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A table of contents for *Scripture* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_scripture-01.php

his quotations ; it was enough for him to be confident that he too had the spirit of God (I Cor. vii, 40), the mind of Christ (I Cor. ii, 16).

C. LATTEY, S.J.

What is the meaning of the word "poor" and the phrase "poor in spirit" in the Old and New Testaments?

The Italians, I believe, have a proverb, "Traduttori traditori" (literally, "Translators are traitors," i.e., to their authors), which it is worth while always to bear in mind, for it is often impossible for a translator to express the precise shades of meaning in a great author's mind, or the melody of his sentences. Words are not mere counters, to be exchanged at will between languages ; rather they are the centres of a cluster of connotations, which do not follow them from language to language. Thus, to give a rough but obvious example, our English enthusiasm for sunshine (with the consequent figures of speech drawn from it) does not appeal so strongly to the oriental, who may be sure of three or four months of scorching heat every year, with its partially bad effect upon vegetation ; nor do we quite understand his enthusiasm for rain.

Hebrew has a word which I may write simply '*ani*', translated in the Brown-Driver-Briggs dictionary, "poor, afflicted, humble," thus showing the difficulty of translation. The same word is found in a slightly varied form in Aramaic, the closely related language spoken by our Lord. The word implies a resigned state of mind *besides* an external condition of poverty. Perhaps "under-dog" might illustrate it, just as (to use a rather remote comparison) "inwards" would be far superior to "all that is within me," etc., if it were still refined English.

St. Matthew, then (or, to be more accurate, the translator of his Aramaic original), has added "in spirit" to the Greek "poor" in Matt. v, 3, in order to bring out the implied internal disposition ; but it must be remembered that a rich man, however much detached in spirit and able (by a sort of spiritual miracle : cf. Matt. xix, 23, etc.) to save his soul, is not here in question. The Lucan parallel (vi, 20) does not of itself imply any internal disposition, though it must be understood from the context. It is in fact one of St. Luke's characteristics that he stresses the danger of riches and the blessedness of poverty well borne ; he alone, for example, has preserved the parable of Dives and Lazarus (xvi, 19-31). No sin is explicitly imputed to Dives, nor is it said that Lazarus practised virtue ; the only explanation offered by Abraham is that after death their positions are reversed.

It does not follow that the poor may not make reasonable efforts to better their position ; excesses of wealth and poverty are alike dangerous to the body politic. Within prudent limits the Church encourages voluntary poverty, but not absolute destitution.

C. LATTEY, S.J.