



LUKE 12: 1-34

The Gospel of Luke

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For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

Luke's gospel is a compilation of various interviews with eye-witnesses and close followers of Jesus (Luke 1:1-4). The author, Luke, probably did not become a Christian until several years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He is first mentioned (implicitly) in Acts 16:10 (Acts is another book of the New Testament which Luke wrote). He did not, therefore, meet Jesus in the flesh and he himself was not an eye-witness.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Luke 12: 1-34

Douay Rheims Version

*Christ warns us against hypocrisy, the fear of the world
and covetousness. He admonishes all to watch.*

1. And when great multitudes stood about him, so that they trod one upon another, he began to say to his disciples: Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.
2. For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed: nor hidden that shall not be known.
3. For whatsoever things you have spoken in darkness shall be published in the light: and that which you have spoken in the ear in the chambers shall be preached on the housetops.
4. And I say to you, my friends: Be not afraid of them who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do.

5. But I will shew you whom you shall fear: Fear ye him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you: Fear him.
6. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?
7. Yea, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: you are of more value than many sparrows.
8. And I say to you: Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.
9. But he that shall deny me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.
10. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but to him that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.
11. And when they shall bring you into the synagogues and to magistrates and powers, be not solicitous how or what you shall answer, or what you shall say.
12. For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what you must say.
13. And one of the multitude said to him: Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me.
14. But he said to him: Man, who hath appointed me judge or divider over you?
15. And he said to them: Take heed and beware of all covetousness: for a man's life doth not consist in the abundance of things which he possesseth.
16. And he spoke a similitude to them, saying: The land of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruits.
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 my barns and will build greater: and into them will I gather all things that are grown to me and my goods.
19. And I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thy rest: eat, drink, make good cheer.
20. But God said to him: Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee. And whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?
21. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God.
22. And he said to his disciples: Therefore I say to you: Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on.
23. The life is more than the meat: and the body is more than the raiment.
24. Consider the ravens, for they sow not, neither do they reap, neither have they storehouse nor barn, and God feedeth them. How much are you more valuable than they?
25. And which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?
26. If then ye be not able to do so much as the least thing, why are you solicitous for the rest?

27. Consider the lilies, how they grow: they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these.

28. Now, if God clothe in this manner the grass that is to-day in the field and to-morrow is cast into the oven: how much more you, O ye of little faith?

29. And seek not what you shall eat or what you shall drink: and be not lifted up on high.

30. For all these things do the nations of the world seek. But your Father knoweth that you have need of these things.

31. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice: and all these things shall be added unto you.

32. Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom.

33. Sell what you possess and give alms. Make to yourselves bags which grow not old, a treasure in heaven which faileth not: where no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth.

34. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

35. Let your loins be girt and lamps burning in your hands.

36. And you yourselves like to men who wait for their lord, when he shall return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately.

37. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Amen I say to you that he will gird himself and make them sit down to meat and passing will minister unto them.

38. And if he shall come in the second watch or come in the third watch and find them so, blessed are those servants.

39. But this know ye, that if the householder did know at what hour the thief would come, he would surely watch and would not suffer his house to be broken open.

40. Be you then also ready: for at what hour you think not the Son of man will come.

41. And Peter said to him: Lord, dost thou speak this parable to us, or likewise to all?

42. And the Lord said: Who thinkest thou is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord setteth over his family, to give them their measure of wheat in due season?

43. Blessed is that servant whom, when his lord shall come, he shall find so doing.

44. Verily I say to you, he will set him over all that he possesseth.

45. But if that servant shall say in his heart: My Lord is long a coming; and shall begin to strike the men-servants and maid-servants, and to eat and to drink and be drunk:

46. The lord of that servant will come in the day that he hopeth not, and at the hour that he knoweth not: and shall separate him and shall appoint him his portion with unbelievers.

47. And that servant, who knew the will of his lord and prepared not himself and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

48. But he that knew not and did things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes. And unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required: and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more.

