

Knowing and Doing (1908)

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon passionately teaches that believers must deeply know and embrace the grace of Christ, who, though rich, became poor for their sake so that they might be spiritually enriched and transformed into lives of trust, love, and service.

Scripture: John 10:30, Philippians 2:7-8, Hebrews 4:15, Isaiah 53:3, John 15:13, Psalm 23:1, Romans 5:8

Topics: "Grace of Christ"

Description

In this powerful devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound grace of Jesus Christ who, though rich, became poor for the sake of humanity's salvation. Spurgeon calls believers to a deeper understanding of this grace that should lead to unwavering trust, passionate love, and joyful service. Through vivid biblical exposition and heartfelt application, he challenges Christians to live in the richness of Christ's sacrifice and to respond with spontaneous devotion. This sermon remains a timeless call to embrace the transformative power of Christ's grace in everyday life.

Transcript

"For you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might be rich." 2 Corinthians 8:9.

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text are as follows—# 151, Volume 3—THE CONDESCENSION OF CHRIST; #2232, Volume 37— CHRIST'S MOTIVE AND OURS; #2364, Volume 40—POVERTY AND RICHES and #2716, Volume 47—CHRIST'S POVERTY, OUR RICHES]

WE may, for once, dispense with a preface, and go straight to our subject. The text speaks, first, of something that we know. When we have, for a while, meditated upon that, we will speak of some things that are due because of this something that we know.

I. First, then, I am going to talk to you about SOMETHING THAT YOU KNOW.

I have heard that people like to be told, over and over again, what they already know. If you tell them what they do not know they may or may not listen to you, but if you tell them what they do know, they will be sure to be interested. If I were to speak about the town from which one of our friends from the country has come. If I were to mention something that occurred not long ago in the High Street of that town, I would be sure to have his eyes fixed upon me and his ears opened to my words. "Ah," he would say, "I know that

town well. I was there Saturday afternoon." Well now, I am going to speak of something with which all Christians are so familiar that I may refer to it as something that they certainly know. Whatever else they know or do not know, I may address all of them who are here and say, "You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." Beloved Believers, you could not have been Believers in Christ if you had not known this! You could not have had faith if you had not had this knowledge—it would have been impossible for you to have been converted unless you had known Jesus Christ who has now your soul's entire confidence! It is an essential part of your very profession that you should know this and, therefore, we assume that you do. Whatever else you do not know— and I suppose there are some Doctrines that are yet too high or too deep for you to comprehend, and some experiences to which you have not yet attained, and some Graces that are as yet not consciously enjoyed by you—you do "know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might be rich."

You know, first, that "He was rich "We believe that He was infinitely rich and eternally rich, for He was "very God of very God," and none can be compared for riches with God, who has boundless wealth. God was able to create the heavens and the earth at His own good pleasure and of Christ we are expressly told that "by Him were all things created." "He was rich" in His essential Deity and rich in the homage of the holy beings that He had made. The hosts of blessed spirits adored Him, principalities and powers counted it their highest honor to be conformed to His will. Heaven is Heaven because He is there. "By Him all things consist" and, therefore, all things reflect His Glory. We are not among those who think that Jesus was a mere Man—blessed be God, we know better than that! We could not trust our salvation to the very best of men. But Christ is God—He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." He certainly was rich in happiness. We cannot conceive of His ever feeling a pang of pain or having a single thought of care while yet He dwelt in His Father's bosom. He must have been as happy as He was holy! We say that "He was rich," but that is a poor expression, after all, for human language utterly fails to express how rich He was. He was more than rich—He was more

than great, He was GOD—all that that word can possibly mean! We know that we have no controversy about that, for "without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."

