No. 105.

On the parable of the barren fig tree.

6/29/1821
Behold then 3 years. If a fig tree
in this fig tree, I find none, I cut it down.

Luke xiii. 11. 10. - The parable of the

The first circumstance, which we are led to notice
in the journey of our soul through this parable, is
concerning the parable is that it is remarkably
appropriate & lovely for the occasion, and it forms
a striking contrast with the stern & mighty
utterances that are conveyed to us through the
manner.

We are informed that at that time some were
present, who told of Old Balaam, whose God
Balaam had mingled with their sacrifices, &c,
whom Balaam, the Roman governor, had gallstones
with a band of soldiers, & put them to death,
while they were offering their sacrifices. 

I want to know.
this deed of cruelty and perfidy. It is supposed that
had rebelled against the Roman government when
Cata took the opportunity, while they were engaged
in religious services, to kill them to the last.
But the purpose, for which the Jews assembled, the fact
of x is apparent. They wished to see what remarks
he would make upon it, if done, to expect that
he would join with them in considering it, as a
terrible judgment of heaven upon the unhappy
Jews. But they were disappointed. Instead of
the barbarous conduct of Cata into an occasion
of reviling these, who had so cruelly suffered, with
his usual wisdom he avoided himself of this
opportunity to convey hisinstruction, and showed that
were present. Supposing," he said, "that these
Jews were owners above all the Galileans, be-
cause they suffered such things? Do you think the
their unhappy state is to be considered as a judgment
of God, while there are many of their countrymen quit
as guilty as they are, who have escaped?" I shall give
you now, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise
perish." Look to yourselves, talk not of these gall
beans, but consider what you are not bringing up
yourselves, as terrible a fate as they met. But let them
mention another fact, to illustrate his instructions. A
turn in Sabbath had fallen in, and in its usual expe-
cen men. On this tragical event, Jews makes the same
remark as when the other, of divine, from it the same
morning, except ye repent." And there, in saying
me should remark in his printed a happy ama-
ne i sai ed as the despairs even commonly
manhandled the interpreters of particular events, as
judgments of heaven. We are very apt today
to suppose, that certain things are providential
because they happen, we wish them to happen.
Long as the moral government of the God of
times in its usual course, we take no notice of its ex-
cept, even tenous. But every thing extraordinary
sends the attention of each duration from the commu
faith draws our eager notice. There is a strong distinc-
tion in the world, to regard uncommon calamities
suffering, especially if it be traceable to those whom
dislike, as the pecuniary investment of divine justice.
We seem to imagine, that God makes bare the arm
of his power, to punish those when we hate. Thus
are the使人 reason: if this mountain are ever
home to reason. But it is one of the most preva-
tious things, to the human passions, that we
unravel the dealings of Providence in this light.
me is warranted to assert, that any particular act
is a judgment of heaven. We are much too apt to
regard, as regards of man, thus to rush into the counsels
of God, in deal out with a bold hand the lightning
of his displeasure. It is not for us to say, that he
what our sufferings are the mark of the anger of God.
He sometimes causes us, that as there
as human hearts can be, if the deep shade of despair
rest upon a spirit full of devotion & submission. We
know there are certain consequences in the moral
government of the. All follow certain courses of con-
duct. Thus inimical spirits are followed closely
disease of misery. But the concern between exterior
their consequences takes place in a natural way, 3.
Besides this, we interpret particular events as parac-
judgments, we may así once the fault of the Jews
when our Saviour, addressed, 3 to us might be applied.
column mention, "excepting only, we shall all like
wise perish." But to turn to the passage of
more under consideration; after all, it had concluded
years not to draw erroneous inferences from the distinc-
tion of the Jewish dispensation. The proph-
cally to apply his instructions still more forcibly.
parable, for his design is to represent the state of the
Jewish nation. The owner of a vineyard is described as
seeking fruit from the vines, 4 years of after fruitless.
If therefore orders the vine dresser to cut down the tree,
because it was a mere inconvenience to him. The
vine dresser, however, intercedes for it, 3 days that the
owner would not, after the effects cultivation.
then when the boughs tree—perhaps by the diligent use
of these means, it might thrive; if it did not, he
would then consent that it should be destroyed?

