

bination of P and J. As the narrative stands we have at once references to, and neglect of, distinction between clean and unclean beasts, different numbers of animals of each species received into the ark; different causes and a different statement of the length of the Flood itself; two quite homogeneous narratives will result, if, out of chaps. 6-8, we take out the following:—6, 9-22; 7, 6-11, 13-16a, 18-21 and 24; 8, 1-2a, 3b-5, 13a and 14-19. (A well-known instance of similar combination is to be found in 1 S 16-18, where David appears to be at once of mature age, 'a man of war and clever in speech,' and an inexperienced but daring shepherd lad).

The parallel in the Gospels that will most readily occur is probably the day of the Crucifixion, which the Synoptics identify with the Passover, while St. John clearly seems to make the Crucifixion come first. An instance of equal interest might be found in the accounts of Peter's denial narrated by all four Gospels, where for the sake of clearness we may simply combine John and Matthew. 'John spake unto her that kept the door and brought in Peter. Now Peter was sitting within the court, and a damsel came unto him. The damsel therefore that kept the door said unto Peter, Art thou also one of this man's disciples? He denied before them all, and saith, I am not. Now he was standing and warming himself, and when he was gone out into the porch another maid

saw him,' etc. (Mt 26<sup>71-74</sup>). Lastly, the question of Malchus' kinsman.

If we may thus argue from the New Testament to the Old we shall probably feel more clearly the uncertainty that inevitably follows from the theory of compilation to which all the phenomena of the parts of the Old Testament in question seem to point us; we would at least urge that to those who question the accuracy of the 'critical' results, their difficulty is connected with the compilation, at least as much as with the sources, and that before any of the analyses can be held to be final, we must at least consider what is involved in the synthesis.

It may be that as the Darwinian theory first had to fight strenuously for recognition, then seemed the final statement of truth, and is now felt to be in considerable need of being modified and supplemented, so the 'higher' view of the Old Testament, fiercely opposed and then accepted as authoritative, may be on the way to a further modification, which will prove to be a sign not of retrogression but of true progress; just as, after the assaults of the *inhaltliche kritik*, the accuracy of the narratives of the Old Testament is coming to be once more established. (See König's tract, *Die Bedeutung des Alten Testaments*. Leipz., 1901.)

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## The Poor Rich Fool.

LUKE XII. 21.

BY THE REV. JOHN REID, M.A., DUNDEE.

THE parable which closes with these words can never be forgotten. To hear or read it once is to remember it always. The story needs no explanation; its teaching is unmistakable. It is a story of judgment. Christ had such a man as He speaks of in view. Perhaps some of those who heard Him could remember the sudden death of a rich landowner whose unexpected end had been the sensation of a week. He passes judgment on his life. The man who lived and planned thus was a fool.

The parable explains how it is that 'a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth' (Lk 12<sup>15</sup>). It is a poor life

'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God' (Luke xii. 21).

whose possessions are outward and material. The life that is rich toward God is rich in itself. The life on which judgment was passed was poor and foolish, because it was not rich toward God. What did it lack? What qualities were wanting? What are the proofs of this rich man's real poverty?

1. The lack of thanksgiving. He was rich, and his ground brought forth plentifully, but his heart is never stirred by a feeling of gratitude. Never a thought of God as the giver of increase comes to his mind. He thinks only of 'my fruits,' 'my goods,' 'my barns.' He speaks only of him-

self. 'I' is his only councillor. Most likely he attributed his prosperity to his skill, his sharpness at a bargain, his wise planning, and anxious toil. Perhaps, like many another, he boasted of the little he had when he started life, and spoke of his present worth with pride. He did not see that God had any part in it. That of itself is a proof of poverty. 'A grateful mind is a great mind.' Thankfulness of spirit is one of God's treasures. It 'blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.' 'I will praise the Lord with a song. . . . This will please the Lord better than any ox or bullock which hath horns and hoofs.' It was one of the chief offences of the heathen and one great source of their errors that 'neither were they thankful' (Ro 1<sup>21</sup>). Pride and presumption are children of unthankfulness. Not to be able to see God's goodness is a greater lack than colour-blindness. It misses all the glory of life, as colour-blindness misses all the glory of the world. To be lacking in thankfulness means that we are poor in ourselves. To look at the gift and not at the giver is to show that we lack all the finer instincts of the soul. The thankless life is a poor life.

2. The lack of helpful service. The man is embarrassed with his riches. He has no room where to bestow his fruits. He takes counsel with himself as to what he shall do. In a flash the answer is found. He will pull down his barns and build greater, and there bestow all his fruits and all his goods. It is a resolve to 'stow,' not to 'bestow.' He will carry on business as before, but on larger lines. No other thought comes to him. But this, too, is a proof of his poverty. He has no idea of giving, only of getting; no idea of using, only of storing. He sees none of the possibilities that are in his hand. He has nothing to give to the poor; nothing to contribute to the temple or the synagogue. No wise large-hearted plan for elevating or enriching the people around him is cherished by him. Perhaps the houses of his servants, where men and women lived, and little children were born, were not equal to the old barns which were found too small for his goods. Power is in his hand, and all he can think of is to accumulate more of it. He is one of those of whom men ask when they die, 'How much was he worth? What did he leave?' They do not talk or tell of the use he made of his means, of the services he rendered by his riches. His 'life' consisted in getting. He has no higher conception of the use of prosperity than to store it in a barn. He saw not that all gifts are gifts for men, to be used as such in the service of God. He never dreamed of stewardship or service. He was 'like an ass whose back with ingots bows.' To have and to hold are his ambitions. He is 'a man of means,' too mean to

see his power. The plenty which came from his fields should have taught him better. The increase came not from stowing, but from sowing. Had he used his means as he used his grain, putting them out to service in the help of man, true riches would have come to him. He would have been rich toward God and rich in himself.

3. The lack of any worthy outlook or interest. What are his thoughts for the future? What hopes and plans does he cherish? 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' He plays with the thought of retiring from business. He has enough and more than enough. There is no need to rise early and toil late or endure the heat of the day. He will take life easily, will enjoy himself. He is his own Alpha and Omega. All is for self. He will 'eat and drink and be merry.' That is all. He will be a glutton and a wine-bibber. His pleasures are of the flesh. No higher vision dawns upon his soul. No interest in spiritual aims or objects suggests itself. God and the hereafter are absent from his scheme of life. 'Many days' is the limit of his outlook. Till those are ended he 'will eat and drink and sleep, and then will eat and drink and sleep again.' All his labour is for his mouth. This made life pleasant. This gave value to his wealth. It is a poor life—abject in its poverty. Man's grandest powers are atrophied. Man's highest interests are without interest to him. The soul of goodness, the love of truth, the gladness of helping, the joy of fellowship with God are no attractions. The life is so poor and mean that it knows not what it lacks.

4. In what he leaves behind him, and takes with him. He is summoned hence by the voice none can disobey. He had planned for 'many days,' and he has not even one. 'This night'—in the midst of plan and hope, the inevitable end surprises him. What does he leave behind him? His fruits, his goods, his barns. Nothing more. No one rises up to bless his memory. His mourners are few if any, though he may have had a grand funeral. He leaves no imperishable monument in deeds of kindness, or of helpful service, or in an honoured name. What does he take with him? Nothing of what he had. His treasures were of the earth, and the earth keeps them. He only takes his character, such as it was. And with that he entered the eternal world a beggar, and a fool.

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