

## The Danger of Riches

Rev. J. L. Brasher

If my readers will turn to the 6th Chapter of First Timothy and read from the 6th to the 19th verses there will be found the scriptural foundation of this article. It is a fearful passage, mostly overlooked by ministers and laymen. Indeed the common meaning of the successful man is one who has acquired wealth. To the contrary this Scripture teaches that, "Having food and raiment let us be therewith content." We came into the world without anything; our nerveless hands shall turn loose of everything we now hold and go forth empty.

But they that will be rich, those who have set their heart on riches and their acquirement, "fall," because they are no longer master of themselves or of their powers, but are mastered by their desire for wealth. No more deadly passion can be found in the human heart than covetousness, because if it is strong enough, he who is possessed by it will sell out everything that stands in the way of its accomplishment. Witness Balaam the prophet, who finally sold his character, his soul and the people of Israel, because he "loved the wages of unrighteousness." He wanted Balak's gold and wanted it until nothing stood in his way. Witness, Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, as he runs greedily, with a lie upon his lips, and deception in his speech, to get some of the talents in the chariot of Naaman the Leper who had been healed. Leprosy clave to him, but there is no record of his repentance. No record of the repentance of Balaam. He got his gold. He lost his soul. Remember one does not have to accomplish his ambition. They that will be rich are already fallen. Witness Judas, companion of our Lord, Treasurer of the group of disciples, honored as signally by his Master as any of the number, but he so wanted silver, that he opened wide the door of his selfhood for the incoming of the devil as his alias in order to obtain it.

There he stands in the list of the world's traitors, the greatest of them all; he sold the Lord of Glory for 30 pieces of silver. Covetousness had so swallowed him up that he could not repent, for it had placed him beyond the dead line. He died as a suicide out of remorse for a sin he had no power to give up.

Men have been saved from murder, adultery, stealing, lying, drunkenness, morphine. Who knows of one from covetousness? Such fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. They are positively swallowed up by their will to be rich as truly as a victim is swallowed by the water and drowned, and are as much dead to all things high and holy as the man who is dragged from the lake is dead to his friends and family. Great God have mercy, for thousands of the race are already swallowed up by this abnormal desire even though there is no prospect that they shall be rich. God is shut out in his claims. A world is forgotten and allowed to perish without any worthwhile effort to help them as shown by the man who with 21 bales of cotton under his shed and abundance of corn and livestock gave me one dime for missions on one of my charges. So deadly is this passion that the love of family, the needs of wife and children are ignored and the cry of human need falls on ears as dead to pity as if they were carved out of marble. If the will to

be rich is fraught with such danger what must the possession of riches be? To possess wealth or an unusual supply of ready money, lays the soul open to the temptation of the devil. Indulge yourself, you have the means, that makes you independent, and self indulgence is a quick cancer to destroy the soul. Plenty of money has supplied more divorce cases than all the suffering, self denial and poverty of the ages.

Plenty of flattery and attention, a nice car, a distant town for dinner and the work of debauchery has been accomplished and homes are broken and faithful hearts that have been sinned against and crushed and all human hope and joy are crushed at a stroke, and the indulgers are filled with remorse and sink swiftly to hell. Riches are dangerous. "How hardly shall they that have riches" said Jesus, "enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

David was troubled as he beheld them with more than they could wish, their eyes standing out with fatness. But he saw that their feet were set in "slippery places."

How many have we known in the time of their meagerness, happy, goodly, useful, benevolent, but wealth came to them and soon it was seen that the cares of this world and "the deceitfulness of riches" had dulled their spiritual fervor and ardor, and finally they were the victims of their self indulgence, and we had to stand by and see them sink beneath the waves of spiritual death, a painted corpse. No more hopeless people are to be found this side if hell than those who once were in the enjoyment of the full blessing of God and have through either the lust for wealth or the lust engendered by its possession, lost their contact with God. Such the writer remembers. Some precious brethren in the evangelistic field have become enamored of large offerings, and have courted the good will of the well to do and the carnal in order that their pay envelope might be heavy, but they have been caught in the snare, their glory has departed, their homes are broken, their children are godless and they have lost "the pearl of great price." I know of no faithful godly preacher, who preaches the whole truth explicitly, constantly, urgently, who is overpaid. I fear that is the reason some have selected other lines of less resistance, others have plunged in stocks, and get rich quick investments, and have come to grief and spiritual loss, and like Saul of old have been rejected. Oh ministers and children of God, have we warned faithfully those who are exposed to such danger. Let us be faithful to warn, lest their blood be required at our hands.—American Holiness Journal.

### A GUIDEBOOK PLUS

A Christian traveler was packing his suitcase for a trip when he remarked to a friend: "There is still a little corner left open in which I wish to pack a guidebook, a lamp, a mirror, a telescope, a book of poems, a number of biographies, a bundle of old letters, a hymn book, a sharp sword, a small library containing 66 volumes; and all these articles must occupy a space about three by six inches." "How are you going to manage that?" inquired his friend. The reply was, "Very easily, for my Bible contains all these things."

You will find this to be true if you read your Bible through this year. Stay with it; you'll be glad you did.—Brethren Missionary Herald.

## The Price that Livingstone Paid!

By L. C. Philo

In the American Hall of Fame on the campus of New York University are the sculptured busts of truly great men and women who through sweat and tears and blood have denied themselves to serve their fellow men, unselfish lives that breathed with the spirit of love and compassion, men who forgot themselves into immortality. The God-Man once said: "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:39).

David Livingstone is an example of self-denial. He made a vow to God, saying: "I will place no value on anything I possess save in its relation to the kingdom of God. If anything will advance the kingdom of God, it will be given away or kept, only as the giving of it will advance the kingdom of God. I shall promote the glory of Him to whom I owe all my hopes in time and eternity."

Livingstone traversed 29,000 miles over interior Africa, often through flooded country, with raw, bloody hands and body raging with fever. Once he was mauled by a lion that bit through his arm bone, leaving it practically helpless. He slept on the ground for six months at a time, and suffered sickness, scarcity of food, danger of wild beasts and savage men by day and by night. His attendants left him and took his medicine chest; he broke his teeth tearing at the hard food; his feet were covered with eating ulcers.

He said: "I never made a sacrifice. If you knew the satisfaction of performing such a duty as well as the gratitude for being chosen for so sacred a calling, you would have no hesitation in accepting it."

When he went into the jungles he said: "If you see me back here before eight years, you may shoot me." His child died and was buried. He sent his family back to England and went on alone, crossing a country reported to be occupied by cannibals. When he could walk no farther, they carried him by palanquin and canoe until the last day.

The next morning they found him kneeling by his bed with face in hands as if in prayer—dead. The natives buried his heart under a tree, wrapped his body in bark and canvas and carried it through hostile country to the coast; now it is at rest in England with kings and statesmen.

A large slab in Westminster Abbey is inscribed thus: "Brought by faithful hands over land and sea, here rests David Livingstone, missionary, traveller, philanthropist. Born March 19, 1813 at Blantyre, Lanarkshire; died May 4, 1873, at Chitambo's Village, Ilala. For thirty years his life was spent in an unwearied effort to evangelize the native races, to explore the undiscovered secrets, and abolish the desolate slave trade of central Africa, and where with his last words he wrote: 'All I can say in my solitude is, May Heaven's richest blessing come down on every one, American, English, Turk, who will help to heal this open sore of the world.'"

David Livingstone opened a vast continent of a million square miles to future missionary workers at the expense of his life, and at the price of blood.—Herald of Holiness.