49. I am come to cast fire on the earth. And what will I, but that it be kindled?

50. And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized. And how am I straitened until it be accomplished?

51. Think ye, that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, no; but separation.

Provide yourselves bags which wax not old. Wax not old, and from which, therefore, the coin of spiritual alms cannot drop out and be lost, as the money of the world often falls from the old and worn-out purses of the rich. The purses that wax not old are the bosoms of the poor, and more especially the mind and memory of God, in which He keeps as in a purse your alms and good works, that He may return you the most ample rewards for them in the day of judgment. This He Himself explains, adding, *a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth.* From this Chrysologus rightly concludes, “What have they to do with the earth who possess heaven—what with human affairs who have gained divine ones—unless, perhaps, they find pleasure in lamentations, choose labours, delight in dangers, love the most cruel deaths, and find the evil things that are brought upon them more pleasing than the good ones?”

Ver. 34.—*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* This is a conclusion from the former, showing why our Lord said, “Sell that ye have,” namely, that you may show that your heart is not in your money but in heaven. If, therefore, you place your treasure gained by alms-giving in heaven, you will show that your heart is fixed in heaven, not on earth—in God, not in gold. For a man’s treasure is that which he loves—holds dear—values at a great price, on which he rests his hopes. See Matt. vi. 20.

appears that “flock” (pusillus) is here put in the nominative instead of the vocative as is done in other passages. This nominative is more forcible and significant than the vocative would be. Wherefore, although we might explain it by adding something, *e.g.*, Fear not, you who are a little flock, that the nominative might remain, yet the nominative is more tersely and strongly put for the vocative by adding nothing. Fear not then, O ye faithful, for although you are a little flock, God estimates you highly, and has a great and peculiar care of you, and Christ the Lord is your shepherd, who will feed you abundantly, according to the words, “I am the good Shepherd” (S. John x. II), and the others (Ps. xxiii. 1, 2), “The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing!—“He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.” S. Peter Chrysologus (*serm.* xxii.). “A small flock to the world is a large one to God;” and (xxiii.) “Humility has gained what pride lost, and the little flock has subdued entire and various savagenesses (nations) by its meekness; for the little flock conquered and destroyed as many kinds of beasts as it subdued nations to the yoke of Christ. It did this not by bearing but by suffering, not by fighting but by dying for Christ.”

It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. To you who are not slow, not idle, not presuming on the mere mercy of God, but who hear My words and truly obey them; who therefore bear your cross after Me, mortify your passions, and are continually zealous in good works. “To give,” not absolutely, but upon conditions—namely, that you persevere in My faith and love and in obedience even to death—for to Judas, who afterwards apostatised from Christ, the kingdom was not given. Christ gives the reason why the disciples, though a little flock and poor, should not fear lest needful things should be withheld from them, for He says, “Since God so loved you as to destine you for heavenly riches and the kingdom of God, He will assuredly not refuse you these worthless earthly riches, as far as they are necessary for your journey towards the kingdom of heaven, and that you may adorn it by your life and conversation.” So S. Cyril, in the *Catena*, “He who has given you gifts of such great price, how will He be not merciful to you but suffer you to perish of hunger?”

Ver. 33.—*Sell what ye have, and give alms.* This is a counsel, not a precept, as Pelagius would have it, who said that all Christians ought to be poor, from the precept of Christ. This is shewn by the words of Christ (Matt. xix. 21), “If thou wouldst be perfect, go sell that thou hast and give to the poor.” That you may study evangelical perfection, sell what you possess and give the price to the poor, that you may follow Me who am poor in spirit in a like poverty, and with me despise earthly riches, that so you may obtain heavenly ones. Do this with the end that you may show yourselves not anxious for food and raiment, but that you depend solely on God, and look to Him for all those needs of life which He Himself has promised to all who seek His kingdom. For this reason the first Christians, following the counsel of Christ, sold all that they had and laid the price at the feet of the apostles, that they might distribute them among the poor believers (Acts ii 3, 4). So Bede: “Fear not that you will lack the needful things of life, but rather sell what you possess for alms. This is done worthily when he who lives by the labour of his hands, despises all things, and gives alms.”

52. For there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided: three against two, and two against three.

53. The father shall be divided against the son and the son against his father: the mother against the daughter and the daughter against her mother: the mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

54. And he said also to the multitudes: When you see a cloud rising from the west, presently you say: A shower is coming. And so it happeneth.

55. And when ye see the south wind blow, you say: There will heat. And it cometh to pass.

56. You hypocrites, you know how to discern the face of the heaven and of the earth: but how is it that you do not discern this time?

57. And why, even of yourselves, do you not judge that which is just?

58. And when thou goest with thy adversary to the prince, whilst thou art in the way, endeavour to be delivered from him: lest perhaps he draw thee to he judge, and the judge deliver thee to the exacter, and the exacter cast thee into prison.

