



A

SERMON,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

FIRST UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY,

IN CAMBRIDGE,

ON THE

EVENING OF THE THIRD SABBATH

IN MARCH, 1824.

BY THOMAS WHITTEMORE, PASTOR.

BOSTON:

H. & A. BOWEN, PRINTERS.

.....
1824.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
Boston Public Library

SERMON.

LUKE, xvi, 19—31.

“ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.

“ And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

“ And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table ; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

“ And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom : the rich man also died, and was buried ;

“ And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

“ And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.

“ But Abraham said, son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things : but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

“ And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed : so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot ; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

“ Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house :

“ For I have five brethren ; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

“ Abraham saith unto him, they have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them.

“ And he said, Nay, father Abraham ; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

“ And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

IT is a command of our Lord and Saviour that we should *“ search the Scriptures,”* and of the apostle Paul, that we should *“ prove all things ; hold fast that which is good.”* Therefore, notwithstanding many learned and good men have advocated the doctrine of endless misery, and adduced the text as proof of it, we cannot receive it because they have believed it, nor our text as proof of it, because it has been used

as such. We receive no doctrine until we are convinced of its truth by the force of evidence. Whenever our views of Christian doctrine agree with those of our brethren of other denominations, we feel no small degree of pleasure in making it known; but we feel it our imperious duty to openly avow our difference from them, when their views seem to us to disagree with the plainest passages of scripture, and the simplest dictates of reason.

That part of the scriptures which we have selected as our text is said by many to be, not a parable, but a literal relation of facts. It is easy to see why they contend this is not a parable. If it is a parable, the proof it is supposed to contain of the doctrine of misery in the future state, is greatly impaired. Those things which Jesus used as figures of the reality, have been taken for the reality. A parable is not unlike a similitude; it is "a relation under which something else is figured." Our Saviour often spake in them. "He spake many things unto them in parables." Matt. xiii, 3. So common a thing was it for our Saviour to speak in this way, that Matthew has said of him, "without a parable spake he not unto them." xiii. 34. The most of you will recollect the beautiful and instructive parable of the sower, which our Saviour himself explained. The sower went forth to sow. "Some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up because they had no deepness of earth; and when the sun was up they were scorched; and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them. But others fell into good ground, &c." Now we do not think our Saviour meant that a man actually went and sowed seed in this way. Such an interpretation would destroy the idea of a parable. The doctrine which he meant to teach was, that the truth would be received in different ways by different people, and that it would produce different effects. See his explanation of this parable. Matt. xiii, 18—23.

We think that the text is a parable. The evidence of this, which we shall lay before you, is to us irresistible. But before we introduce this part of our subject, we will, for a moment, allow the text to be a literal relation of facts; and we will inquire whether, *allowing this*, it will prove either of the two great doctrines advocated by christians in general. One of these doctrines is that believed by Calvinists, viz. that God elected to his favor before the world was created, those who will finally be saved; and that he reprobated to his eternal ire all the rest of mankind. What does the text contain in favor of this doctrine? What do we find in it about election and reprobation? Are we informed that the rich man was reprobated to God's eternal wrath? Or that God hated him? Or that he loved Abraham, or Lazarus more than him? Are we informed that Lazarus was elected to God's peculiar favor? I cannot see one word in the text in favor of the notion, either of election or reprobation. How then does it afford this doctrine any proof? How can it prove that, about which it does not contain any thing?

The other doctrine to which I alluded, is that mankind will be punished and rewarded in the future state for the vices and virtues of this world. What does the text, understanding it literally, contain in favor of this doctrine? We read that the rich man was in torments in *hades*; but not because he had been wicked: and we read that the beggar was happy; but not because he had been good. I see no evidence in the text that the rich man was a very bad man, or that the beggar was better than he. We are not informed that the former obtained his riches improperly, or that the beggar did not become poor by his own negligence or imprudence. Is it a sin to be rich? Is it a virtue to be poor? It has been alleged against the rich man that he refused Lazarus the crumbs which fell from his table. Of this we can see no proof. † But allowing it, would this have been a very serious evil to Lazarus? The land which the Jews possessed at the time of our Saviour's ministry was