We also know, dear Friends, that though He was rich, "He became poor " I am only telling you something that you know full well, but let your minds be refreshed with the remembrance that Christ was so poor that He was wrapped with baby clothes just as any other infant was. Although He was The Infinite, He was so poor that He had to be sheltered in a stable because there was no room for Him in the inn. Afterwards, He was so poor that He was banished from His own country and had to flee into Egypt. He was so poor that He was the fit companion of a humble carpenter at Nazareth. So poor that when He came out into public life, His dress was the common garment of a laborer, woven from the top throughout without a seam. He had not where to lay His head, though foxes had their holes and birds their nests. He was so poor that He was indebted for His daily bread to the charity of gracious women who followed Him and ministered to Him of their substance. Though the cattle on a thousand hills were His, He sat upon a well at Sychar and said to a poor woman, "Give Me a drink." Oftentimes, He knew what faintness and hunger meant—and the longer He lived, the more intense His poverty became, until, at last, He was left without a friend when He most needed sympathy—without one to speak a good word for Him when He was arraigned before the bar of those who had resolved to condemn Him to death! Then was He taken out to die without a rag to cover Him. And when He was dead, He was indebted for a tomb to one who lent it to Him out of love. Never was there anywhere else such poverty as the poverty of Christ, for it was not merely external, it was also internal. He became so poor, through bearing our sin, that He had to lose the light of His Father's

Countenance, emptying Himself of all the repute He had. He became a spectacle of scorn and shame because our shameful sin had been laid upon Him. See Him on yonder shameful Cross! Mark His many wounds, hear His expiring cry! And as you gaze upon that spectacle of majestic misery, remember that although He was rich, He became thus poor.

I must remind you, yet further, of something else that you know—"that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor." I want everyone of you, if it is true, to say, "For my sake, out of love to me, Jesus Christ left His Throne in Heaven to die on the Cross of Calvary." Forget that there is anybody else here now if you can, and just take this Truth of God to yourself—Jesus Christ loved you and gave Himself for you—as much as if nobody else had ever lived. For you were poured out those drops of gore which streamed from His blessed brow in the Gethsemane sweat. For you He endured that shameful kiss by which Judas betrayed Him. For you His blessed shoulders were bared to the cruel Roman scourge. For you His hands were bound with cords, His thorn-crowned head smitten by the soldiers and His marred Countenance became smeared with their abominable spittle! For you the Lord of Glory became "a worm and no man," and was "despised and rejected of men." Surely there was nothing in you that could have merited love mighty enough to suffer so! Yet it was all for you and for me!

I seemed to be speaking to myself just now and I would gladly stop preaching and sit down and weep that Christ should have borne all this for me, as I am sure He did. But, Beloved Brothers and Sisters, will not you also remember that it was for your sakes that He became poor? Let each one of you, in imagination, stand at the foot of the Cross and say, "That suffering was all for me! That sacred head was wounded for me! Those dear eyes were red with weeping for me! Those lips that are like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh, and those cheeks, so full of love and tenderness, were stained and marred for me! Those holy hands and those cruelly-fastened feet from which His life's blood flowed, poured out that sacred flood for me! That throat all parched, those limbs all dislocated by the jarring of the Cross—above all else, His soul's deep distress, the unknown anguish that made Him cry, 'Lama Sabachthani?'—all this was for me!" Ask God the Holy Spirit to write all this on your soul, dear Brother or sister in Christ, and to make you feel, "All this was for

me."

Notice also that as Christ, for your sakes, became poor, it was "that you, though His poverty, might be rich" It will be a change of thought for you if you now think that you are rich. I hope you felt like weeping, just now, when I spoke of how Christ became poor. Now feel like singing as I remind you how rich you are! You are rich through that which is imputed to you, for all that Jesus had and did is yours. His matchless Righteousness is yours—you have it on already if you are a Believer—and so you are arrayed in fair white linen, whiter than any fuller could make it! His Atonement is yours. His precious blood has washed all your guilt away and you are now whiter than snow, without spot even before the eyes of the All-Seeing One!

