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THE RICH MAN WHO DIED LIKE LAZARUS
Compiled By Duane V. Maxey

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INTRODUCTION

This is a moving account that puts a marvelous, but true, twist on Luke 16:22, so that of the passing of Samuel Budgett, it could be said: "THE RICH MAN DIED... AND WAS CARRIED BY THE ANGELS INTO ABRAHAM'S BOSOM." The compilation is taken from the 1853 publication titled, "The Successful Merchant -- Life Sketches of Samuel Budgett" by William Arthur, who also wrote "The Tongue of Fire." "The Successful Merchant" is now entered into the HDM Digital Library as hdm2053. It was a toilsome process; the pages were foxed, and I found it necessary to first create TIFF graphics in my graphics program, then adjust the brightness and contrast of those text pictures before I could run them through my TypeReader OCR program and get good text-recognition. The whole process has taken me about one week, but while it was "a job" it was not a mentally monotonous job, because it is one of the most unusual and interesting biographies that I have ever read.

Samuel Budgett was born in Wrington, England on July 27, 1794 and as best I could deduce from the book, he died April 29, 1851, several months before what would have been his 57th birthday. Born with a God-given wisdom and talent for merchandise trading, he rose from poverty during less than three-score years to become one of the most prosperous merchants in England. Early in life he gave his heart to God and burned himself out in zeal for God, for souls, for the Church, and for the poor -- literally, for others!

So glorious was his passing, that I have dubbed him, "The Rich Man Who Died Like Lazarus." Not money, but "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (NIV 1 Tim. 6:10), and for that reason Jesus warned in Luke 18:24-25, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." But Samuel Budgett was an exception, in that he never sought money for the sake of HAVING money for himself. He sought it, rather, as the fruit of diligence and wisdom -- to help the cause of God, to help elevate his own family from poverty, to help the poor, to bring about a better environment in his community, and to help souls make it into heaven. He did

not obtain wealth to have and to hold, but to wisely and unselfishly share it with others. Various times he gave away his entire savings to help others.

Do yourself a favor:-- read the entire 10 chapters of hdm2053. I venture to say, you will not regret that you did. It is a book that would be good for every preacher to read and for every Christian family to read together in sessions during family devotions. In places, it may require your perseverance of attention through some of William Arthur's longer diviations from the thread of the story, but even these are instructive and edifying, and, once you get into the story you may find your interest so keen that you will be caught up in one of those "I can't put it down till I finish it" type of captivations -- although its length may require several or more sittings to complete it -- the printed volume contains 411 pages.

Though Samuel Budgett was converted at a young age, through the influence of a Godly, praying mother, and lived a devout life from thence forward, satan buffeted him with doubts about his experience for a number of years -- primarily, I believe, because he judged himself too harshly and set standards for himself so unattainably high that his faith was crippled and his assurance was needlessly clouded when he failed to measure up to all of them to the fullest. Chapter 9 of the book tells of the time when he got clear out beyond those shadows into the sunshine of happy assurance of his salvation, and was also sanctified wholly.

Chapter 10, the last chapter of the book, tells of his passing -- how that once again, as death approached, the tempter did his fiendish worst to cloud Samuel Budgett's mind with feelings of unworthiness, shortcoming, and doubt about his acceptance with God. BUT GOD -- THE FAITHFUL GOD -- BROUGHT HIM OUT FROM UNDER THAT DARK CLOUD INTO THE GLORIOUS SUNSHINE OF PERFECT ASSURANCE THAT ALL WAS WELL. He lingered on his death-bed for a number of days -- and -- you'll just have to read it yourself -- GOD GAVE HIM ONE OF THE MOST GLORIOUS PASSINGS OF WHICH I HAVE EVER READ.

With no further explanations now, I present to you my selections from Chapter 10, of "The Successful Merchant," a chapter that might well be re-titled: "THE RICH MAN WHO DIED LIKE LAZARUS, AND WAS CARRIED BY THE ANGELS INTO ABRAHAM'S BOSOM."

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10 -- THE LATTER END

By death and hell pursued in vain,
To thee the ransom'd seed shall come;
Shouting, their heavenly Sion gain,
And pass through death triumphant home. -- Wesley.