fertile, and ample provision was made for the poor. But we are not informed that he was refused the crumbs. Lazarus laid at the gate, "desiring to be fed with the crumbs," &c. So it reads in the common version. In the original it is *Και επιθυμων χορτασθηναι απο των ψιχιων*. The word *επιθυμων* rendered *desiring*, might be here translated *delighting*, as it is in other places. The passage would then read, Lazarus was laid at his gate full of sores, and *delighting* to be fed with the crumbs, &c. Elsner, as quoted by the learned and orthodox Mr. Parkhurst, in his Greek and English Lexicon, explains this passage in this way. And Elsner observes that the LXX have so applied this word, *επιθυμων*. We have an instance of this in Isaiah lviii. 2. "Yet they seek me early, and *delight* to know my ways as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God : They take delight in approaching to God." Elsner quotes in support of his position the authority of Lysias. Now if this be correct, the rich man did not refuse Lazarus the crumbs ; but on the contrary, Lazarus had them, and delighted to be fed with them. How then will the text prove that men will be punished in the future state because they are sinful in this world ? I repeat, I see no evidence that the rich man was a very bad man. The prayer which he offered to Abraham is a manifestation of a good spirit. How much better could Lazarus or Abraham have prayed had either been in the rich man's situation ? The rich man prayed, that his five brethren might be warned, and prevented from coming to that place of torment. Abraham seems at one time to be accounting for the rich man's torment ; but he says nothing about any previous wickedness in him. "Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things : but now he is comforted and thou art tormented." He did not say, remember thou in thy life time wast wicked, but Lazarus good.

Another inquiry properly coming before us is, does not the literal sense of the text pointedly disagree

with the notions of those who contend that it is *not a parable*? We often hear that those who go to hell never have one holy feeling; no desire for the company of the blessed; that they spend their time in blaspheming God. Was it so with the rich man? Do we read of his blaspheming God? No; but we read of his offering up a prayer, and a very good one too. "I pray thee therefore father," said he, "that thou wouldest send him (Lazarus) to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." Did he not in this language breathe forth a good desire? Did he not have a holy feeling? Abraham, when speaking of the great gulf, said it was fixed "so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot: neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." Here two things should be noticed. 1. There were some with Abraham that would go to the place of the rich man; but could not. And, 2. There were some with the rich man who would go to the place of Abraham; but could not. It appears from this that there were some in hell who had a desire for the company of the blessed, and would have gone to them, had it been in their power. And we learn, furthermore, that hell cannot be so dreadfully hot a place as it has been represented to be. For if this were so, the rich man we should think would have called for more water than Lazarus would have carried on the tip of his finger. And suppose the common idea of a devil be correct, how would he be pleased to have so benevolent a prayer as that of the rich man, offered up in his dark dominions? The *literal* sense of the text disagrees very much with many people's notions of the future world.

Now let us turn to Abraham and those with him. It is commonly supposed that those who are in heaven are serenely happy and perfectly reconciled to the will of God. We have already shown that there were some in the place of happiness who would go to the rich man; but could not. They were not, therefore, perfectly happy, inasmuch as they were desirous

of doing that which they were not permitted to do. Neither were they reconciled to the will of God; for it was the will of God that they should not go, and he had made the great gulf to prevent them. Wishing to do what was not permitted to be done, they were unhappy, and being unreconciled to God, they were wicked. If wicked, they must have been miserable. So we have one argument to prove that those who were with Abraham were wicked, and two that they were miserable. How will these things agree with the opinions of those who contend that the text is a literal relation of facts? Those who were in heaven were unreconciled to God, and those who were in hell were unreconciled to the devil. How can the text be explained *literally* by our opposers, and they maintain their present notions?

But it may be said, those in heaven were benevolent, sympathetick, and were urged by good motives to endeavour to relieve the distressed. But I ask, how could they be so ignorant of God's determination to punish the wicked eternally? And will it be said that they were better than God? Was not he as good, sympathetick and benevolent as they? Let those who interpret the text literally consider these things. Let them tell us why those in heaven wished to go down to hell. Was it to abide there? Was it to relieve some friend, some relation? Would some parent comfort his child? Some child, its parent? Some brother, a sister? Some husband, a wife? No, answer the orthodox, the saints say, Amen, alleluia, when they see the smoke of the wicked's torment ascend. How will those who do not allow that the text is a parable, surmount these difficulties?