You have also riches of another kind—riches within you. The life of Christ is in you by reason of His death. For you the Holy Spirit has so worked in you that the life of God is within you and you can never die! Because Christ lives, you must also live. You may be wearing very poor apparel tonight and have but few coins in your purse, but you are very rich—the Czar of all of Russia and all the emperors who have ever lived are not as rich as you are unless they also have a share in all that you possess, for "all things are yours," and no one can have more than "all things."—

"This world is yours, and worlds to come. Earth is your lodge, and Heaven your home!" When the stars come out, count them if you can, for all the glories of Heaven are yours. And beyond the stars, the endless realms of bliss are all yours. It is not merely for today or for tomorrow that "all things are yours," but they shall be yours throughout the eternal ages! When the sun's lamp has burnt out and the moon has been turned into blood, still shall you live on as long as the unending life of God, and all the Glory of your God shall be yours. Does not your very heart sing as you try to realize how rich you are and how rich you shall be forever?

Now come back to this point—you are rich through Christ's poverty. You have been lifted up so high because He was dragged down so low! You have been filled because He was emptied. You live because He died. As you think of your innumerable mercies, remember that there is not one of them but has the blood mark upon it. All your possessions have come to you through the Well-Beloved who impoverished Himself that you might be enriched.

This is the finishing stroke. The Apostle says "You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." I have spoken to you about His being rich and becoming poor, and making you rich through His poverty. But the point that we must never forget is that it was Divine Grace that led Him to do this. He was under no compulsion, so far as His Father was concerned, to come from Heaven to redeem us from destruction and, as far as you and I were concerned, He was under no obligation to come and save us. Do you ask, "Why did He do it, then?" Ah, that is one of the things you will have to ask Him. I know of only one reason and that is, "His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins." That quotation naturally suggests the next question, "But why did He love us?" You must ask Him that, also, and when you do ask Him that question, you must look up at Him and then you will see that He loved us because He is all Love.

II. You know His Grace, says the Apostle—His graciousness to us, His willingness to bless us, how He came, not by constraint, but entirely because of His own graciousness that He might save us. I am not going to enlarge further upon

that topic, but to speak of SOME THINGS THAT ARE DUE BECAUSE OF WHAT WE KNOW. I want to use this

knowledge as a hammer to strike home some nails.

If you know the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, what then, Beloved? First, it is due to Him that you trust Him. "Why," says someone, "I thought you were preaching to sinners." So I am. "But that is the exhortation which you give to sinners." Yes, that is quite true, for that is what sinners are bid to do—to trust in Jesus that they may be saved. But I want to give the same exhortation to saints as to sinners. I know that we are trusting in Jesus if we are saved, but do we trust Him as He deserves to be trusted? He has given us the most convincing proof of His love that can possibly be conceived—how is it that we do not always rest in His love, feel quite confident about that love, lean our whole weight upon that love and live in the full conviction that that love is altogether our own? I mean this—do you not sometimes get into Doubting Castle? Have not some of you been fretting lately about some pecuniary trouble? Were you not worried, the other day, about some little domestic affair? Surely it is time that you fully trusted your Lord! If there is a wife who says to her husband, "I am afraid of this, and afraid of that," he says to her, "But, my dear wife, can you not yet trust me? Have I not given you proofs enough of my love?"

Now, no earthly husband has ever given such proofs of love to his spouse as Jesus has given to us, so we ought to trust Him wholly, fully, constantly, unwaveringly with everything! It ought to be our habit to "steal away to Jesus" whatever happens to us—never to carry a burden for a minute, but to take it to His feet—never to worry, never to fret, never to mistrust, but since He was rich and for our sakes became poor, that He might make us rich, the very least we can do is to trust Him! It seems to me that not to do so is to insult Him—and He whispers to each dear child of His here, "After all that I have done for you, repose upon Me. Put your aching head upon My bosom. Exercise it no longer with a thousand anxious cares, but believe that I love you, died for you and that I will see you through it all and, therefore, leave it all to Me." God help you to learn that first lesson—to trust in the Lord with all your heart!

