

The King Who Became Poor To Make Others Rich by T DeWitt Talmage

"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.

It's absurd to suppose that all the worlds which on a cold winter's night make the heavens one great glitter are inhabitantless. There is a great world swung somewhere, vast beyond imagination, and that it is the headquarters of the universe, and the metropolis of immensity, and has a population in numbers vast beyond all statistics, and appointments of splendor beyond the capacity of canvas, or poem, or angel to describe, is as certain as the Bible is authentic. Perhaps some of the astronomers with their big telescopes have already caught a glimpse of it, not knowing what it is. We spell it with six letters, and pronounce it - HEAVEN.

A GLIMPSE OF HEAVEN

That is where Prince Jesus lived. He was the King's Son. It was the old homestead of eternity, and all its castles were as old as God. Not a frost had ever chilled the air. Not a tear had ever rolled down the cheek of one of its inhabitants. There had never been in it a headache, or a sideache, or a heartache. There had not been a funeral in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. There had never in all the land been woven a black veil, for there had never been anything to mourn over. The passage of millions of years had not wrinkled or crippled or bedimmed any of its citizens. All the people there were in a state of eternal adolescence.

What floral and pomological richness! Gardens of perpetual fruitage. Had some spirit from another world entered and asked: "What is sin? What is bereavement? What is sorrow? What is death?" the brightest of the intelligences would have failed to give definition, though to study the question there was silence in Heaven for half an hour.

The Prince of whom I spoke had honors, emoluments, acclamations, such as no other prince, celestial or terrestrial, ever enjoyed. As He passed the street, the inhabitants took from their brows garlands of white lilies and threw them in the way. When He entered any of the temples, all the worshipers arose and bowed in obeisance. In all the processions of the high days, He was the one who evoked the loudest welcome. Sometimes on foot, walking with the humblest of the land; but at other times, He took chariot, and among the 20,000 that David spoke of His was the swiftest and most flaming; or as when John described Him, He took white palfrey, with what prance of foot and arch of neck and roll of mane and gleam of eye is only dimly suggested in the Apocalypse. He was not like other princes, waiting for the Father to die and then take the throne.

When, a few years ago, an artist in Germany made a picture for the Royal Gallery, representing Emperor William on the throne and the Crown Prince as having one foot on the step of the throne, Emperor William ordered the picture changed, and said: "Let the Prince keep his foot off the throne till I leave it."

THE WEALTH OF THE PRINCE

Already throned was the Heavenly Prince side by side with the Father. What a circle of dominion! What myriads of admirers! What unending round of glories! All the towers chimed the Prince's praises. Of all the inhabitants, from the center of the city on over the hills and clear down to the beach against which the ocean of immensity rolls its billows, the Prince was the acknowledged favorite. No wonder Paul says that "He was rich."

Set all the diamonds of the earth in one sceptre, build all the palaces of the earth into one Alhambra, gather all the pearls of the sea in one diadem, put all the values of the earth in one coin, the aggregate would not express His affluence. Yes, Paul was right. Solomon had in gold \$3,400,000,000; and in silver \$5,145,001,885. But a greater than Solomon is here. Not the millionaire, but the quadrillionaire of Heaven. To describe His celestial surroundings the Bible uses colors, gathering them in a rainbow over the throne and setting them as agate in the temple window and hoisting twelve of them into a wall from striped jasper at the base to transparent amethyst in the capstone, while between are green of emerald and snow of pearl and blue of sapphire and yellow of topaz and gray of chrysoprase and flame of jacinth. All the loveliness of landscape in foliage and river and rill, and all enchantment aquamarine, the sea of glass mingled with fire as the sun sinks in the Mediterranean. All the thrill of music, instrumental and vocal, harps, trumpets, doxologies. There stood the Prince, surrounded by those who had under their wings the velocity of millions of miles in a second, rich in love, rich in adoration, rich in power, rich in worship, rich in holiness, rich as God.