59. I say to thee, thou shalt not go out thence until thou pay the very last mite.

Ver. 1.—*In the mean time when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people.* The Greek has “the myriads of the multitude.” A myriad contains exactly ten thousand, and is consequently taken for an innumerable multitude, as here.

Ver. 2.—*Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees.* Beware, says Bede, that you do not imitate the hypocrites, for the time will certainly come when both your virtue and their hypocrisy will be revealed to all. I have explained the remainder on Matt. x. 26.

Ver. 13.—*And one of the multitude said unto Him.* My brother is injuring me, for he wishes to seize the whole of our father’s property, and he will give me no share of it. Command him therefore to do me justice, for Thou by Thy authority canst do this with a word, which I cannot effect by many suits and much litigation. For it is Thy office to defend the right and assist the oppressed, for Thou art the Lord of justice.

Ver. 14.—*But He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?* The word “man” is a Hebraism for an unknown person, as in chap. xxii. 58, Peter said, “Man, I am not,” and v. 60, “Man, I know not what thou sayest.” The meaning is, This is a matter of the courts which dispose of secular questions: it has no part in Me, who teach and dispense a heavenly heritage. Christ does not here deny that He has judicial power, for He was the King of kings and the Lord of lords; but He wished to use His power over a covetous man to cure him of his greed, and to teach him to prefer heavenly to earthly things, and to give way willingly to them,

according to His own words, vi. 29, "From him that taketh away thy cloke withhold not thy coat also." "He rightly sets aside earthly things," says S. Ambrose, "who came down to us for heavenly ones. Hence this brother is rebuked not undeservedly, for he would fain have occupied the dispenser of heavenly things with those of earth." At the same time He taught that ecclesiastics and spiritual persons ought not to meddle with secular things, but to employ themselves in divine ones, as S. Paul says, 2 Tim ii. 4, "No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life." So S. Ambrose, Euthymius, Bede, and de Lyra from S. Augustine (*serm.* 196)—that is, unless the faithful have any suit; secular Bishops in former ages used to settle these, as S. Augustine says that he has done. *Lib. de Opere Monachor,* c. 29.

And He said to them, "as well to His disciples," the Syriac says, "as to the multitude," especially to him who had spoken about his brother dividing the property, *Take heed.* In this contention of brothers how much ill was caused by avarice. Whilst one from avarice refused to divide the inheritance, the other, with too much cupidity and out of all season, urged the division. Strife and dissention arose among them. Not only should we guard against the lust of seizing what is another's, but also from too great cupidity to get possession of what is our own, for they who are too eager for earthly riches, neglect heavenly ones. S. Augustine, in his 28th *Sermo. De diversis:* "Not only is he avaricious who seizes what is another's, but he also who covetously keeps his own." The Arabic has, "See and beware of all evil—for avarice is the cause of all evil," as in 1 Tim. vi. 10, "The love of money is the root of all evil."

For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. That is, it is not because a man abounds in riches that his life is abundant, so as to be longer and happier on that account, for it is shortened and made unhappy from the anxiety and luxury which attend upon great wealth. The Syriac version has, "Life is not in the abundance of riches;" the Arabic, "Man has not abundance in his much wealth"—that is, abundance does not prolong our lives, but rather shortens them. Theophylact says, "The measure of life is not contained in its abundance. For he who has great possessions does not live longer for them, nor does length of life attend upon the multitude of his riches;" and Euthymius, "Not because a man abounds in riches, does his life abound from such abundance. The measure of his life does not depend upon this." The meaning is, Thou, O man, who greedily seekest a heritage from thy brother, seekest it that thou mayest live long and comfortably. But thou erreth; for the rich, from their cares and the gluttony they indulge in, often pass short and miserable lives. If thou wouldest live long and profitably, despise money, be poor in spirit, entrust thy hopes and wealth to God alone, for He is the only giver of length of life and happiness. To show this Christ adds the following parable. S. Augustine, *On Abel and Cain,* i. 5, at the end: "If thou seek treasures, choose the unseen and hidden, those which are to be found in the highest heavens, not sought in the veins of the earth. Be poor in spirit and thou shalt be rich by every reckoning; for the life of man consists not in the abundance of his wealth, but in virtue and faith. These riches make us rich indeed, if we be rich in God."