In this emblematical representation, by the fig tree par
identity intended to describe the Jewish nation. Like the
tree, they had been bowered in the secure of life. Their
standing Jehovah had placed them in his vineyard. He
had in vain sought for fruit. Why, after great, they were
deserted, rebellious, resolute. He sought, and was
ed by their ingratitude and ingratitude. And is represented as
determining to destroy them. But the hand of mercy en
ternoes, & He foretold the day of judgment. He is willing to
try what effects may be produced upon his errant
people, by the application of gentler means, by
remedies short. But this was to be the last trial. If
after that they bore the fruits of righteousness, it was
well; if not, they were to be cut down as unfruitful
branches. In this latter part of the parable, one plain
ly alludes to himself, as the Redeemer, & to the nature
design of his mission, as being the last effort to redeem
us from the path of destruction. He intended for his own
people, & he had an earnest desire for their reformation
of the people. The intercession of 
in this place, represents
by the redeemer's saying, I let it alone this year; con
verted, probably, in earnest prayers for the mercy of heaven,
when the Jewish people, spiritually in the most ungodly
able laborers to convert, to reform the nation. Ohs
never was the act of intercession; for it was designed to
render them fruits at last, subjects for the favor of heaven.
Thus this nation was one long pleading for the Jews. Here
darkly, his desire, the path for the approaching judgments,
many destructions of the Jews, is manifested in the im
possible lamentation. How often would I have gathered
the children together, as a hen gathereth her young
under her wings. If ye would not. Canst thou fathom the
he who falleth thus, should be represented as entirely
for his people? or, but as now observe the peculiar face
of the whole parable in this occasion. It is the same
as saying to the Jews: upon, who talketh with earnest
self-mailing of the destruction of these gallant yrs
The men of Sodom consider their unhappy state as the judgment of God, you are at least as guilty as they; you are like a bower figtree, with the stones coupled. No fruit, you are like his punishment yourselves; it is only the mercy of God, that now holds back the bend. I appeal upon the blessings of his love to you, yet further measures for repentance are necessary. But if these fail, what more can you do? Instead of considering the Galileans, whom Christ ministered to, as outcasts from Heaven’s favour, remember, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Such was the original design of this parable. It was applied as a season of national trial, as the Jews were to a people. But the instruction it conveyed may be considered, I should be considered, in the light of eternal truths. Each one of us, at the present day, has an interest in the solemn, oratory lessons thus bound in our ears. Note the text: 4. We, like the figtree in the parable, are planted in the vineyard. This is the problem of our moral advancement. God has planted us in his spiritual vineyard where the ways of his mercy shine; if the doors of his love be closed, open the soil; if it be not fruitful, it is our crime your condemnation. The means of the twentys are placed within our power; if we employ them, the reward of improvement will be ours; if we neglect them, the recompense of negligence will be as certain.

The moral vineyard, if I may so call it, in which we are located in this world, is made up of several parts, each of which has its appropriate use and importance. One part consists of the natural powers of faculties of our minds, the moral perceptions of feelings, and for that reason, as an expression of the display of the Spirit in the works of creation, in the course of the government of the world. Man has the capacity of discerning the true good of evil, of choosing the one, avoiding the other; of the use of this capacity constitutes a part of his moral discipline. The exercise of reason, the cultivation of the affections. God has implanted within his
had them to the knowledge of many duties, to the conviction of their obligation of importance. They teach him that he is not made for himself alone; but that He has linked him by a thousand bonds to the beings around him, so that each one of these ties should become a branch to bear the fruits of benevolence in humanity. And beside the forces of preserving moral distinction, of acting accordingly, man has the capacity of raising his thoughts to God, of stretching his narrow life in infinity. He can trace the footsteps of the all in his creator, of nature with holy administration on that track of light of glory, which marks the path of commerce. He can perceive that there are duties, springing from the relation of the creature to the creator, that a being like man, he is dependent, and, hence, should adore the powers that support him, and for his mercies, obey his laws. Such are some of the powers with which God has enriched man; they constitute a portion of the moral means and advantages, with which we are endowed. They may be, in many cases, the least of buried under the influence of force, they must feel the moral judgment, instead of answering the purpose for which they were bestowed, may be converted into poverty, but this does not prove, that they were never bestowed. Make not, however, stop here. The secret garden, part of the moral vineyard, in which we are placed, consists of what God has here reared through the agency of Jesus. It is the height of the glorious Gospel, that will most effectually warm of those the green in which we are planted, if the waters of Zephaniah will best nourish the strength of the roots of every virtue. All these, the Hispanic countries are peculiarly placed in the vineyard of God. They have bright discoveries of the character of perfection of the Deity, they see more clearly the high and mighty course of leading for the moral improvements of the world; they have more or less certain objects to fasten all this.
Thus doth he affect us, as they have infinitely brighter, more glorious hopes, of infinitely richer, more abundant consolations, in view of heaven, the glory of God shines with peculiar luster, because it is reflected from the face of Christ. He is thus the vine, acting as the vine-dresser in the vineyard. He is representative as sustaining this office, because He has enlarged, improved the means of fathoming our duty of destination, because He came in the name of the Most High to cause us to the time and purpose of our existence, to make us more fit subjects for the favor of God. This world is one of the vineyards of God, for the raising up those who shall become the children of heaven. But before our barley this vineyard had fallen into a state of ruin and destruction. The soil had become harsh of cultivation, the land grassy moved upon it. Where is there theThumbnail of the wild plant that had taken root, since daily encroaching yet further, of absorbing all the nourishment around.