Now allowing the text to be no parable, but a literal relation, what will it prove? It will *not* prove the doctrine of election and reprobation; it will *not* prove that men are to be punished or rewarded in the next life for their conduct in this; but it will prove that there was a man tormented in *hades* who was a good man in some respects, and for aught we know,

as good as any body else ; it will prove that those who are in heaven are both wicked and miserable, that they wish to leave the place and go to hell ; and it will prove that some notions which orthodox people have entertained for years are totally erroneous. Those who contend that it is not a parable, for any thing I see, must allow all these things.

But the hearer will say, that the text understood literally, proves that men will be punished after death. I answer, if we interpret it literally, and suppose the death of the rich man to mean the departure of life from his animal frame, then it will teach that one man was tormented in another state of being ; but whether it should be for one year, one day or hour, we could not tell. One thing is certain, it would not then prove the doctrine of *endless torment*, because the place, *the hell* in which the rich man was tormented *is to be destroyed*, according to the testimony of Hosea, “ *O hades, I will be thy destruction,*” (Hos. xiii. 14.) and of John, “ *And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire,*” (Rev. xx. 14.) and of Paul, “ *O hades, where is thy victory ?*” (1 Cor. xv. 55.) But if I may have the liberty of interpreting parables literally, I will engage to prove to you almost any thing. There is no intelligent christian who does not know that those things which Jesus used as figures of the reality, should not be considered the reality itself.

There is sufficient evidence, both internal and external, to prove that the text is a parable. We will briefly examine the internal first. It is stated in the text that the beggar was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom. Now I ask, can any one suppose that celestial beings actually, really carried a poor beggar and put him into the bosom of the patriarch Abraham ? No ; you say, this is a representation of heaven. Now you have interpreted the text as a parable yourselves. And permit me to remark, that I have all the right to interpret the whole text parabolically that you have to interpret any part of it so. You will see

that these people are represented as having bodily organs and powers with them. The rich man had eyes and a tongue, and Lazarus fingers. Can this be interpreted literally? Do disembodied spirits in the world to come have eyes, and tongues, and fingers, and the powers of speech, of hearing and of seeing? We do not profess to know much about spirits in another world, but we believe this is not the common opinion upon the subject. However, it belongs to those who say the text is not a parable, to show how this can be, to give some proof upon the subject; and to shew us how people in heaven and hell can converse with apparent ease from one place to the other.

The external evidence that the text is a parable is in the connexion in which it is found. We should maintain a proper connexion throughout our Lord's discourse. I see no way to do this, if we do not consider the text to be a parable. It is found connected with a number of parables, in Luke xv. and xvi.

In the beginning of the 15th chapter, we find a murmur which the scribes and pharisees expressed, because Jesus received sinners and ate with them. In the three parables which fill up the remainder of this chapter, viz. that of the lost sheep, lost piece of silver, and prodigal son, Jesus vindicated that part of his conduct of which they had complained. But in the last of these three parables, a character was presented which had not appeared in either of the others. This was the elder brother of the prodigal who was angry because the prodigal was received into favor, and who very justly represented the scribes and Pharisees; for they murmured because Jesus Christ received sinners and ate with them. These Pharisees rejected the gospel; and this is represented by the elder brother's refusing to go in to his father's house. In the parable of the unjust steward with which the 16th chapter is commenced, the same people are admonished for not making such an improvement of the law, as would introduce them into the

christian faith and church. The Pharisees being provoked at this, derided Jesus. After briefly describing to them their conduct, he says, "the law and the prophets were until John : since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Jesus then spake another parable, in which the folly of the Jews, in rejecting the gospel and adhering to the law, is represented by the sin of adultery. Then come the words of the text ; "There was a certain rich man," &c. What is there in all this connection which would have the least tendency to lead the mind to such a doctrine as that which the text is used to support? It has been justly said, "To suppose that he who spake as never man spake, abruptly dropped the subject of the end of the law dispensation, and the introduction of the gospel, or kingdom of heaven, and having no further allusion to this subject, proceeded to give an account of the sin of adultery, which account occupies but one verse, and then again flies directly from this subject, to give a literal account about a rich man and a beggar, in this world and in an eternal state, is so unwarrantable, and so derogatory to the character of the divine orator, that it is a matter of wonder that such an opinion should ever have been honoured with the consent of learned commentators." Ballou.