Next, "you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." Therefore, secondly, love Him. "But I do love Him," says one. Do you? "Yes," you reply, "I do." Well, suppose He were to come here at this moment and that He were to come to your pew and say to you, as He said to Peter, "Do you love Me?" would you answer, "Yes"? "Yes," you reply, "I would say as Peter did, 'Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You.'" Suppose He were then to say to you, "What have you done today to prove your love to Me?" What could you answer? Suppose He were to say, "I will take this day's actions as a specimen of your love." Would you be willing for Him to do so? If He said, "I will take yesterday's actions," I am afraid there are some here who would have to say, "Dear Master, do no such thing. We hope we do love You but, oh, give us Grace to love You more, for we cannot continue to live as we have done. Do help us, by Your Holy Spirit, to live after a different fashion." Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I want your love for Jesus to be not merely in name, but to be as real as your love to your dearest ones! No, I want it to be a passion far more operative than the fondest love of a mother for her child or of a spouse for her husband! Do you so love Jesus? Why, compared with what Christ has done for you, what have you done for Christ? May we never cease to praise our mother's love! Dear and blessed was the woman who bore us, nursed us and cared for us as no one else could have done! Yet this mortal life of ours would have been a curse to us if Jesus had not come to redeem us from eternal death and shown us a greater love even than our mother's! Beloved, if you feel the love of your father and mother stirring in your heart—and I am sure you do if you are worthy of the name of a man—much more let the love of Jesus Christ fire and fill your soul! Some of you have children and for then you would willingly sacrifice everything. Well, we do not doubt your love to your wife and your child, but let your love to Jesus be quite as operative on your daily life as these loves and even more so! In the remembrance of Gethsemane and Golgotha, I claim your heart's best love for Christ, and I pray that His blessed Spirit may compel you to gladly yield it to

Him!

But now, Beloved, I have to go a step further and say that if you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to you, I come to claim that in proof of your love, you render to Him your daily service. Paul was writing to tell the Corinthians that the poor Christians in Macedonia had made a very generous contribution towards the poor saints in Jerusalem. And He wanted the richer brethren in Corinth to give their share to help those in need. Instead of telling them that they ought to do this, he put it to them thus—"You know how freely Jesus Christ, though He was rich, became poor that you might be rich. Now, for His sake, act in the same spirit toward your needy Brothers and Sisters in Judea."

Let me explain how this principle affects me and every one of you, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ. It means this—praise Jesus for dying for you! Do not need anybody to urge you to be obedient to Jesus—spontaneous love deserves spontaneous love. Do not need to be driven to your duty and do not let it be duty so much as delight, even as Jesus said to His Father, "I delight to do Your will, O My God."

You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in all that He did—do all that you have to do with a like gracefulness of spontaneity, that is, do it without needing to be pressed to do it. No honey is so sweet as that which drops freely from the comb, and no service is so sweet to the Lord Jesus as that which a Believer spontaneously renders to Him.

Think of what you would like to do for Jesus. He thought long ago about what He would do for you and it was a great joy to Him to think of it. Now think what you can do for Jesus. You know what you sometimes do for a dear friend when a birthday is coming on—you plot, you plan, you say to yourself, "What shall my present be? What surprise can I arrange?" I want you, in some such fashion as that, to turn over in your mind what you can do for the Lord Jesus. Have you an alabaster box of precious ointment at home? Then bring it as your love-gift to Him—you surely would not give Christ your odds and ends, would you? "No," you say, "I will give Him the best that I have. I only wish it were a thousand times as good as it is." When Jesus became poor for your sakes, it cost Him all that He had—now do something for Him which will be costly to you, for He well deserves it. O our blessed Savior, we are not going to give You kisses and tears and words only. No, we will pinch ourselves, we will deny ourselves, we will plan and toil so that we may give You something that costs us our heart's deepest emotions, our mind's best thoughts and our body's sternest labor! Of all that we have on earth, we will choose the choicest and best for you, our dear Lord and Master.

You see, I am almost beginning to press you to this blessed service, but that is not what I intend to do—I am aiming at the very reverse of that. I do believe that the Lord Jesus delights to see His people thinking what they can do for Him, without any minister urging them to do it, without any circular from a society, or a collector calling at the door for their half-guinea. Do not imagine that just because you belong to such-and-such a church, you must do something for Christ.