Mr. Budgett had now reached a point when earth might well seem a pleasant home. He was prospering amazingly, with the certainty (as men would say) of yearly prospering more; his family were grown up and their prospects smiling; the prejudices which had hung round his sudden rise were disappearing; respect, attention, love were coming thick upon him; wider and higher circles were doing homage to his excellence; abundant leisure for mental feasts and benevolent labors

was at his command; and, only fifty-six, he might yet for years rejoice amid the fruits of his toil: so that one, looking at him about the fall of 1850, might have said, "If Samuel Budgett is not to be envied, who is?"

It was about the November of that year, when walking up a hill in Bristol, that he complained of a difficulty of breathing. Then, ascending stairs became a weariness; a new weight hung upon his agile step. Day by day strength failed; the system betokened decay; the heart was affected; dropsy was feared, -- the Successful Merchant had lived too fast. His master energy which had crushed so many difficulties had been doing its work on his own frame, which soon became a witness that over-activity is not to be indulged without shivering a man at last.

Prone ever to self-reproach, slow to behold the full consolation of the gospel, the first days of his illness were days of mourning; not the mourning of selfish fear, which shudders in presence of its just doom, without sorrow for offenses; but the mourning of a heart which felt itself infinitely indebted to the Redeemer's undeserved mercy, and could not forgive itself for having loved him so little and served him so imperfectly. His soul was especially weighed down by this... prayers of piteous abasement, and tears flowing copiously, marked the early scenes of his last sickness. While many who had been far higher in their professions and far less abundant in their fruits were entering the valley of death with an easy acknowledgment that they had been "very unfaithful," Samuel Budgett was pouring floods of contrite sorrow on the feet of that blessed Saviour who had forgiven him so much and had been so unworthily requited. But, though our God seeks the sacrifice of a contrite heart, he delights not in the wailing of joyless self-reproach... This was Mr. Budgett's danger... But prayer was made for him continually, and friends strong in faith were ever reminding him of the love infinitely stored up in the Redeemer he adored. That Redeemer.. did, ere long, shed abroad in the heart of his servant a plenteous consolation which well showed that parting with all the enticements of earth is not hard to him whom Christ makes joyful...

Just at this point I am happy to withdraw and leave you with him. The friend who had written from his own lips notes of the recollections of his childhood, would fain have completed the story of his life ere he went hence...

"Friday, March 14, 1851, he sent for Miss _____, and said, 'I sent for you to tell you how happy I am; not a wave, not a ripple, not a fear, not a shadow of doubt. I didn't think it was possible for man to enjoy so much of God upon earth. I'm filled with God.'

"On stepping into the carriage he stopped and said, 'How is Mrs. _____?' On receiving a reply, he said with solemn earnestness, 'O _____, "seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you."' During the ride, he spoke on various subjects, and much enjoyed some verses that were repeated, frequently joining in. A member of his class who saw him, came and congratulated him on being out, hoping he was better. Mr. Budgett said, 'No; I feel I am going home. I should like to have met you all once more, but tell them all to meet me in Heaven.'

"Monday, the 17th, he said to Miss Budgett, 'I have passed a pleasant night, but feel myself getting weaker. My stay on earth will be but short. I shall soon arrive at home. It gives me great pleasure to think we shall be an unbroken family in heaven. My father's family are many of them

gone; the rest are on the way. My own family, part of them, are in heaven. Yes, I have some dear children in heaven, and so have you, (meaning spiritual children.) It gives me great pleasure to look on _____ and _____, because I know they are trying to serve the Church, and when they have served their generations on earth, they will join me above. O, how thin does the veil now appear which separates earth from heaven!"

"The same day he saw Mr. _____: 'I am glad to see you, my dear friend. How hard it is in life and vigor to bring our minds to believe that we must suffer; but the Lord has seen fit to bring me to a death-bed. I this day hang like a little child in a brook, catching hold of a branch that is thrown out to save it; only there is this one difference in my case, I hang upon the branch of Jesse's stem. Christ will keep me; I am safe. The day of mourning is better than the day of rejoicing. God has blessed me with prosperity in life, and were he to see fit to spare me now, I should have a fairer prospect of prosperity than most before me; but I give all up. I would not alter my lot if it were in my power to do so for any earthly advantage. The blood of Christ is all to me. I hang upon the atonement.

