

self and not for God; his crime is not even that he is rich, but that being rich, he is not rich towards God; that is to say, that he has not used his riches for God's honor and glory.

And is this unreasonable? No! rich man! it is not unreasonable; if you look at it but for a moment by the light of revelation (which is only higher reason) you will see that it is not unreasonable. For who gave you your riches? Yourself? No! for you had nothing to give yourself; naked you came into the world and naked you will go out of it. Your own exertions? No; for thousands have worked as hard as you, and have still remained poor. Your saving habits? No; for saving habits will not avail when God chooses to take away. All Job's privations, all Job's saving habits could not stand out against the plagues with which God chooses to afflict him. Who then gave you your riches? God and God alone. Besides in our parable the riches of the rich man are expressly set down to Almighty God, they are the result, we are told, of a bountiful harvest, and it is God, who gives the harvest. "The lands of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruit." If then God gives he has a right to impose conditions on his gift; and he has done so; and the condition is that you "love your neighbour as you love yourself." But how did the rich man of the parable love himself I pray you? Did he not eat, drink, and make good cheer? And so then he was bound to do to his poor neighbor. As he eat, drank, and made good cheer out of his abundance, so he was bound by the terms of his contract when he accepted his riches from God, to make his poor neighbor to eat, drink, and make good cheer out of his superabundance. But he did not do this. Though he would eat, drink, and be merry himself he would not that others should eat, drink, and be merry likewise. And God said unto him, "Thou fool—this night do they require thy soul of thee. He had violated his contract then—and that contract was with God. God had been bountiful to him on condition that he should be bountiful to others—therefore did God take away his riches from him by taking him away from his riches. He had defrauded his poor neighbor because he would hide

his riches from him in his new barns—therefore did God summon him to the bar of divine justice to give an account of his soul. He was not "rich towards God." You know, Christian Soul, what that means. You know that Christ has accepted acts of love done to our neighbor as done to himself. "Come ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink. * * *" "Lord when did we see thee hungry and gave thee to eat?" * * * And the Lord said "Amen I say to you every time you did it to one of these my least brethren you did it to me." You know all this. To be rich then towards one of these, his least brethren, is to be rich towards God. But this poor man had been rich only to himself and not to God.

But clinging to all hope you may perhaps say—the sentence of this parable does not of necessity mean that the rich man was condemned to hell. It calls him a fool it is true; and it calls upon him to appear that night before the tribunal of the just Judge, but it nowhere follows up the sentence of eternal condemnation.

Ah! Christian Soul, how slender a reed you would lean upon! In Sacred Scripture the word fool almost always implies a mortal crime. It is for this reason why the calling your brother a fool is threatened with hell fire, because it implies the accusing him of a grievous crime. When, therefore, God calls the rich man in our parable a fool, he implies that he is guilty of grievous sin.

But if you would have further proof let me lead you to the valley of Josaphat. Behold the whole human race, the whole of mankind that have ever been born or ever will be born here standing trembling in that valley to hear the sentence of their eternal doom—heaven or hell for eternity. A buzz, a murmur, a deep wave of joy has just thrilled through those, who have been placed on the right hand, for they have even now heard the award of their good works in those blessed words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father; possess ye the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning." But then, alas, what do we hear? In loud commanding accents