

LESSON XII.

THE RICH FOOL

September 16, 1900

Luke 12: 13-23. Commit to memory vs. 19-21. Read Luke 10: 38 to 12: 34.

13 And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully;

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down

Revise! Version—¹ Out of the multitude; ² Bid my brother divide; ³ But; ⁴ Keep yourselves from all; ⁵ Reasoned; ⁶ Not where; ⁷ Corn; ⁸ Om! and; ⁹ Foolish one; ¹⁰ Is thy soul required; ¹¹ And the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? ¹² Be not anxious; ¹³ Nor yet for your body; ¹⁴ For the; ¹⁵ The food; ¹⁶ The body than the raiment.

EXPLANATION

Rev. Prof. Z. Alcorn
Connection—We have here another most instructive incident. These chapters of Luke are full of the conversations of Jesus during His Perean ministry (See Lesson X.), as He sought to make clearer to His disciples and the people the true nature of His Kingdom. The time was short; His death was not far distant. Every hour has its new revelation of truth.

13. One of the company; not a disciple. Master; Teacher. Said unto him; recognizing that Jesus was someone more than common, but caring no further than to work his own worldly scheme. **Divide the inheritance.** The law said one third to the younger, two thirds to the elder. (Deut. 21: 17.) In case of dispute as to how the flocks or cattle should be divided in this proportion there was a tribunal; but the consent of both parties was necessary.

14. Man; a stern word, conveying a rebuke. **A judge or a divider;** umpire, arbitrator. Jesus had higher work to do. He came to give men good hearts, not to arrange their worldly concerns. If the hearts are right, these concerns are usually easily regulated.

15. Said unto them; turned the stumbling block into a stepping stone. **Keep yourselves from all covetousness** (Rev. Ver.); all violations of the Tenth Commandment. The warning is very frequent in both Old and New Testaments. (See 1 Tim. 6: 10-17.) Balaam (Deut. 23: 4), Achan (Josh. 7: 20, 21), Gehazi (2 Kings 5: 20, 21), Judas (Matt. 26: 14-16), Demetrius (Acts 19: 24-27) are Scripture examples. **Consisteth not;** a definition. To "live well" generally means a fine house, rich food and good clothes. Jesus says a man may have all these and know nothing of what life really means. A man's "life" is what he is, not what he has. It is the man, not his belongings.

my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body what ye shall put on.

23 The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

16, 17. Plentifully. Not the rich man's doing: it is God who gives the increase. (Ps. 104: 14-16.) **What shall I do?** A common perplexity of the wealthy man, how to invest his surplus. (Abbott.) Riches bring much care. Notice the number of "I's" and "my's". (Compare 1 Sam. 25: 11.) The man was an egotist, as is every man who leaves God out of his scheme of life.

18, 19. Build greater. With us it would be, buy another farm, build a block of houses, purchase some new stocks or shares. He counted out God and God's poor and needy ones and God's great work of saving the world. **Say to my soul.** Says Basil, "What folly! Had thy soul been a sty, what else couldest thou have promised it?" He would live the life of a mere animal.

20. But God said. It is not so easy to get rid of God, as men sometimes seem to think. **Thou fool;** a witless or senseless man. The "fool" of Ps. 53: 1, is "an empty person." The two are twin brothers. The man who leaves God out of his reckoning is a fool, though in the eyes of the world, a very clever man. **This night;** instead of "many years." (v. 19.) **Thy soul . . . required.** The end is just at hand. **Then, whose shall those things be?** High scorn. They may be anybody's; they certainly shall be his no longer.

21. Layeth up treasures for himself. A poor man may be as guilty of this as a rich man. It is not the amount. It is the spirit. **Rich towards God.** For the meaning, see Matt. 6: 19-21; 1 Tim. 6: 17-19; Jas. 2: 5.

22, 23. Take no thought; literally "be not drawn in different directions," "Be not anxious" (Rev. Ver.). Worry is both sinful and useless. The true way is Ps. 55: 22; 1 Pet. 5: 7. **The life is more than the food.** (Rev. Ver.). "First things, first," should be our rule.