A FALLEN WORLD

But one day there was a big disaster in a department of God's universe. A race fell! A world was in ruins! Our planet was the scene of a catastrophe. A globe was swinging out into darkness, with mountains and seas and islands -- an awful centrifugal of sin seeming to overpower the beautiful centripetal of righteousness, and from it a groan reached Heaven. Such a sound had never been heard there. Plenty of sweet sounds were forever familiar, but never an outcry of distress or an echo of agony. At that one groan the Prince rose from all the blissful circumstances, started for the outer gate and descended into the night of this world -- out of what a bright harbor into what rough sea! "Stay with us," cried angel after angel and potentate after potentate.

"No," said the Prince. "I cannot stay; I must be off for that wreck of a world. I must stop that groan. I must hush that distress. I must fathom that woe. I must redeem those nations. Farewell, thrones and temples, companions cherubic, seraphic, archangelic! Excuse this absence, for I will come back again carrying one My shoulder the ransomed world. Till this is done I choose earthly scoff to heavenly acclamation and a cattle pen to a king's palace and the frigid zone of earth to the atmosphere of celestial radiance. I have no time to lose, for hark ye to the groan that grows mightier while I wait. Farewell! Farewell!"

CHRIST'S ARRIVAL ON EARTH

Was there ever a contrast so overpowering as that between the noonday of Christ's celestial departure and the midnight of His earthly arrival? Sure enough, the angels were out that night in the sky and especial meteors acts as escort, but all of that was from other worlds and not from this world. The earth made no demonstration of welcome. If one of the great princes of this world steps out at a depot, cheers resound, and the bands play, and the flags wave. But for the arrival of this missionary Prince of the skies not a torch flared, not a trumpet blew, not a plume fluttered. All the music and the pomp were overheard. Our world opened for Him nothing better than a barn door.

The Rajah of Cashmere sent to Victoria a bedstead of carved gold and a canopy that cost a million dollars; but the world had for the Prince of Heaven and earth a little of straw. The Crown jewels in the Tower of London amount to hundreds of millions of dollars; but this member of eternal royalty had nowhere to lay His head.

To know how poor He was, ask the camel drivers, ask the shepherds, ask Mary, ask the Three Wise Men of the East who afterward came there.

To know how poor He was, examine all the records of real estate in that Oriental country and see what vineyard or what house or what field He owned. Not one! Of what mortgage was He the mortgagee? Of what tenement was He the landlord? Of what lease was He the lessee? Who ever paid Him rent? He did not own the boat on which He sailed or the beast on which He rode or the pillow on which He slept. He had so little estate that in order to pay His tax He had to perform a miracle, putting the amount of the assessment in a fish's mouth and having it hauled ashore. And after His death, the world rushed in to take an inventory of His goods; and the entire aggregate was the garments He had worn -- sleeping in them by night and traveling in them by day, bearing on them the dust of the highway and the saturation of the sea. Paul hit the mark when he said of the missionary Prince: "For your sakes he became poor!"

A CHILLING RECEPTION

The world could have treated Him better if it had so chosen. It had all the

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means for making His earthly condition more comfortable. Only a few years before, when General Pompey returned in triumph, he was greeted with arches and a costly column which celebrated the 12,000,000 people whom he killed or conquered; and he was allowed to wear his triumphal robe in the senate. The world had applause for imperial butchers, but buffeting for the Prince of Peace; plenty of golden chalices for the favoured to drink out of, but our Prince must put His lips to the bucket of the well by the roadside after He had begged for a drink.

Poor? Born in another man's barn and eating at another man's table and cruising the lake in another man's fishing smack and buried in another man's mausoleum. Our inspired authors wrote His biography; and innumerable lives of Christ have been published; but He composed His autobiography in the most compressed way when He said, "I have trodden the wine press alone."