Having shown as I think that the text is a parable, I shall now proceed to shew you the true meaning of the word *hades* ; why our Lord spake of it as a place of torment ; and why he used it figuratively, as he undoubtedly did in the text. *Hades* is the word rendered hell in the text. "In hell, *εν τω αδη* he lifted up his eyes," &c. Its literal meaning is not a place of torment in another world : but the state of the dead in general, without regard to the goodness or badness of persons, their happiness or misery. This was the meaning of the Hebrew word *Sheol*, which the LXX have almost invariably rendered *hades*. *All men go down to hades at death, where they remain till the*

resurrection. It is said in the scripture that our Saviour's soul was in hell, *hades*. Not in a place of torment ; but in the state of the dead, the grave. But it was not left there, for he rose from the dead. See Acts ii. 27. In the Improved Version, the place where the rich man was, is called "the unseen state," and in Wakefield's translation, "the grave." These are their definitions of *hades*. Wakefield says, in his note on this place, "It must be remembered that *hades* no where means hell, *γεεννα*, in any author whatsoever, *sacred* or *profane* ; and also that our Lord is giving his hearers a *parable*, (Matt. xiii. 34,) and not a piece of *real history*. To them, who regard the narration as exhibiting a *reality*, it must stand as an unanswerable argument for the *purgatory* of the *Papists*. The universal meaning of *hades* is *the state of death*." Whitby, who was farther from being a Universalist than Wakefield, says, "Sheol throughout the Old Testament, and Hades in the Septuagint, answering to it, signify *not the place of punishment*, or of the souls of *bad men only*, but the *grave only*, or the place of death." He says, *Hades* is the place—"Whither we are all going." Old Jacob went there ; Job desired, yea prayed to go there ; Hezekiah expected to be there, for he said, "I shall go to the gates of Hades." Whitby further says, "The ancient Greeks assigned one Hades to all that died, and therefore say, *Hades receives all mortal men together, all men shall go to hades*." Doctor Campbell, a believer of the doctrine of endless misery, gives us the same account of *hades*. This then is what we must understand the word hell to mean, when it stands for *hades*, a place to which all men go, good and bad. We must not, when we contemplate it, look forward beyond the resurrection. All men will be raised from *hades* to incorruption and immortality. *Then hades* will be destroyed. Our word hell, in its original signification, perfectly corresponded to the definition we have given of *Hades*,

Now it does not ; with christians generally here, its meaning somehow has been changed : but we are informed, I believe by Dr. Doddridge, that the original sense of the word hell is now retained in the eastern, and especially in the western counties of England ; where to *hele* over a thing is to cover it. Hence says Dr. Campbell, “ *it (hades) ought never in the scripture to be rendered hell, at least in the sense wherein that word is now universally understood by christians.*” He says, that with the meaning of *hades*, “ the word hell, in its primitive signification, perfectly corresponded. For, at first, it denoted only what was secret or concealed.” The rich man, and the beggar, and Abraham, were all represented as being in *hades* together. We do not read in the text that one was in hell, but the other two in heaven. This differs materially, I know from the common opinion on the subject ; but I see no way to avoid it. The text says not one word to the contrary. Nay, it rather favours the idea. For otherwise, how could the rich man see Abraham and Lazarus ? How could he converse with Abraham, and how could Abraham hear him ?