"In the afternoon, being a little restless and unable to sleep, he lay for some minutes apparently very uncomfortable, when in an instant a sweet smile lit up his countenance as he exclaimed... 'Glory! glory! glory! I want to shout the praises of God.'

"On Tuesday, the 18th, he saw Mrs. H_____ and said, 'I am glad to see you, I should like to have lived a little longer if it had been for your sake, but you'll not want an earthly friend. My sons will be to you what I have been. I have told them all about it, and they will be kind to you.' He inquired if she had anything to say to him: on her replying she only wished to thank him for all his kindness. He said, 'I wish it had been more, but I know it has helped you. Good-bye! The Lord be with you: cleave to him and he will be a friend; yes, he will be your friend, your husband, your support. He will guide you in passing through the troubles of this life. He will be your shield, your defense, and your exceeding great reward. The time is passing away: we shall soon meet.'

"The same morning Mr. and Mrs. _____ came. After some remarks to Mrs. _____, he addressed her husband:-- "My dear _____, you have still to cope with the difficulties and trials of business. I look back on all the way I have been led, and feel it is your privilege "to walk unburned in fire." Cleave to him; keep close to Jesus. Every morning, before you leave your room, inquire, Lord, what wouldst thou have me do? And every evening ask yourself, How much owest thou unto thy Lord? Keep short reckonings with him; go forward, and your path shall be as that of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day. I think I may have a little more suffering before I go, but I am willing to bear it. Good-bye! "May the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son, Christ Jesus our Lord!" '

"On Sunday night, March 23d, before he was undressed he said, "Let us spend a few minutes in silent prayer, I think I can hardly bear praying aloud. Pray, my dear friend, that we may tonight experience the presence and blessing of our heavenly Father. Ask that I may obtain a settled calm and quiet sleep.'

"After he got into bed he lay for some hours in a most delightful state of mind, occasionally giving vent to his feelings in expressions, a few only of which can be remembered. It was observed, 'You feel that your heavenly Father can make you enjoy affliction.' 'O yes,' he said, 'I do now; I don't feel myself like a sick man, I feel I am luxuriating in God's presence; but I believe he means soon to take me.' It was remarked, 'Well, yours will be the gain, ours the loss.' Mr. Budgett replied, 'Yes, I know to me it will be gain, unspeakable gain...from complete exhaustion he fell into a doze. Waking in two or three minutes, he said, 'I felt overpowered and dropped asleep, and when I awoke I thought (pointing to the curtains) all this was my tomb; but the room around me was so bright -- it was dazzling brightness too great to bear: Continually he repeated, 'I'm very comfortable -- too happy: Then again, 'This is a most remarkable time, I feel a solemn sense of the presence of God; so calm, so beautiful.' Then did he almost unconsciously slide into prayer -- 'Lord, I am thine, thou art mine. I have made a covenant with thee, I would not break it for a thousand worlds... Afterwards he broke out--

"O, here is rest and calm repose;
Here all my sorrows cease;
For Jesus meets my spirit here,
And kindly whispers peace." '

"Wednesday evening, April 2d. -- For the first time he was carried up stairs: On the way he said to the men who carried him, 'I am quite ready to be carried down whenever my heavenly Father sees fit. Thank God, I have a hope beyond the grave.' On being seated he said, 'Wait; I want to tell you on what my hope is fixed. Listen: He then repeated his favorite verse, "Jesus, my great High Priest, &c." I thank God for such an assurance...

"Tuesday, April 8. -- At Weston-super-Mare, the Rev. T____ called. After some remarks had passed respecting his health, Mr. Budgett said, 'Well, you know there is not really any more uncertainty about my life than yours, or any other person's; you may be gone in an hour or two, or so may I but I have no great desire either way; for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain; but if I might choose, I would rather depart and be with Christ, which is far, far better.' He then repeated, with an emphasis never to be forgotten,--

' "Thou Shepherd of Israel and mine,
The joy and desire of my heart;
For closer communion I pine,
I LONG to reside where thou art.

Ah, show me that happiest place,
The place of thy people's abode,
Where saints in an ecstasy gaze,
And hang on a crucified God." '

As he repeated these lines the tears streamed down, plainly indicating that more was really felt than could be expressed. The next day when dressed, he said, 'Well, I'm glad we are going home today; I shall not have many more changes; this I expect will be my last change, till I am removed

to that beautiful little place they call the tomb: yes, I feel that my next remove will be to the chapel yard.'