Ver. 16.—*And He spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.* The ground in the Greek (χώρα) means a large extent of

says, "Be ye not anxious." For all things point in this direction, that Christ will remove from us too great anxiety as to our support and clothing, and will impress on us a sure confidence in God by which to look with certainty to His Fatherly providence for all these things. The Greek word μετέωρος conveys the idea of one whose mind is in doubt and suspense and is unfixed, who will judge by the result, and is, as Gaza calls it, "wavering" (pensilis). Others render it, "Do not look out from afar off," or as we commonly say, Do not make a long discoursus, as though you would have no room for a Divine Providence, or as if you doubted of it. And F. Lucas: Be not over-anxious, as looking out with anxiety for what may happen in the far distant future, and taking thought long before for your future bodily needs, and looking forward in the distant times to come with solicitude about your food and clothing, as S. Matthew clearly explains it, "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow," vi. 34. All these words tend to the same point, forbidding us to show too great anxiety for the future, and directing us to resign it into the hands of Providence; to trust in it and securely rest upon it. Following this precept of Christ, S. Thomas wished and ordered all his brotherhood to live for the day and reserve nothing for the morrow, but to give what was over and above their day's need to the poor; as being confident that God would provide for the morrow, as He did to Elijah and Paul the first hermit, sending them food daily by a raven; and as the children of Israel, who were certainly three millions, were fed daily in the desert with manna sufficient for their support, which was rained down upon them from heaven for forty years, while their clothes remained undamaged and perfect and even grew with the growing children.

Ver. 32.—*Fear not, little flock.* Fear not lest your food and raiment fail you, and lest, if you lay aside all anxiety and sell your goods and give to the poor, these things should not be added to you; if you seek firstly the kingdom of God. "Little flock,"—little, because, firstly, the faithful were so few and these poor either in position and property, or in election and feeling, or in spirit; for they despised the riches of the world that they might strive after those of heaven, and therefore, they were little in the eyes of the world, they were of no account, and were despised. But now that the faith of Christ has so spread throughout the whole world, that kings and princes are subdued to it, it is no longer a little flock but a most ample and powerful church. Secondly, the flock of faithful men is little if compared with the angels who are without number, says Euthymius, according to the words, Dan. vii. 10, "Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him."

Thirdly, The flock is little if compared with the immense multitude of unbelievers and wicked. Bede adds, "It is called a little flock either on account of its humility or in comparison with the greater number of the reprobate. Then all the faithful, from the example of Christ, will willingly reduce themselves to Christian humility and poverty, especially the apostles and disciples of Christ. Hence Christ says, 'Sell that thou hast.'" It

love and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him,” 1 John iv. 16. “If you have love you have God. What has the rich man if he have not love? If a poor man have love, what has he not? You think him rich perhaps whose chest is full of gold; and is he not so whose conscience is full of God? He is truly rich in whom God deigns to dwell.” S. Augustine.

Lastly, The rich man toward God is one who abounds in every virtue. So S. Ambrose explains at length (*lib. iv. epis. 27*), to Simplicianus, whose words I have cited on 1 Peter iii. 4, “That which is not corruptible, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

In allegory. The rich toward God are the blessed who enjoy God and all His works. S. Augustine (*Serm. 74 de Temp.*) teaches that the blessed alone are happy, both because they possess God, and want nothing. “He,” he says, “is truly rich who wants nothing, but the blessed alone want nothing—the blessed alone are truly happy.” He says in the preface of Psalm xli., “Christ was rich to the Father, and poor to us—rich in heaven, poor on earth—rich as God, poor as man.”

S. Ambrose in his Epistle to Demetrias, wisely says, “By what price can the repose of this world be more fitly purchased than by the restoration to the world itself of all riches, all dignities, and all desires; and the purchase of Christian liberty by a holy and happy community by which the sons of God, from having been poor will be made rich, from patient will become brave, from humility be exalted?”

Ver. 29.—*Neither be ye of doubtful mind.* (The Greek and the Vulgate say, “Be ye not lifted up on high.”) Cornelius comments on this reading, this passage is explained in many different ways. S. Clement of Alexandria (*Pæd. lib. ii. 10*) says, “Be not led away from the truth to wish for a higher wisdom than faith teaches.”

Secondly, S. Augustine (*Lib. ii. Quæst. 29, Evang. Quæst.*): “Be not puffed up with pride because you have much food and clothing. For to be proud of having abundance of provision, is like a wounded man boasting that he has many plasters at hand, when it would have been well for him not to have needed any.”