But as now, came to make this vineyard yield the trees of better fruit, to raise from it a harvest, of for heaven. For this purpose, He has communicated instructions, hopes of warnings on the earth to God himself, that we might be assured to answer the great purposes of our existence. Thus we see that man, whether he considers him merely as an essence with reason of conscience, or as enlightened by the blessed gospel, is a moral being, destined to a moral end, and supplied with moral means. This in itself lessens the true state of the case with regard to man; there is no secret, irresistible influence, which compels him to be good or base; he is a moral agent acting on his own responsibility; he may receive the aid of heaven if he seeks it aright, but it will not be forced upon him. Such, how is the vineyard? In the parlour represents us as planters: a vineyard of spiritual and spiritual means, privileges, a vineyard on which there are all the helps to spiritual needs, means may be or neglect, according as we are
verse, intestingly disposed.

2. We are to take notice of the meaningful fact that the fig tree, in spite of all the endeavors of the vineyard, was barren. Though he had planted it under the most favorable circumstances with the best situation, yet when he came to seek the fruits which he had a right to expect, he found none. And where are all those, who, recognizing God's ways, yet unfaithfully a picture of our own negligence and blindness? Notwithstanding, the Lord has placed us in the vineyard. These just described, though he has created us with a capacity, he has surrounded us with the means of improvement, though he has given us the light of nature and the blessings of grace, through his Son, he has afforded us all the help and aid not a being born for immortality can need; yet if we were ever to seek moral fruits upon us, do we continually to ourselves that he would find few, very few, compared with what sorrows ought to have yielded? Where is he, who has not been, though not entirely, yet in some degree, born to be blest.

Those, who are delighted in the discharge of all the duties of their station, who fulfill the duties of their station, who are, as it were, God's men in this land of generation, will we secure the gratitude of mankind with the approbation of God, will be seen to glorify his name. When they die, they leave an image of their kind, and of their own friends have the richest consolation in the belief that they are gone to receive a crown proportionate to their envolement in this world. But all men of mankind, of those who seem seldom to remember their moral accountability, or who forget their lives, as if they had forgotten that God was their Father? Are there not too many, who stand in society like the wild fig tree, occupying room, yielding no fruit? And is it for this that God has sent us into the world? Oh! the sorrows of others brand something as the consequence of all he has done to improve of us. For wh
verse unnecessarily disposed.

D. We are to take notice of the meanful fact, that
the fig-tree, in spite of all the endeavours of Whose
of the vineyard, was barren. Though he had planted
it under the most favorable circumstances, yet the last
situation, yet when he came to seek the fruit which
he had a right to inherit, he found none. And shew
us how, and receive the poor fololee for a picture
of our own negligence (blameworthiness) With a
the A has placed us in the moral vineyard. But as
past described, though he has created us with a ca-
city of translated as with the means of improvement,
though he has given us the light of nature and the
words of grace, though he has bid us, he has affixed
us all the bonds and not a being born immor-
tally cannot see, yet if we were new to seek moral
fruit in us, constant, continual. To confess, that he
would find for us, and yet compare the result against
ought to have yeilded

When is he, who has not

seen, though not entirely, yet in some degree, know
of the graces of a life? It is almost impossible
to say, how much less we do now than least since, the
are mighty; because one or perhaps has ever done all that
he could. The most unforgetable/grieve drawn of
for all, it leaves many an opportunity of change be-
coming good unimproved, if many are not thus
might advance his own eternal interests or those of others
unattempted; given he has lost the close of life, bas-
on to promise that he has stood in this vineyard so
long a time to suit the fruit. Whether this be true of
best of men, what shall we say or think if the great
mass of mankind, if those who appear seldom seen to
remember their moral accountability, of who farther
takes, as if they had forgot, that God was their preser-
ter? Are there not too many, who stand in society like
the without tree, occupying room, and yielding no fruit.
And is it for this that God has not set to the world
Chris. the remainder all hands something as the conse-
quence of all he has done to improve of less and. The other

