No. 121.

The parable of the prodigal son.

"Where, my dear sir, shall we look to find a more admirable picture, than is here given, of the feelings of a returning penitent, of the willingness of God to receive that penitent, of the bitter fruits of sin, of the sad & sorrowful heart, with which it sends the sinner is sent back to seek pardon & acceptance? - The colours which compose this picture are these of eternal truth: always unsparing, always representing with fidelity that actually exists in life.

The general design of this parable is the same with that of the parable of the lost sheep..."
the beginning of the chapter. They are both designed to answer: the civil sience the maximosity of labor. by showing them that the moral yet,

of the lowest most abandoned is an object of great importance in the sight of Heaven; that the

lost sheep, when brought back to the fold, of the regaining prodigal son, are ministered to by every

friend and relative, crowned with a smile of approba-
tion by God himself. As I have already stated in

particular in a separate view of the subject, since
ordering the first of these passages, we may now
pass directly to the general instruction afforded by

that now before us.

1. Let us consider the conduct of the prodigal son.
He leaves his father's house to do an errand of pleasing his

arose of leisure. He asked for the portion of goods that

fate to him, if then went into a far country to

wave his substance with riotous living. All fancy

once I poorly staid him in the face, reduced him
to the deepest distress; sent him back benedict and

shameful. If we consider this without any refer-

tance to its figurative meaning, how forcibly does

represent to us the evil effects of prodigality? The

young man, on the right just dismissed for

the restraint of parental government, has the add

all before him, where to choose his way, is an ar
critical judgment or situation, if his danger is increas-

his hands are full of wealth if he is not compelled
to earn his subsistence by industrious exertion. Who

does not tremble for this aye adventure in the

sea of life? Who that has surveyed the sea, does

not fear that this youth should add another to the

numberless, who are floating, destined, to perish

around the rocks where guilty pleasure entangled

indulgence holds their empire? The existence of that

is indeed an exemplification of great importance: He

who stands there is to be aware how much depends

on the choice he makes. He may waste his substance

in various ways. He may govern the whole circle

of various consuming pleasures, tainting all. He

has already engaged for the same one of the

most gratifying, he may plunge into debauchery

in its various forms of not great vice, is
infancy of misery;
You were in the happy age of life.
The part of the soul may be the same.

But this view of the subject is too limited. Men to consider the boundless sea as representing causes in general, as being the source of their own fate, they become the slaves of their fate. If they have no fixed principle of action, if every good affection, in others living, be the result of chance, every indulgence in passion, in the want of temperate indulgence of passion, in the want of quietude and rest, in the want of all things, in all the objects of this world, without the moral law. The pure produce a sort of excellence in the moral law of the man. The strong and quiet organizes the soul, and in the moral law, the same that a storm is, on the material world. And he, who has once become its victor, who has given his soul to its promptings, stimulations, who has left his father's house, the abode of plenty, peace, of salvation.
redeemed himself in the guidance of this passion, he has given this feeling to the judgment under a sort of illusion, from which it may be long before he awakes. He becomes a vessel of false visions are continually floating before his eyes. Passions from his pleasure to another, in favour of what he desires, pleasure can afford him, happiness; but it is perhaps only in some what low and inferior, and his heart has still strength enough to make him voice heard, when there is nothing within him to make him turn a deaf ear. When he is taken so to speak, out of the current in the midst of the deluge stream, placed as it were in some retired nook where the water is still quiet. It is this that he begins to question with himself. Where is there one thing in these favours to which he has gone. His soul, that will render his account at the last day more black and fearful. Whether they are not all man's standard, lawless, disorder, and criminal. Whether they have not defiled, bewildered, degraded him; it is then, he begins to see that those pleasures to which he had trusted his felicity are nothing away from under them, that nothing but the sins of the cup, nothing but his sins are in the name of the last, are left to him. It is then that the cloud of his heart is obstructed his vision begin to roll away, and disappear, as bright shines upon him, that he that cannot see the God, who created. The heart to reconcile him. The heart is full with contrition, how can it be otherwise? And bitterly does he wish he had been wise in season. But all the time, the relations, the prodigal, even after: he had come to a consciousness of his wretchedness, poverty, did not immediately return to his father's house. It was too humiliating to go home and confess his faults; she was not sufficiently subdued to bring his mind to such an admission. He therefore struggles awhile to take care of himself as he can. Till at last, poverty itself from me press on hard, that he is melted into humility of his own. He bows out his heart to his father an acknowledge, and asks for pardon. This is one of them...
minute circumstances, and shows how strictly under 
address to nature in his figurative representations; 
that it is with mankind at large; even after we are 
awakened from the number of vice, how meanful ex-
perience has forced on us the conviction that we are 
made ourselves miserable by guilty, degrading indul-
gence. Till we feel a reparation at humbling our-
seles before God, confessing our transgressions, wear-
ing his pardon. It is long before the last remnant 
of stubborn pride leaves the heart even of the peni-
tent, she feels so completely devoted to helpless that 
she is willing to throw herself, not to the mercy of 
God. At first he hesitates, strives to evade,只为 
his pride excuses his nature for his sins; he will 
search for something on which he may set up 
idea of merit. If it is not until he finds that he 
resting on a broken reed of trusting to the pride's 
work that he learns to renounce all his pride, to be like 
himself cheerfully, heartily, to confessing acknow-
edgment, solely wholly in the free mercy of God.