It is true that there is such a necessity, but you should put the matter in quite a different form from that—"May I have the privilege of doing something for Him who for my sake became poor? And if there is anything to be done that is more lowly than other service, less seen and reckoned to be less honorable than other service, is that the post for me?" Those who truly love Christ will gladly wash His feet and wipe them with the hairs of their head. They will not covet the higher work of anointing His head, but will be satisfied to be allowed to anoint His feet. Anything for Jesus—that shall be our motto. We know how freely He became poor for our sakes. Let us, with just such freeness, render ourselves up as living sacrifices unto God, which is our reasonable service.

I must add this one thing. "You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might be rich." Now go and imitate Him as far as you can. If you see anybody in need, be generous, for Christ was generous. If you meet a sinner, do not turn your back upon him, as a Pharisee might, but help him all you can, for Christ helped you all He could. If it should cost you a great deal of trouble to win that soul for Christ, gladly put yourself to that trouble because Christ took so much trouble to save you. A good Brother said to me, the other day, concerning a certain boy, that he was afraid we would never do much with him because he was of very corrupt origin. I said, "So were you." "Ah," he replied, "I do not quite mean it that way." "No," I said, "but I do mean it that way." He or she who is a son or daughter of Adam had a corrupt origin—and as we all came from that source, we are all corrupt! Do not ever say of anybody, "That person is too bad for me to do anything with him." It is the genius of Christianity to select the worst, first, and we should never regard any man as utterly hopeless until he is dead. As long as the breath is in his body, no matter though all the devils from Hell were also in him, there is enough power in the Lord Jesus Christ to make the whole troop

of them flee—and it is for us to attack those devils in His name! Jesus Christ, having saved us, the salvation of other sinners must be possible.

I want you, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, wherever you are, to tell others about Him. "You know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," but others do not know it! You have been made to know it in order that you may tell it to others. We have come nearly to the close of another Sabbath, so permit me to put a question or two by way of examination to you who profess to be Christ's. Have you talked about Jesus Christ today? Have you spoken to anybody about His soul today? "I have been in the Bible class, Sir, studying the Word." That is good, but did you, today, come to close grips with anybody about his soul? I believe that is the best way to be soul-winners for all who cannot exercise the public ministry—and even for ministers it is the best way! When God really stirs us up to get a hold of men, we shall soon see them saved. I try to talk straight home to my hearers as far as I can, but I am conscious that the man who gets a hold of his fellow men, talks to them individually, tells them of their danger and pleads with them to trust in Jesus, is the man who is sure to be blessed to them! Have you done that? Some of you have children—have you ever prayed with them, one by one? "Oh, yes," you reply. I am glad you can say that, dear Brother. But I am afraid there are some who cannot say it. Perhaps you have a fellow servant who is utterly godless—did you ever speak to her tenderly and affectionately about her soul?

We neglect the souls of others because we do not realize as we ought that Christ, though rich, for our sakes became poor. If we really knew this as we ought to know it, we would begin to care about other people for Christ's sake. What a strange man was that Paul who wrote our text! After his conversion, he went all over the world, as far as he could, preaching Jesus Christ. They stoned him and put him in prison, but as soon as he got out of prison, he was preaching again! He had chains on his wrists and was taken as a prisoner to Rome, but he kept on preaching when he had the opportunity. Do you know why he did so? I believe it was because, one day, when he was riding to Damascus, something very extraordinary happened to him. Jesus Christ spoke to him out of Heaven and he fell to the ground. And when he got up, his whole being had received such a twist that he was very strange ever after!

Brothers and Sisters, I should like you tonight, if you never before had it, to get such a realizing view of Christ's coming down from Heaven, lying in the manger among the horned oxen, living for nearly 30 years in obscurity and then, after His brief but wonderful public ministry, bearing all your sins in His own body on the tree! I should like you to have such a view of Him that, like Paul, you would receive such a twist as you would never get over as long as you live! I have sometimes felt that twist, as I have recalled the day in which I first saw the Lord—and then I felt as if I could do some extraordinary thing for Christ that would make men say, "What a fanatical fool that fellow is!" I should like to be thought a fanatical fool by all those who do not love the Lord Jesus Christ! And I am afraid, Brothers and Sisters, it is only because we love Christ so little that men treat us so well. I should like for us to feel that twist so strongly that, henceforth, we should know nothing "save Jesus Christ and Him Crucified," and live for nothing else but Christ, so that people would say of us, "What strange men they are! They seem to be all on fire for Christ. The zeal of the Lord's house seems to have eaten them right up." That is the kind of man I want you to be and that is the sort of woman I want you to be—and if you really know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was consumed with zeal for your salvation—it would be only fair that you, also, should be utterly consumed with a passion for His Glory! God grant that all of us may be so, from this time forth and forever!