"On Thursday, April 10th, he said, 'And so poor J. H_____ is gone! Poor fellow! do you know what sort of an end he made?' On his being told nothing was known on that subject, he said, 'Poor fellow! the last time I saw him I talked to him, and begged him not to build on his health. I told him how many were called away in the midst of health. I have often talked to him on the necessity of seeking a change of heart. I don't know whether it was the last time I saw him, but it is not long since that I gave him the "Sinner's Friend." '

"Friday evening, April 11th. -- Conversing with his medical attendant, he again inquired as to the probable result of his sickness, and on being told it was still very uncertain, he said, -- 'Well, when I look around at my family and the Church, I feel as if life would still be a blessing. I am not one of those who are weary of the world, nor do I feel any sympathy with such; but when I look at myself as an individual, I feel 'twere better far to go.

"There is my house and portion fair;
My treasure and my heart are there,
And my abiding home."

But I did not feel like this at the beginning of my illness; then I felt my own unfaithfulness had been so great... but I have been led to see that I can do nothing to merit heaven. Could I live like an archangel, still I should not merit heaven:--

"In my hands no price I bring;
Simply to the cross I cling."

I trust now in the merits of my Saviour -- in his atoning blood. I feel that it is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his mercy hath he saved us." No, it is "by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." One being named who was getting old, he said, 'O! he has made a god of his money. Often have I talked to him and urged him to make preparation for a better country. O, what is all the world worth to a dying man? Riches I have had as much as my heart could desire, but I never felt any pleasure in them for their own sake, only so far as they enabled me to give pleasure to others...

"It was said, 'How delightful is the thought that you will so soon be there [in heaven]! there you will have a harp of gold, be clothed in white raiment, and have a crown upon your head.' 'Yes,' he said, 'I like to hear of the beauties of heaven, but I do not dwell upon them; no, what I rejoice in is that Christ will be there. Where he is, there shall I be also. I know that he is in me and I in him. I shall see him as he is. I delight in knowing that. I have no dread of death; I have not had for some time. I wish one of you would write to Mr. Wood; give him my love, and tell him I thank God almost every day for his visit here. Since that first night he was with me, I have had no fear: the enemy has assaulted me once or twice, but only for a short time.'

"Wednesday, April 16th. -- He saw Miss F____, to whom he spoke most sweetly of the many mercies and comforts he enjoyed, recapitulating many of them to her, whilst his heart seemed overflowing with gratitude. Soon after he repeated,--

"My God, I am thine; what a comfort divine,
What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine!" &c.

"Saturday the 19th. -- He said to S____ A____, 'Just now I woke up in a turmoil, wondering who would take care of Society matters when I am gone, and then I thought of my own spiritual cares; but I can cast them all upon my Saviour,--

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die."

Saturday morning, the 19th. -- On being told the water was advancing, he said, 'I thank God -- for that I'm glad; I believe I shall go soon; it does not alarm me. I think I shall go suddenly; but if I go in a moment it does not matter, all will be well.' In the afternoon he observed, 'How our heavenly Father paves our way down to the tomb! I seem so happy and comfortable... I may go off now, this moment, while I am talking to you; and I should not be sorry. I am as weak as an infant: now I can do nothing. Glory be to God, all is well. My temporal affairs I leave in the hands of my sons, and my spiritual affairs with my Saviour. I cannot tell you how my comforts and consolations abound.

"Better than my boding fears,
To me Thou oft has proved."

"The same evening, when several were in his room, he inquired, 'Can you tell me what a debt I owe to God for having given me such innumerable mercies and comforts? He has indeed given me plenty of this world's goods; each of my children will have ample, and my dear wife too. I have every comfort I can desire; O, tell me how much I owe! How can I pay this debt of gratitude? There has been many a time when I have given away my last shilling, and now I have more than I could have desired, and the more I give away the more comes in; and I have more coming in than ever I had. What a mercy to have so many kind friends! I am surprised at your kindness and willingness to do so many little acts of love for me. I hope none of you will ever want for kind attention in affliction.

"Kindness gives the fleeting flower
Of life its luster and perfume;
And we are weeds without it."

