, One whose love never grows cold, One from whom nothing can separate us – "neither death," which to His loved ones will now mean our blessed "change"; "nor life," which means further opportunities for suffering with Him that we may also share His glory, and which permits further works of loving service for Him whom we love; "nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers," for these cannot harm us who are sheltered in Christ; "nor things present, nor things to come"; for "all things shall work together for our *good*," and in every trial He will direct the issue that we may be able to bear it; "nor height" of temporary exaltation; "nor depth" of trouble or sorrow, for our Refuge and Strength is ever near; "nor any other thing" in creation, for He has promised to "keep the feet of His saints," and that nothing shall touch them as New Creatures in

Christ, and that His presence shall go with them wherever they may be. – Romans 8:35-39; 1 Samuel 2:9; Luke 10:19; Exodus 33:14.

Nor will any other creatures either in Heaven or in earth receive such marks of special favor as are and ever will be the portion of the beloved Bride of Christ. Although the whole family in Heaven and in earth will be blessed through Him, His Wife, cooperating with Him in His work, will alone be His companion, His confidante, [R5862 : page 70] His treasure. Hear the Lord's exhortation to the *Bride* class: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear. Forget also thine own people and thy father's house [the ambitions, hopes and aims of the children of Adam]; so shall the King [Jehovah's Anointed] greatly desire thy beauty [beauty of character, of heart-loyalty]; for He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him." (Psalm 45:10,11; Canticles 4.) How unworthy we feel of so great honor and love from our beloved Bridegroom! And no wonder! When we look at all our imperfections, it seems that there is little in us to call forth such love and admiration. To think that the angels with all their purity and faithfulness should have been passed by; and that we poor, blemished mortals, should be chosen instead!

Is there not some mistake? Ah, no! We have the infallible words of inspiration to assure us that it is even so. This Bride of Jehovah's Son is to reign with Him in the future over a fallen race; and who could so well sympathize with them in all their weaknesses and frailties as those who have themselves partaken of the same? And who could bear the infinite heights of glory to which the Lamb's Wife will be raised, with such humility as those who realize that it was not through any worthiness of their own that they were chosen to so high an exaltation, but that it was all of Divine grace? Clad in the glorious Robe of our Bridegroom's furnishing, we can stand all complete, even now, in the eyes of Jehovah. And possessing the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, the faith that trusts under every

condition, the love that delights to do the Father's will, we are lovely in the eyes of our Beloved, our Bridegroom and our King.

Having this confidence, we can with unspeakable joy and gratitude lay hold of the exceeding great and precious promises which are ours through Christ, and without presumption press along the line toward the prize of our High Calling, humbly trusting that He who has begun the good work in us will complete it unto the day of our glorification with our Bridegroom in the Heavenly Kingdom, when we shall be presented before the Father "without [R5863 : page 70] spot or wrinkle or any such thing," gloriously complete and perfect, in the most absolute sense, fitted and prepared for the wonderful work which we shall share with our blessed Lord and King.

INCENTIVES TO FAITHFULNESS

Listen to some of the blessed and inspiring promises with which the Father and the Son cheer the Bride: "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty." Ye "shall be Mine, in that Day when I make up My jewels." "I will give thee to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give thee a white stone [a precious token of love], and in the stone a new name written [the name of our Bridegroom, henceforth to be our name] which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." "Lo, I am with you always." "And if I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also [and He *has* come, He is even now present, and will soon receive us unto Himself forevermore]." "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "To Him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne." – Isaiah 33:17; Malachi 3:17; Revelation 2:17; Matthew 28:20; John 14:3; 15:16; Revelation 2:10; 3:21.

Precious promises are these, wonderful words of life! Let us count them over and over again, that all their sweet significance may sink deep into our hearts and bring forth their blessed fruitage in our

lives. May they cheer us in every dark and trying hour and reinforce our waning powers with renewed vigor, courage and zeal, that we may press along the narrow way until indeed our "eyes shall see the King in His beauty." What wondrous treasures do we thus find laid up in Heaven for us, because we have left the world and all its delusive fancies and aspirations and have laid hold upon the things eternal! And while this glorious inheritance is to be the possession of all the faithful, the Apostle intimates clearly that our Heavenly treasure may be augmented by special zeal and faithfulness under the peculiar trials of the present time.

One of the treasures which we may lay up in Heaven will be the marks of just approval and distinction among the good and holy beyond the veil, which patient endurance of affliction, unwavering trust under crucial trials and testings, diligence in the King's business, will secure to us. Treasures of mind and character, too, we shall find laid up in Heaven; for nothing that is good and true and worthy of preservation shall be lost to those who have committed their investments to the Lord. These are incorruptible treasures, which neither the lapse of time nor the exigencies of circumstances will ever wrest from us.

Other treasures will be all the true and noble friendships which have been founded in truth and righteousness here on earth, whether they be on the spiritual or on the natural plane. For instance, one on the spiritual plane will not be disposed to forget or ignore the loving loyalty of a former friend, who from time to time administered the cup of cold water to the thirsty soul battling with the heat and dust of life's desert way, and who did this because the one ministered to was a disciple of Christ.

But especially sweet will be the spiritual friendships begun and cherished here, which will bloom and blossom in still greater vigor when transplanted into Heavenly soil and atmosphere. And what a treasure we shall find in the gratitude and love of those to whom we have ministered here in times of special need, and to whom we have

carried the Living water and broken the Bread of Life! Who can measure the joy unspeakable that shall be the heritage of the faithful when we shall find all these precious treasures beyond the veil! When we view these treasures with unclouded eyes, and realize that they are ours forever, shall we not feel infinitely repaid for any sufferings and hardships we have borne in our brief earthly pilgrimage?

HEAVENLY PILGRIMS NEARING HOME

Then, dear brethren and sisters in Christ, let us keep our eyes steadfastly set upon the Heavenly, eternal things. Let us more and more lay up treasures where "moth and rust cannot corrupt and where thieves cannot break through and steal." (Matthew 6:20.) If our hearts are upon the Heavenly treasures, then the disappointments and afflictions of the present life cannot overwhelm us. Whatsoever things are worthy the aspiration of the spiritual sons of God are our real treasures, and they are the only things that are worth while. What care we for the illusive bubbles of this poor life, so soon to burst and disappear? Then, as sings the poet:

"Let us touch lightly the things of this earth,
Esteeming them only of trifling worth,"

not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, if we faint not by the way, but with our pilgrim's staff in hand shall press along the Heavenly road until we reach the goal of our hopes.

As the sun sinks at the close of each day, and the shadows gather around us, how sweet to sing, "I'm one day nearer Home!" We have nearly reached the mountain-top, and every day multiplies the evidences that the journey is nearing its end. Just how long it will be we cannot know; probably it is best that we do not know. But we believe that it will not be very long.

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