Euthymius: “Be not dragged down from lofty and heavenly concerns to earthly ones, so as to study and pursue not the former but the latter.” Theophylact: “Be not present but are always looking on to something greater.”

Fifthly and best: Be not anxious about the heavenly bodies over your head—the constellations of the stars and their courses—the shifting of the clouds—the breath of the winds, so as to judge from them of the future abundance or deficiency of your crops; as in Jer. x. 2, “Be not dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the heathen are dismayed at them;” and Eccles. xi. 4, “He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.” So Toletus, Vatablus, &c. Vatablus says, “Be not uneasy, as one who turns his face askance to the heavens from anxiety.” Be not wavering in your minds as a pendulum in the air, looking to human assistance in different directions, and not anchoring on the providence of God.” The Arabic version

land, a number of fields.

And he reasoned with himself saying, What shall I do?&c. Behold the care, behold the poverty of this rich man—he who is overflowing with wealth and receptacles has need of some place in which to store his goods. He is in doubt and perplexity, says Euthymius, as if he were really poor, though he is in truth wealthy. And S. Basil, in his homily on these words of Christ: “The earth did not return fruits but lamentations; for this unhappy man is afflicted quite as much as they who are oppressed by want, and he cries out saying, ‘What shall I do?’ Does not he who is in straits from his poverty utter the same words? and he who has to beg?” From all the good things that flowed in upon him he derived no gratification. They rather annoyed his mind and troubled him.

Ver. 17.—*My fruits.* “Did he not,” says S. Basil, “collect his crops and incur the reputation of avarice when he called them his own?” For how many dangers are there before the harvest is gathered in. The hail often beats it down, and the heat snatches it out of the very grasp, and rains suddenly rush down from the mountains and sweep it away.

Ver. 18.—*And he said, This will I do, I will pull down my barns,* &c. All the harvests collected in past years. He took counsel of his cupidity, not of his charity, which would have said to him, “Spend them on the poor.” “Dost thou want barns? Thou hast them in the bellies of the poor,” says S. Basil; and S. Ambrose (*Lib. de Naboth, cap. vii.*), “Thou hast storehouses; the bosoms of the poor, the houses of widows and orphans, the mouths of infants. Let these be thy barns, and they will last thee for ever.” S. Basil again, in the homily above: “He is a despoiler who, when he receives what he ought to dispense, considers it as his own. The bread thou hast is the bread of the famishing, thy robe is the robe of the naked, thy silver that is buried in the ground is the silver of the indigent: wherefore dost thou wrong so many poor whom thou mightest support?” He adds, “And, when thou hast filled thy barns, what wilt thou do with the harvest of the following year? Wilt thou pull them down again and build new ones for ever? Thou wilt always be consuming thy substance and thy wealth in pulling down the old and building new, that the fruits which sprang from the earth may return to it again. Thou wilt not bestow them upon the poor, because thou enviest others the use of them, and thus, when earth restored them again to thee, thou deprivest all men of their benefit, nay even thyself; for as corn, falling into the ground, brings gain to the sower, so thy bread, if thou gavest it to the hungry, would bring thee much profit hereafter.”

And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. This rich man again errs and commits sin. First, in promising himself very many years, when he was to die that night. He who promised himself a long life did not see the following day,” says S. Gregory (22 *Moral* chap.

6). And S. Cyril, in the *Catena*, “Thou hast fruits in thy barns, O rich man, but whence hast thou many years?” Secondly, in giving himself up to gluttony and luxury, saying, “Eat, drink, and be merry like an Epicurean.” For after death is no enjoyment.

Take thine ease. To the plague of avarice is joined that of sloth, says the Gloss. “If you had the soul of a sow,” says S. Basil, “what else could you propose for yourself?—you are so brutish, so ignorant of the soul’s good, that you indulge it in carnal gratification.” Being wholly of the flesh, you make yourself a slave to its lusts. An appellation worthy of you, was bestowed upon you, “Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.”

S. Ambrose (*Lib. ii. de Interpell. in Job c. 5*) says wisely, “A great incitement to fall away is an influx of prosperity. It makes us supine, puffs us up, causes forgetfulness of its author.”