O, God has bestowed upon me far above my desires; tell me, my dear friend, how much I owe! I enjoy all these temporal blessings, and how can I repay the debt for these? But this is not a thousandth part of the debt I owe... I feel I have

"Riches above what earth can grant,
And lasting as the mind!"

Then in a rapture, and with tears of joy streaming down his face, he exclaimed, 'O, I'm overwhelmed with love. I want to fly to preach Christ to all the world. "I'll praise him everywhere. Can I be lost? O no, no! O, I want to preach Christ. I am overburdened with love and gratitude... I had some fear of death at the beginning, because of my past unfaithfulness; but the merits of Christ are all-sufficient. Now I enjoy a sweet calm:--

"I bless the day that I was born." '

Then, as in a rapture he exclaimed, 'O, I can't describe my happiness. I bless God that he created me, that he has spared me, and that he has pardoned me. I thank God that you and I were ever acquainted, that I ever saw your dear sister, and that I was ever united to her. O, God has been very gracious to me. I praise him for the past, what he has done for me! I praise him for the present, what he is now doing for me! and I praise him for the future, knowing what he will do for me... he requested a hymn to be sung. On a fear being expressed lest it should prove too much for him, he reiterated with great ardor, 'Sing, sing.' The Rev. Charles Clay then gave out three verses of the hymn commencing -- "Behold the Saviour of mankind," during which time Mr. Budgett, seated on the side of his bed, his countenance beaming with almost angelic joy, his eyes streaming, his chin quivering with emotion, and his hands upraised, to the astonishment of all joined most heartily in the singing, reminding one of some old prophet, or the patriarch Jacob, surrounded by his family giving them his last blessing. He appeared in a perfect ecstasy of joy and triumph, and continued to utter the most joyful expressions of faith in Christ and hope of heaven.

"Some of his expressions were to the following effect:-- 'O, I see such a fullness of merit in the atonement of my Saviour.' 'I am a poor vile sinner, but the blood of Jesus avails even for me.' 'I have been unfaithful; my only regret is my own unfaithfulness. If I could live over again, I think I should be more faithful; but that is all past and forgiven.' He then quoted his favorite verse, 'Jesus, my great High Priest,' &c. and said, 'There I rest; Satan cannot drive me from this. For many days he has not been permitted to molest me,' and then described with much energy his last conflict with the adversary of souls. His son James said, 'We shall all soon meet in heaven.' 'Yes,' he replied, (looking round upon his family,) 'yes, thank God! He has not left a wish ungratified, a desire unsatisfied, either temporal or spiritual.'

"He also said, amongst several other similar exclamations, 'This is the happiest day of my life -- the happiest hour. I am ready to go this moment, or ready to stay. O, how would I preach if I could preach now!.. but a faint idea can be conveyed of that solemn but joyful hour. Altogether it was such a scene as is seldom witnessed on earth. It was the full triumph of faith. An impression was made on the minds of all present which can never be obliterated. The language of all seemed to be, 'How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'

"Tuesday, the 22d. -- 'O,' he said, 'I want rest; this pain and suffering make me long for rest.' Mrs. J _____ said, 'This will no doubt make the heavenly rest more sweet.' 'O yes,' he replied,

"Sweet as home to pilgrims weary,
Light to newly-open'd eyes,
Flowing springs in deserts dreary,
Is the rest the cross supplies;
All who taste it, shall to life immortal rise." '

"The last evening of his life he saw Mr. W____, who only remained with him about three minutes. Mr. Budgett, however, used that short time to the best purpose; he said, 'I am going the way of all flesh; but bless God, I'm ready. I trust in the merits of my Redeemer.' Then alluding to the near prospect of his dissolution he said, 'I care not when, or where, or how: glory be to God!' In the morning... they watched his eyes gently closed, and without a struggle or a sound, his spirit winged its way to that haven he had so long desired to reach!

'They look'd:
He was dead;
His spirit had fled:--
Painless and swift as his own desire.
The soul undress'd
From her mortal vest,
Had stepp'd in her car of heavenly fire,
And proved how bright
Were the realms of light,
Bursting at once upon the sight.' "

Farewell, patient reader, our task is done! May God bless thee! May he give thee bright days, tranquil nights, and a happy end! And when he opens the GREAT BOOK wherein all our lives are written, O may it contain a good account of thee!

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THE END