to raise his soul to heaven in sincere prayers for for-
dassistance. It is then he utter that simple, heart felt 
ceremony of the prodigal: 'father, I have sinned 
against heaven and before thee; I am no more worthy 
to be called thy son...'

And after penitence had brought its perfect work 
appear, how was the prodigal son received? He 
puts on 24 tokens of confidence and 

He was not only welcomed to his father's house with 
joy and congratulating, but his father went out to 
meet him while he was yet at a great way off, not 
only to receive his son, but his heart was fell with 
overfling delight at his return. Nothing was 
wanting to move him to kindness, but the evi-
dence of penitence of contrition on the face of the 
prodigal. He had no vengeance to be satisfied, no 
anger to be appeased, no storm of wrath to break-
ed. The first indications of a wish to return were 
mot of encouragement, of the young nature, but was 
strongly amidst tears of sorrow for the past, most...
crushed and driven back by enervating terrors. The
tempting nature of engaging in the view of the scenes that
are in the heart. To me it would be impossible to
present a more admirable sketch of the free, unpre-
pared, unerring, unselfish, unselfish, unselfish, unselfish,
ness of God, than is delineated in this para-
phrase. He whose thine is on high, whose glory no
thought can comprehend, reaches forth the hand of
goodness, not only to receive, but to help thee. His
ere, the humble, the persistent. There is not any
one can read this parable, or then so present
Deity as invested only with terrors, as amongst all
mortal men, as in mortal excellency, the all of Christ’s delights in moral excellence,
whereas it is manifested, that not a word of fear
rises from the heart without ascending to his
theme, that not a step is taken by the wander-

that sincere, heartfelt, efficacious repentance,
so that inculcation of true repentance, necessi-
ty, the only conditions, is the only require,
tae, and he requires to secure his good
fathers. But while Scripture teaches us to describe this
But while Scripture teaches us to describe this
quality of repentance, we should be careful not to
exalt the nature of this repentance, mistake exaltation on
ness, as a selfish, ignoble,
We are not to consider it as a selfish, ignoble,
mental forms of sinning, as a selfish, ignoble,
ishes; he is determined to
ners, as the fear

condemnation. It is not that God is
penitence, but in a more full, because it cannot
the feelings of wicked with the parts
of Christ’s delights in moral excellence,
desire, whereas it is manifested, that not a word of fear

