

tion; and the prospect of this being conceded to the tenant is adding "cares" to those who possess the "acres."

Now the rich fool in the parable was like both the landlord and the tenant in this controversy. As his "acres," or at least the produce of them, increased, his "cares" increased too. "What shall I do?" he exclaimed. His very abundance caused his perplexity. On the other hand, there was one thing he wanted, or rather assumed that he possessed, and that was fixity of tenure. He thought his lands and his goods were his own, and quite forgot that he was but God's tenant, liable to "eviction" at any moment; and not arbitrary or unjust eviction either, for he had never paid his rent. He "laid up treasure for himself," but was "not rich toward God," (ver. 21;) that is, he had paid nothing into God's bank, and nothing stood at his credit in the books of heaven.

But before considering his case more fully, look at the occasion of the parable being spoken. Jesus has come out of the Pharisee's house after his delivery of those solemn denunciations of Pharisaic hypocrisy, as described in my last Note. "An innumerable company of people," "treading one upon another," (ver. 1,) surround him as he addresses the immediate circle of disciples. The fact has spread abroad among them of his having been in open conflict with the ruling party, and the victory seems to remain with him. Surely, thinks one man, if the Prophet of Galilee thus rebukes the hollowness of the scribes and the oppression of the lawyers, (vers. 39 and 46 of chap. 11,) he will rebuke my grasping and selfish brother, who has my share of our patrimony and wont give it up. "Master," he says, "speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me."

Why did Jesus, instead of rebuking the brother, rebuke him? First, it was a mean taking advantage of the influence of Jesus for his own private purposes. The man reminds me of certain Chinese "inquirers" who sometimes come to our missionaries. The Chinese, with some good qualities, such as industry and frugality, are—as California knows so well—a money-getting people, emphatically "of the earth, earthy." To Mr. Moule, an English missionary at Ningpo, once came an apparently sincere and genuine "inquirer." They conversed a long while, the visitor showing the greatest interest in all Mr. Moule told him of the Gospel. At last he said, "Now, may I ask one question more before I leave?" "Certainly." "Well, have you any employment for me?" The missionary, dumb with bitter disappointment, could only bow him out in silence. The man thought to make a gain

of Christ's religion; which is exactly what the applicant in our passage thought.

But then, secondly, he was rebuked for having—just like the Chinese—his heart set upon earthly things. Here was the Son of God, the Almighty Saviour, or if he did not know that, at all events a teacher come from God with messages for his soul; and all he cared for was to get his property from his brother.

And do not we often need similar rebukes? How often do the thoughts of worshippers in the sanctuary run off to their daily business or home cares! How often do men plead that their business leaves them "no time" to attend to religion? How often, on the other hand, do men make a religious profession to help forward their earthly connection? Even boys and girls, will they not attach themselves very piously to the teacher with an eye to special favours?

Truly we all need the warning, "Take heed," literally, keep guard. Have strict watch kept day and night, for the enemy is very swift, very subtle, very strong.

"But I am not covetous," pleads one; "I want nobody else's goods, only my own." Just so; but is not that what the applicant to Christ wanted? "I wish for no more," says another, "I am quite content; I have not a spark of covetousness." But did the rich fool want more? Was he not going to stop amassing wealth and rest upon his gains? The fact is, as I pointed out in this same passage two years ago, covetousness is not the same thing as coveting. Covet nothing else, but set your heart on what you have—that is covetousness. On this, however, I will not dwell again now. Let us look at the rich man in the parable from another point of view.

God calls him "FOOL." It would be an interesting exercise for our scholars to search out the various passages of Scripture in which this word occurs, and also the cognate words, "foolish," "folly," etc., whether used by man or by God. I can only here mention that the Greek word in this place (which is not the most common one) is the one used in the old Septuagint translation as the equivalent of Nabal in 1 Sam. 25; and Nabal's history is curiously like the story in this parable, as we shall see if we look at the three ways in which the farmer in the parable was a "fool."

1. He ignored God, and counted his possessions his own. Five times in three verses he uses the word "my." "My fruits," "my barns," "my fruits," "my goods," "my soul!" So was it with Nabal, (1 Sam. 25. 11.) "My bread, and my water, and my flesh." "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Psa. 14. 1. So was it with Israel in the days of the kings; and