If there is a sinner here who does not love this Jesus, who gave Himself for us, I will not say what Paul wrote, "Let Him be anathema maranatha," that is, cursed at the coming of the Lord, but I will say this—remember, Sinner, that if the Grace of Jesus does not save you, the Justice of Jesus will destroy

you! And if you are not saved by His first coming, you will be condemned at His second coming. And that may God forbid, for His mercy's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: 2 CORINTHIANS 8.

Although this is rather a practical than a spiritual chapter, I hope that we shall get profit out of it by the teaching of the Spirit of God who inspired Paul to write it. Paul was writing to the Church at Corinth to commend the Churches of Macedonia, that he might stir up the one Church by the example of the others. The saints at Jerusalem were starving because of a famine and it came into the mind of certain Gentile Churches to send help to the mother Church at Jerusalem. It was regarded as a very wonderful thing that Gentiles should be sending help to Jews. I hope it would not be thought wonderful now, but it was then. And Paul, who loved the saints at Corinth, and saw that they were a little backward in this matter, stirred them up to greater diligence. He did not like the Churches in Macedonia to go so far ahead of the Church in Corinth which was richer, more endowed with gifts and, therefore, he set to work to stimulate their generosity. Thus he begins—

Verse 1. Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the Grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia. That is a quaint old expression, "We do you to wit." It means, "We would let you know, we would tell you, we would inform you of what the Macedonia saints have done." And he does not at first say, "We would let you know of the liberality which the Macedonia Churches have shown," but, "of the Grace of God bestowed on the Churches of Macedonia." What we do for God, God's Grace has first bestowed upon us! If there is any virtue, if there is any zeal, if there is any faith, if there is any love, it is the result of the Grace of God bestowed upon us! Always look upon things in that light, for then you will not grow proud. Give what you may, and do what you may—you may regard it as the effect of the Grace of God bestowed upon you.

2. How that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of the joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. They were very poor people in Macedonia, but they loved God so much that they abounded in liberality. Considering how little they possessed, and how much they were tried and persecuted, they had been wonderfully generous.

3. For to their power, I bear record, yes, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves. They were willing to give even beyond their power! They gave up to the full limit of what they could do and then wished that they could give even more. And notice that "they were willing of themselves." Paul had not to stir them up to do this, nor even to mention the subject to them—"They were willing of themselves." That is the best kind of service to God which a man ever does, that in which he is willing of himself. It is the slave who is flogged to his work—the child is willing of himself. Oh, that on the altar of God you and I may gladly place our offerings because we have been made willing of ourselves!

4. Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. Paul did not have to beg them to give, but they begged him to take their gifts! And when the saints of God are in a right state, they come forward voluntarily, as Paul says that these Macedonian Christians did, "praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints" by going to Jerusalem and giving away this money where it was needed.

5. 6. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same

Grace also. Paul said,

"Titus, do not let the Corinthians be behind the Macedonians in this matter. Go and show them how they may receive similar Grace."

7. Therefore, as you abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that you abound to this Grace also. These Corinthians were an instructed people. They were so well taught that they were able to carry on an open meeting for years without a minister—and the natural consequences followed—they fell into sixes and sevens, and there were divisions among them, so that Paul had to counsel them to have a minister. "I beseech you, brethren, you know the house of Stephanas that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, that you submit yourselves unto such, and to everyone that helps with us, and labors." They were a notable Church, people of standing among them. Paul admits all that, but he says, "Do not be behindhand in your liberality to the cause of God."

8. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. And, Christian men and women, whenever you see other Christians excelling you in any Grace, seek to catch up with them! Why should you be in the rear rank? You are to run with patience the race that is set before you, so do not be outstripped by your fellow runners. If God has given to one Christian much of any Grace, He can, if He pleases, give as much to you.

9. For you know. These are most precious words, worthy of being written in letters of gold—"You know."

9. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might be rich. "You know the wonderful story of how you are rich through Christ's poverty. What a change it was for Him, from the riches of Heaven to the poverty of His Manhood here, and what a change it is for you from the poverty of your sin and ruin to the riches of His Grace! Now you know this—you do not need anybody to tell you about it, so imitate it—distribute to the poor and especially to the poor saints, as you have the power and the opportunity."

10. And herein give my advice: for this is expedient for you who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. They had started a year ago, but the project had hung fire, as such things often do. Many a man is good at resolving and starting, but not so good at going on to the end.

11. Now therefore perform the doing of it "Do not let your good resolves be buried, let them be turned into action! 'Now therefore perform the doing of it.'" So I might say to who are here. "You have purposed, you have determined, you have resolved a great many times. 'Now therefore perform the doing of it.' If it is a good resolve, it will be best to carry it out at once."

11, 12. That as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which you have. For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man has and not according to that he has not. This is how we should always act—see what we can do and do it—not wait till we can do twice as much. There is a great waste of holy effort and of holy giving because so many people are ashamed to do a little and, therefore, do nothing because they cannot do much. That is not the way for God's children to act. With your willing mind do what you can and God will help you to do more!

13, 14. For I mean not that other men be eased, and you burdened: but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your

want: that there may be equality. Paul would have the rich Church at Corinth give to the poor Church at Jerusalem for the Corinthians themselves might be in need some day, and then the Church at Jerusalem would in turn give to them. This is the Law of the Kingdom—if God prospers you, help another who is not being prospered just now—and then, one of these days, he may help you in your time of necessity.

15. As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing left over; and he that had gathered little had no lack That was the law of the manna in the wilderness. Some people brought in a good deal, for they had a great many children, and so it was all eaten up. Some brought in a little, but God multiplied it, so that there was no lack. So, if in Providence God gives you a large supply of good things, divide it among a large number of needy ones. And if He gives you only a small measure, be content and do your best with it.

16. But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. Titus thought of them as Paul did—they were like-minded in this as in many other matters.

17, 18. For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. And we have sent with him the Brother whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches. I do not know who "the Brother" was. There have been many guesses but perhaps none of them were right. You see that human praise, even in the Church, is not a very lasting thing. There was somebody whom all Christians praised, yet nobody knows him now. So, if you get to be esteemed among men, you may be unknown, even as this good man is! But if you have the praise of God, He will never forget you!

19. And not that only, but who was also chosen of the Churches to travel with us with this Grace. Paul did not like handling the money at all. They had to press him to do it and then he sent Titus and somebody else to take charge of it and to keep a strict account so that they should never be blamed in the matter of this distribution. So, Beloved, see that you so serve God that even the devil cannot find fault with you! Be so exact, especially with what is given to God's cause, that no man shall ever even think that you have taken any of it to yourselves.

19-21. Which is administered by us to the Glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. The Apostle is very particular and careful, and herein he sets an example to all of you who have anything to do with any work for God. Do not let it rest on yourselves alone—have others associated with you to share the responsibility and help you to look after it.

22. 23. And we have sent with them our Brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but not much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow helper concerning you. "If anybody outside wants to know who Titus is, say that I have sent him to be the leader in this particular work. If you want to know who he is, he is 'my partner and fellow helper concerning you.'" Well said, Paul!

23. Or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches and the Glory of Christ. This is the reply to any enquiry about the other brethren—they were probably poor men, humble men, plain preachers of the Word, yet Paul calls them "the Glory of Christ." What a wonderful thing it is that any man should be the Glory of Christ! An honest, upright character. A holy gracious conversation brings Glory to Christ. Men say, "If that man is a follower of Christ, he does credit to his Master." Dear Brothers and Sisters, let us think of this. And if we are not the messengers of the churches, we may be "the Glory of Christ."

24. Therefore show you to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

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