As we have proved by the most respectable, orthodox authority that the literal and original meaning of *hades* is the same as the Hebrew *sheol*, signifying the state of the dead in general, the place whither we all go, whether good or bad, it remains for me to shew why our Lord spake of it as a place of torment. Let it be then remembered, that when our Lord was upon the earth, the minds of the Jews had changed with regard to *hades* ; they entertained different views of it from those they imbibed by reading the Old Testament. They had departed from that sense in which the sacred writers had used it ; and thought that ghosts of departed men would be punished there. They did not think that all who went there would be unhappy ; for they supposed it was divided into different parts, for ghosts of different characters. That

they did not learn this idea from the Old Testament is sufficiently obvious ; for no such idea is there. Dr. Campbell says, “ It is plain, that in the Old Testament, the most profound silence is observed in regard to the state of the deceased, their joys, or sorrows, happiness or misery.” They could not have learned it from the New Testament ; for this was not then written. Where then did they learn it ? Answer, From the idolatrous, heathen nations around them. In support of this I shall read you a quotation from the learned Dr. Campbell. He thus writes, Dis. vi. Part 2, Sect. 19. “ But the opinions neither of Hebrews nor of heathen, remained invariably the same. And from the time of the captivity, more especially from the time of the subjection of the Jews, first to the Macedonian empire and afterwards to the Roman ; as they had a closer intercourse with pagans, they insensibly imbibed many of their sentiments, particularly on those subjects, whereon their law was silent, and wherein by consequence, they considered themselves as at greater freedom. On this subject of a future state, we find a considerable difference in the popular opinions of the Jews in our Saviour’s time, from those which prevailed in the days of the ancient prophets. As both Greeks and Romans had adopted the notion, that the ghosts of the departed were susceptible both of enjoyment and of suffering, they were led to suppose a sort of retribution in that state, for their merit or demerit in the present. The Jews did not indeed adopt the pagan fables on this subject, nor did they express themselves entirely in the same manner ; but the general train of thinking in both came pretty much to coincide. The Greek *Hades* they found well adapted to express the Hebrew *Sheol*. This they came to conceive as including different sorts of habitations for ghosts of different characters. And though they did not receive the terms Elysium or Elysian fields, as suitable appellations for the regions peopled by good spirits, they took instead of

them, as better adapted to their own theology, the garden of *Eden*, or *Paradise*, a name originally Persian, by which the word answering to garden, especially when applied to Eden, had commonly been rendered by the LXX. To denote the same state, they sometimes used the phrase *Abraham's bosom*, a metaphor borrowed from the manner in which they reclined at meals. But, on the other hand, to express the unhappy situation of the wicked in that intermediate state, they do not seem to have declined the use of the word *Tartarus*." Here we have our question answered. On whose authority did the Jews believe that *Hades* was a place of punishment? Ans. On the authority of the heathen. Dr. Campbell says, "they insensibly imbibed many of their sentiments, particularly on those subjects whereon their law was silent, and wherein, by consequence, they thought themselves as at greater freedom. *On this subject of a future state, we find a considerable difference in the popular opinions of the Jews in our Saviour's time, from those which prevailed in the days of the ancient prophets.*" "The general train of thinking," says he, "in both (i. e. Jews and heathen) came pretty much to coincide." Now I seriously believe that it was to this opinion, that *hades* was divided into different habitations, peopled by good and bad spirits, that our Lord alluded in the text. Hence, both Abraham and the rich man are represented as being in one place, divided into different apartments by the great gulph. The Jews were tenacious of these ideas; and our Lord used them as figures of an important truth. And the reason why he spake in parables generally may be rendered why he spake parabolically in the text. He did not allude to their doctrine to recognize it as truth; no; and all the evidence we find in the text of the heathen's notions concerning *hades* is, that he used them as a similitude. In the parable of the sower, to which we have before alluded, Jesus used natural

things as similitudes of spiritual. We do not understand the figures as realities here, and we should not in the text. What intelligent man would infer from reading this parable, that a man actually went and sowed seed, some by the way side, some upon stony places, and some among thorns? Have we not proved that the text is parable? Have we not shown that literally it proves a doctrine which nobody believes? I ask then, by what just rule of interpretation this can be said to prove the doctrine of a future state of punishment? We have the opinion of the learned that this is a parable; we see nothing to prove it is not; and we then demand, why we should not adopt the same rules in explaining this that we do in explaining other parables? Parables, we all know, are figurative language. The truth taught is to be sought under the figure.

