

# YOU FOOL!

by Archibald Alexander

"**You fool**, this night your soul shall be required of you!" What harsh language, some will be ready to say. But it is true; and the occasion requires all earnestness. If you see your neighbor's house on fire, while he is sound asleep in his bed, you do not hesitate to alarm him with the most penetrating cry that you can utter. The reason in both cases is of the same nature, but much stronger in the latter, because the loss of the soul is infinitely greater than that of the body; the fires of hell are much more to be dreaded than any material fire, which can only destroy property, or at most, shorten life.

But why is this man called a fool? Surely he was not such in the world's estimation. He evidently possessed the wisdom of this world. He knew how to manage his farm successfully. If there was any defect in this respect, it was in not building his barns large enough at first. Often enterprising, industrious men run far before their own anticipations. Wealth flows in upon them, so that they have more than heart could wish. This man, no doubt, had labored hard, but now thinks of taking his rest, and entering on the enjoyment of his rich possessions. He said to his soul, "Take it easy, eat, drink, and enjoy yourself!" No cloud appeared in all his horizon to darken his prospects. His expectation was, not only rest from labor, and ease from trouble; but actual enjoyment in feasting, and unceasing mirth.

The course of this farmer and his success are the very objects at which thousands are constantly aiming. They look no higher; they ask no more than he possessed. How then was he a fool? Will not the epithet apply as truly to most of the people in the world? If this present world were our only state of existence, it would be hard to prove the folly of such a course and such sentiments. Then men might with some show of reason say, "Let us eat and drink--for tomorrow we die." If this were all of man, and death the end of existence, the scene will so soon be over, and all joys and sorrows so soon buried in eternal oblivion. **If there were no hereafter**, of what account would it now be, whether the thousands of millions who have inhabited this globe were sad or merry while they lived?

The utter folly of this worldling, and of thousands like him, consisted in this--that being the creature of a supreme Being, he neglected to

serve him, and took no pains to secure his favor, or to arrest his wrath. The folly of this he must have felt when God spoke to him and said, "This night your soul shall be required of you!" Oh, what a sudden interruption to his plans of future pleasure. What! Must he give up all his possessions—his fields loaded with ripe harvests, the fruit of his anxious toil? In a moment his fond dream of feasting and mirth is terminated. God, his Maker, calls for him, and none can resist his command. "And who knows the power of his anger?" His soul is required. His account, whether prepared or unprepared, must be rendered. "Give an account of your stewardship." Show in what manner you have improved the talents committed to you. What good use have you made of the riches conferred on you?

Poor, wretched man; what can he say for himself? What justification can he offer for a life of disobedience and forgetfulness of God? Where now can he turn? Where can he flee for refuge from his angry Judge? Alas, there is no escape! His riches cannot profit him now. The whole world could not redeem his soul from destruction; and while his heirs are striving about his great wealth, his soul is writhing in unending anguish! Careless reader, take heed lest this be your case! You are in the same condemnation!