Ver. 20.—*But God said unto him.* God said this, not in word but in deed, sending him a fever or some other mortal disease, and causing his conscience by this means to speak thus to him. “God said this to the rich man,” says Euthymius, “through his conscience, which, as he felt death coming upon him, said this to him.”

Thou fool. Because in thy plan, in which thou appearedst to thyself wise, thou now perceivest that thou wast a fool.

This night. “His soul, which would take no heed of light, and which was tending on to Gehenna, was taken in the night.” Gregory, *Moral., lib. xv. xi. II.*

Shall be required. (Repetunt, *απαίτουσαν*, Greek). They require: that is, God and His angels, who are His instruments, not by misfortune but by the just judgment of God, as if against His will.

Thy soul. “That thou mayest give account of all thy fruits and of the riches and other property which God has given to thee.” So Toletus. They seek it again, because thy soul does not die with the body, but is immortal; thy soul, too, is not thy own, but God’s, who breathed it into thee and entrusted it to thee as a sacred gift. Rightly, therefore, does He now seek it of thee again by a sudden death. Hear S. Jerome on the death that is imminent on all (*Ep.iii. to Heliodorus*): “Xerxes, that most mighty king, who overthrew mountains, who controlled seas, when he had viewed from a lofty place an infinite multitude of men and an immense army, is said to have wept, because after a hundred years none of those whom he then saw would be surviving. Oh, if we could ascend such a tower from which we could see the whole earth under our feet! I would show you the ruins of the world—nations in strife with nations—kings with kings—and, not the army of Xerxes alone, but the inhabitants of the entire globe, who are now alive, in a short space of time, passed away.”

And the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? “They shall not only not belong to thee,” says Euthymius, “they shall not be thine; but thou dost not know whose they will be—whether thy heir’s or a stranger’s, a friend’s or an enemy’s;—

and this increases thy grief.” S. James says, “They shall eat your flesh as fire” (v. 3); and S. Ambrose, “The things that we cannot carry with us are not our own. Virtue alone is the companion of the dead. Mercy alone follows us—and mercy alone gains abodes for the departed.” S. Augustine: “The purse contains that which Christ receives not” (*Hom. 48, inter. 50*). Well says the wise man, “What fortune has lent let her take, what nature has changed let her seek again, what virtue has gained she will retain.” See what I have collected from the Fathers on vanity and the perniciousness of riches on Isaiah v. 9.

Ver. 21.—*So is he that layeth up treasure for himself.* Such an end and such a death did the rich covetous man meet who had not laid up treasure toward God. It will be asked, Who is rich towards God? I answer—He who has by alms and other good works many merits and safeguards hidden up as treasures before God, and who day by day hides more, as the apostle teaches at length, 1 Tim. vi. 17 and following. See what is said thereon.

Secondly, “He is rich in God who studies to please God alone, who fixes all his hope and love on God, who rests wholly on Him, that he may be blessed by Him and made eternally happy.” “He is rich,” says the Gloss, “whose expectation is the Lord, and whose substance is with God.” “The rich in God,” says S. Augustine, “is poor in gold” (*Serm. xxviii. de verb. Apostoli*)—that is, poor in spirit, as St. Peter was when he said to the lame man, “Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that I give thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk,” Acts iii. On Ps. xl. he says, “When Christ was rich He became poor, that by His poverty He might make you rich. He enriches the truly poor, He brings the falsely rich to poverty. ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,’” Matt. v. 3. “Let us endeavour,” says Theophylact, “to be made rich in God, that is, to have trust in Him, that He may have our wealth and the granary of it, and not call our goods our own but God’s, and if they are God’s, let us not deprive Him of His own. This is to be rich in God, to believe that if I give Him all things and empty myself, nothing that is needful for my good shall ever fail me. God is my storehouse, which I will open and take from it all of which I have need.”

Thirdly, He who is rich, that is liberal, in God, is charitable to the poor. For what is done to them God holds to be done to Himself and rewards it. “Let him,” says Bede, “who wishes to be rich in God, not lay up treasure to himself, but distribute his possessions among the poor.” The meaning is good, but it is not complete: for Christ is not speaking here exclusively of almsgiving, but of the true riches, which He declares to be not the fruits of the ground and the wealth of mines, but virtues and good works, for these procure us long life and blessing, as well in this world as in the world to come.

Fourthly, S. Augustine, in his 44th Discourse on the Temptation, teaches that “he is rich to God who is full of love and therefore of God.” “God is