If the text be not a parable, it should be interpreted literally throughout. But this cannot be done, as we think we have shown. We, in this way, must receive the heathens' notions of *hades*; we must consider Abraham and Lazarus in hell, as well as the rich man, and this too with their bodies, with the senses of seeing, hearing, &c. &c. Who is prepared to admit this? Let it be then distinctly understood, that it is our opinion, Jesus used those views of *hades* parabolically, which the Jews had received of the heathen. He did not use them to recognise them as realities, any more than he did the figures and imagery of his other parables.

It has been justly remarked that if Jesus had meant to teach that *hades* was a place of punishment, he would have stated it plainly once at least. This he did not do. He hints it only, and then in a parable. And we should think if the Apostles had understood him as teaching that *hades* was a place of punishment, they would have preached it as such. This they never did. They spake of *hades*, but not as a place of punishment, or torment. Peter said, that Christ's

soul was there ; not in a place of torment, but in the state of the dead. These facts weigh so heavily on our minds that we esteem it unnecessary to say more, until some one shall attempt to shew that the text is not a parable ; and to invalidate the evidence we have given that it is. When any man feels disposed to contend for such notions of *hadēs* as the heathen entertained, as a doctrine of christianity, we will then meet him in a proper way.

We will now endeavour to show what our Saviour meant by the parable which composes the text. But here we should again consult the connexion. Just before our Saviour spake the parable, he said, “the law, and the prophets *were until John* : since *that time* the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” Here notice, that when Jesus spake these words the law dispensation was ended ; for that was “*until John*” only : “*since that time,*” says Christ, “the kingdom of God (the gospel dispensation) is preached.” “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.” By this we learn that the law could not pass away, without being fulfilled. We now come to the parable concerning adultery, which reads as follows : “Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery : and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery.” If the Jews had put away the law, and married another covenant *before John came*, they, in a parabolick sense, would have committed adultery. For infinite wisdom ordained that the law should remain “*until John.*” And it ordained that it should remain no longer. For “*since that time* the kingdom of God is preached.” The law was put away ; it was fulfilled ; “Christ is the end of the law ;” he came to close the first dispensation, and introduce the gospel. The Jews, by rejecting the gospel, and adhering to the law, committed adultery, as would a man

to marry a woman who had been put away by her husband. The parable upon which we are now discoursing immediately follows. "There was a certain rich man," &c. The same subject is continued through the chapter. In the text, the state of the Jews after the kingdom of God had been taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof, is beautifully figured in the description of the rich man's circumstances. I feel sensible that in the explanation of parables, too many have indulged themselves in the exercise of a flying fancy. We should interpret scripture by the help of scripture. I trust that without indulging in fancy, we can obtain the meaning of our Saviour in the text.

By the rich man the house of Israel was represented. They are frequently spoken of under the figure of a human being in the scriptures. God said by Hosea, "When Israel *was a child*, then I loved him, and called *my son* out of Egypt." Hosea xi. 1. "So the Lord alone did lead him, (the house of Israel) and there was no strange God with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock." Deut. xxxii. 12, 13. These are sufficient to shew that the posterity of Abraham are spoken of in the scriptures in the character of a man.

This man was rich. "There was a certain *rich man*." He was blessed with a land flowing with milk and honey. He had advantage every way, chiefly because unto him was committed the oracles of God. In Rom. ix. 4, 5, we have in detail an account of this man's riches. "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever, Amen."

This man was clothed in "*purple and fine linen.*" So Israel is represented in the scriptures as being clad. "I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badger's skin, and I girded thee about with *fine linen*, and I covered thee with silk. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver, and thy raiment wast of *fine linen*, and silk, and brodered work." Ezek. xvi. 10—13. "And of the blue, and *purple*, and scarlet, they made clothes of service, to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the Lord commanded Moses. And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen," Exo. xxxix. 1, 2.

He fared sumptuously every day. This was eminently true of Israel. God says, "thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil; and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom." The rich man's land flowed with milk and honey. He fed spiritually upon the knowledge of God, and upon the promises.