...the great and immovable prophecies of eternal spiritual growth. Will not consent that we should spend life without any reference to moral or spiritual objects? That we should receive rays from heaven, from the good angels, to the noble man, who knows not in doing nothing the precious powers of existence, his never trace given to the mere name of life is simply innocent, merely free from some of the holy, he does not and else he does not pool to them are all his energies of power in noble, of patient parents, to whom no more he can be the dancer of the All, than the chief of heathendom of the mountain can learn of the need of form of more than all. to him who gives this soul to abundant objects, who lives without God, in the world, who tends all his thoughts of affection on superficial objects, to all these may be addressed the strongest own question, whyumber the ground? And in one or another of these classes, too large a proportion of the world may he found, perhaps indeed there are very few, who do not in some degree, however slightly, partake of them all. Will not God not hardly in cutting down the broken tree. He is willing that the woodman should dig about it, use every means to make it fruitful. One year more it may yet be spared. If still another enwronment is to be made, if another opportunity allowed. And that is in the moral government of the All, as of the Doy. Negligent, unrepentent, if broken as we may be, God will grant to another of another year, he will want to gather from the ends of the world, he gets to control, and with the aim of giving it type for improvement and culture. The presence of the All in his government of the world is so common, of nature as it is truly, that as either power, above or below, is not it. And yet perhaps there is no one, who thinks seriously of it, not that being astonished at the beauty of the divine administration. He who reflects candidly on the world, for which he is sent into the world, remembered how welle...
of that purpose comparatively he has accomplished; and remembers all his wasted time, his neglect of opportunities, his abuse of advantages, his weakness, his folly, and the little he has done to imitate the spirit of his Saviour, such as one, in such an hour of reflection, with doubtless wonder, that he is still allowed to stand in the vineyard, if that the owner is still giving him time to yield fruits. It is much greater forbearance than men are willing to practice with each other. We are quick to punish our enemies or abuse in those, to whom any important trust is committed. But God has committed to us a far more important trust, than one man can commit to another. Though we are too often unfaithful to the charge, we are still trusted. If the day of grace is not closed upon us. Yet this very unfaithfulness is frequently the means of confirming men in their impiety or vice. It is because God is so good, that they think the day of his justice will never come. Every one probably has had occasion to remark the truth of Peter's remark, that "because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of men are more fully set in them to do evil." Strange, that while God foresees the time, we should go on deadening men's consciences more and more, in justification as our Heavenly Father is more kind. "Be merciful then," says Paul, "as God is merciful than the riches of his grace, by forbearing long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God is designed to lead thee to repentance."

Let it be our duty to repentance. Let us strive to bear such fruits as God may look on with approbation. Such my hopes is the instruction afforded by the

parable of the barren fig tree. It becomes us most seriously to examine ourselves, to see whether we are not numbered among the servants, whether we have not brought in the vineyard, where God has placed

us,

us.
If one is seeking fruit upon us, does our heart tell us, we would find none?
If they do, let it be no longer; let us embrace the day's last moment of opportunity, and
seek to escape ourselves from the bitterness of the future self-appointed failure. We must be
true to the gospel; we must be true to the Lord. We must be true to our own principles.

Another year—But even the longest time may be permitted to pass in the vineyard of the Lord.
There will be a time when the vine does not bear fruit, and we shall
self will entice us to leave; for the barren, the "if it bear fruit, well; if not, then after that
then shall cut it down."—Aug. 1829.

Is one seeking fruit upon us, may it not be our theme of condemnation, that we shall find none, if we
so not to be idle, so barren, that we shall be un

When the owner of the vineyard in which we are placed
comes seeking fruit upon us, may it not be our theme of condemnation, that we shall find none, if we
so not to be idle, so barren, that we shall be un

down as wanderers of the ground, but while one day after another of one year after another is allowed to us, may we to improve, that we shall bear fruit
for eternity. Save us from all self-deception, from all hypocrisy, and guilt; if make it seem to be records
as we have, spring...
At home, May 27, 1821, forenoon.
At home, Friday lecture, July 20, 1830.