...
transgress, to acquire from day to day greater con-
mend over his bad passions, in confirming his resolu-
cion of good resolutions, in deepening, settling, the spirit of
his repentance, that leads to salvation; this is
the repentance that is meant, when we are taught
that it is all we require to gain this favor, one
and goes through the heart of resolutions, the heart of
the viscous man, a new being, with better views, mo-
times, shapes. Such was the repentance of the heart
of that man; it awakened such an effect in him that
he, who was dead, became alive again. He was for
who had been hurt. When we consider repentance
in this light, we see that the M. Parsons on
account of it, we see that the passion is greater
not to mere persons for sin, but to main excel-
ence, to the spring principle of purity, holiness
and has just taken root in the heart. It is
by a grant in proportion to the reformer, of the
arie, to the advancement attained. This is to be
suffered that forgiveness dispensed on such terms implies weakness or defects in the divine government. In human governments, it is true, the principle of hardening crimes on account of repentance could not be admitted, because human governments are defective of love and respect solely to outward acting all the province of thoughts, motives, designs, all the kingdom of the heart, lies beyond their ken, and that must punish him who commits a crime, however penitent, for it may be, that others may be deterred from committing the same crime. But these reasons cannot be the balance with regard to the moral government of the Deity, for his eye penetrates to the real character of the mind, that of each moral agent. If he cannot be deceived by external actions, he knows infallibly whether the repentance be sincere or forgery, whether it will light or the lips only that make the difference as his government must have reference to those of the individual, not to his conveniences with others, with deal with each one according to his un-
tudd of some very friends; but as soon as they men, who has been visiting since returns, he is received with joy, and all your liberality is bestowed upon them.

I say nothing of 65. I am not at the offers of the eldest son, the father, neither, that he was sensible of this merit, and had not forgiven his faithless behav-

ion in his esteem, nor disapproved his greatest expecta-

tions; but that on an occasion like this present, when a son was recovered as it were from the dead, it was natural to profess a joy proportionate to the happy event. — From this part of the parable, we are to learn, that one, however exalted his character or high their attainments, have any reason to look down with contempt on those inferior in virtue, who are resting on the faith of promise to better future views of glory. The sincere followers of him will never that him self-neglect, because others are ready to the same from themselves. Like a king of good son, he will lye led to become a returning brother; the see him return, again to the arms of their common father; and as the holy assurance that his own long trial of well establishment there will be remembered. Temporal, as the receives, has

will not confirm complaint, though another, who has long been a poor, dedicated, or vice, should be brought to repentance if he is taken back again to the holy offspr

ing of peace and he has set off. On the contrary, he will not give place to see me, who has been a child of darkness. I am brought to a house of holy right, you will gladly travel on together with him to eternity.

Such is the instruction furnished by the beautiful parallel of the prodigal son. Formed correctly in treat your curiosity of decent attention to this fine poten

of the sacred writings: for I know not where you can look for more affecting exhibition of the character of God in relation to man. We have seen the A, as not

stricted sense a father, exercising the most tender parental disposition toward the family of man. Here is no

angry, revengeful Being, requiring to be appeased. Dear

to the concept of satisfaction, and owing his grace from the gracing of treating prodigal. — Think, the use, what a blessing
we enjoy in that religion, it discloses to us such a God. Whether a parent, who has mourned over the apparent ruin of his hopes in a beloved son, or has awake tears of such bitterness as were but a price to be endured to see the end of a profligate child. If that son has returned to virtue, of broken off the chains of vice and habits, let them remember, with what solemnness the reformation of his child filled his heart, of what delight he welcomed the wanderer home. And when he remembers this, let him reflect that it is with such kindness that God, from his throne creates occasions of such great family gladness, who have gone away from his ways, that returning say, "Father, we have sinned against heaven and before thee." Who then, will refuse to obey this call, to embrace this mercy? Who would not rush to the arms of him standing on the confines of this another state of being, it may find him calm, strong, waiting for the hand of God, to be called to the dealings of peace?

June 1824.
At home July 8th, 1824. Forenoon.