Poor in the estimation of nearly all the prosperous classes. They called Him Sabbath-breaker, wine-bibber, traitor, blasphemer, and ransacked the dictionary of opprobrium from lid to lid to express their detestation. I can think now of only two well-to-do men who espoused His cause, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

His friends for the most part were people who, in that climate where ophthalmia or inflammation of the eyeball swept ever and anon as a scourge, had become blind, sick people who were anxious to get well, and troubled people in whose family there was someone dead or dying. If He had a purse at all, it was empty; or we would have heard what was done with the contents at the post-mortem. Poor? The pigeon in the dovecote, the rabbit in its burrow, the silkworm in its cocoon, the bee in its hive is better provided for, better off, better sheltered. Ay, the brute creature has a home on earth, which Christ had not. But the Crown Prince of all heavenly dominion had less than the raven, less than the chamois, for He was homeless. Ay, in the history of the universe there is no other instance of such coming down. Who can count the miles from the top of the throne to the bottom of the cross?

Cleopatra, giving a banquet to Anthony, took a pearl worth \$100,000 and dissolved it in vinegar and swallowed it. But when our Prince, in His last hours, took the vinegar, in it had been dissolved all the pearls of His heavenly royalty. He descended until there was no other depth for Him to touch; He was troubled until there was no other harassment to suffer and poor until there was no other pauperism to endure. Billions of dollars are spent in wars to destroy men. Who will furnish the statistics of the value of that precious blood that was shed to save us?

THE GRACE OF GOD

One of John Bunyan's great books is entitled GRACE ABOUNDING. "It is all of

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grace that I am saved" has been on the lips of hundreds of dying Christians. Oh! the height of it, the depth of it, the length of it, the breadth of it -- the grace of God!

Mr. Fletcher had a pamphlet that pleased the king; and the king offered to compensate him. But Fletcher answered, "There is only one thing I want, and that is more grace."

Yes, blood-bought readers, grace to live by and grace to die by. Grace that saved the publican, that saved Lydia, that saved the dying thief, that saved the jailer, that saved me. But the riches of that grace will not be fully understood until Heaven breaks in upon the soul. An old Scotchman, who had been a soldier in one of the European wars, was sick and dying in an American hospital. His one desire was to see Scotland, his old home, and once again walk the heather of the highlands and hear the bagpipes of the Scotch regiments. The night that the old Scotch soldier died, a young man, somewhat reckless but kindhearted, got a company of musicians to come and play under the old soldier's window; and among the instruments was a bagpipe. The instant that the musicians began, the dying man said: "What's that, what's that? Why, it's the regiment coming home. That's the tune, yes that's the tune. Thank God, I'm home once more!

"Bonny Scotland and Bonny Doon" were the last words he uttered as he passed up to the highlands of the better country. When Artaxerxes was hunting, Tirebazus, who was attending him, showed the kind a rent in his garment. The king said: "How shall I mend it?" "By giving it to me," said Tirebazus. Then the king gave him the robe, but commanded him never to wear it, as it would be inappropriate.

See the startling and comforting fact! While our Prince laid aside His heavenly garment, He not only allows us to wear it, but commands us to wear it; and it will become us well; and for the poverties of our spiritual state, we may put on the splendors of heavenly regalement. For our sakes! Oh, the personality of this grand salvation.

Not an abstraction, not an arch under which we walk to behold elaborate masonry, not an ice castle like that which Empress Elizabeth of Russia over a hundred years ago ordered constructed, but a Father's house with a wide hearth crackling a hearty welcome. Ours is a religion of warmth and inspiration and light and cheer; something we can take into our hearts and homes, our business and recreation, our joys and sorrows.

Not an unmanageable gift, like the galley presented to Ptolemy, which required 4,000 men to row and its draught of water was so great that it could not come near the shore; but something you can run up any stream of annoyance, however shallow; and it gives enrichment now, enrichment forever.

The seven wise men of Greece were chiefly known each for one apothegm: Solon for

the saying "Know thyself"; Periander for the saying, "Nothing is impossible to industry"; Chilo for the saying, "Consider the end"; Thales for the saying, "Suretyship is the precursor of ruin." And Paul, distinguished for a thousand utterances, might well afford to be memorable for the saying, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."