By Lazarus, the beggar, the poor Gentiles, excluded from the advantages which God's covenant people enjoyed, are represented. Paul details the poverty of the Gentiles. "*At that time,*" says he, "*ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.*" They were poor indeed. His being "full of sores," represented the moral condition of the Gentiles. By the death of the beggar is represented the Gentiles' release from their idolatrous worship; and his being carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, represents the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith of Abraham, by the messengers of God. The rich man died politically. He lost his riches, his purple and fine linen, his government, his city, and his existence as a body politic. He was buried. His going into outer darkness is justly represented by being buried. He died to light, and went into darkness. The poor died

to darkness and came forth to light. Hence he is not said to be buried. The rich man sees Lazarus in Abraham's bosom ; he sees fulfilled the words of Christ, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God."

The rich man calls upon Abraham, whom he addresses with the title of father. This is characteristic of the Jews. Abraham was their father ; and they seemed proud of their progenitor. Speaking to our Saviour, they said, "art thou greater than our father Abraham?" John told them, "think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our Father." Yes, they would be in favour with Abraham. They have disbelieved Jesus ; they have abused their privileges ; they have relied upon their national greatness, and the glory of their ancestors. When in distress they turned to Abraham for mercy. But their national greatness is gone, and the glory of their ancestors can afford them no relief. Abraham is represented as recognizing the relationship. He refers the rich man to his former condition, as well as to that of the beggar, and seems to give this as a reason why the former was tormented and the latter blessed. This is according to the equality of God's ways. The Jews had possessed a knowledge of God, and been blessed for a long time, while the Gentiles had been without hope, and without God in the world. Now the scene is reversed according to the appointment of God. "It was necessary," said the apostles to them, "that the word of God should first have been spoken to you : but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of

the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

The gulph which separates the rich man from Abraham and the beggar, deserves to be noticed. By this gulph we understand that purpose of God, in which it is determined by infinite wisdom, that the Jews shall not believe the gospel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. This was the subject of prophecy. Isaiah says, "who hath believed our report?" And John applies this to the unbelief of the Jews in the Messiahship of Jesus. John says, "therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." John xii, 38—40. Matt. xiii. 14, 15. Mark iv, 11, 12. Luke viii, 10. Acts xxviii, 26—28. Rom. xi, 8. The divine purpose in this, is consistent with God's impartial character. This blindness of the Jews is to bring about the conversion of the Gentiles, through whose mercy the Jews will at last obtain mercy. Paul, addressing one of the Gentile churches, says, "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy." Rom. xi, 30, 31. Of the unbelief of the Jews, the prophets had prophesied. When the Gentiles saw the prophecies fulfilled in the obstinacy of the Jews, they were convinced of the divine origin of christianity; they pressed into the kingdom of God. By the mercy of the Gentiles the Jews are at last to obtain mercy. Paul says, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, *until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.* And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Rom. xi, 25, 26. Although

the Jews are now shut out of the kingdom, we can easily perceive they are finally to be brought in. Jesus said unto them, "ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." When they will say this, we are not yet permitted to know; but no one who believes the divine testimony can doubt that they will at a proper time. The benefit derived from the gulph, will then be obtained, and Jews and Gentiles will rejoice together in the fruition of eternal life.

I have now given you my views of the text, with the evidence which induced me to adopt them. Judge for yourselves, my hearers. Let not popularity nor prescription influence you. Be not terrified by the threatening of endless woe. You can form the best judgment while you are dispassionate and calm. Treat your religious opposers with tenderness and love, yet maintain the independence and faithfulness of Christians.

The way in which we have explained the text, appears consistent with the character of God as the Father and friend of mankind; and it leads us clear of those difficulties with which those meet, who use the text to prove the unmerciful doctrine of eternal and infinite misery. But notwithstanding the explanation I have given accords with the very best feelings of your hearts, I would caution you not to receive it, if you are not convinced of its truth by the force of evidence. Rest your faith on the Bible only. Examine this with freedom and care. And God will bless your exertions to the promotion of your spiritual welfare.



