

The sufficiency of the Serpents
Lata 16: 31

Newville June 67
Mrs. Murch Aug 67.
Hont Oct "
Macon S.B. Con. May 69
Newber 71
Belton June 73
Newy Day Gang 75-
Millington Aug 75-

The parable from which the text is taken brings vividly before us the two extremes of human life - a very poor man but one who looks to the other world & lives for the other world & seeks his portion in the other world; & a very rich man but one who looks to this world only & lives for this world only & seeks his portion in this world only. They both die. Death comes alike to all. He is no respecter of persons. With equal tread he knocks at the rich man's palace & the poor man's hovel. The poor man is carried by angels to heaven & the rich man goes to hell. - How very differently does God's look upon men & estimate men from what we do. We look at the outward appearance & estimate them too commonly - not all of us - by their wealth or station or social position. God estimates them by their moral character. Accordingly in this case the extreme of this life become the reversed extreme of the other life. But it must be noticed & I wish to call particular attention to it that it is no part of the object of the parable, or of any other portions of SS to teach that as a general rule the extreme of this life will be the reversed extreme of the other or to urge against relying themselves. This rich man is not censured because he was rich - it was not his ^{riches} that ^{was his sin & his ruin} ~~ruined~~ ^{ruined} him - but it was because ^{that} he was ^{so} ~~rich~~ ^{rich} & for nobody else but himself. That was it precisely - nothing more & nothing less than that - a good moral man just such as you meet constantly - you might stand in Wall St. N.Y. or State St. Boston & shut your eyes & throw a stone at a ventricle & nine times out of ten hit just such a character; one who cared for nothing else but riches & for nobody else but himself. The Bible does not urge against riches in themselves. Religion does not interdict riches. A man may be a very rich man & yet a very good man, ~~even~~ ^{even} a better man even than the poor man of the parable & carried by as many angels to heaven when he dies. But we may note here for our instruction & warning the general truth elsewhere abundantly taught in the SS of the dangerous tendency of riches; that the mere possession of them is dangerous from the well known prevalent disposition of the human heart to fall too much in love with them & from their aptness to engross the thoughts & mind & preoccupy it with the cares of this world & the decaying of riches & so wholly unfit it for the pursuit & duties of religion. Hence Agur wisely & very wisely prayed "Give me neither poverty, nor riches" - neither condition, neither that of the rich man nor that of the poor man is most favorable to moral & religious improvement - "Give me neither poverty, nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me" - that is sufficient for me, a competency - "Lest" on the one hand, "I be full & deny thee & say Who is the Lord, & Lest" on the other, "I be poor & steal & take the name of my God in vain". - The rich man seeing ~~his~~ Abraham afar off solicited the favor that he would send Saramus to dip just the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue, for he was tormented in that flame. A small request it would seem surely yet justly not granted. Figurative language of course & intended it may to represent one view of the suffering of the lost from the craving of burning desire not satisfied as well as it may be to fearfully illustrate the truth that "whatsoever a man sows, shall he also reap in this world" - not that he denied him the comforts - if anybody supposes that was his sin it is a mistake - the servants from his sumptuous table he could do nothing for them - he no doubt gave him as much to eat as he wanted probably the work he did get from this rich man's table - but he could do nothing for him, he had no feeling of pity for him, he had ^{not} even the feeling of a dog for him - even the dogs surpassed him in pity & sympathy; - show the little sympathy he denied to Saramus in this world is repaid in the little drop of water denied to him ⁱⁿ "Whatsoever a man sows" - Oh let us remember it my brethren as we daily journey along life's pathway - whatsoever a man in his acting & treatment of feelings towards others, of that shall he also reap hereafter. He that sows to the wind shall of the wind reap the whirlwind. The reaping is always larger than the sowing. Some remember says Abraham kindly that there in thy lifetime reaped thy good things & Saramus, likewise his evil things; but now he is comforted & thou art tormented. Remember that you chose your portion in the other world & reaped in full - Saramus chose his portion in this world & is reaping it now; he had his evil things while you had your good things & now you are having your evil things while he is having his good things; you chose the gain the world & lost your soul & he chose to lose the world & gain his soul - & now he is comforted & thou art tormented, & it is all right & just that the matter should be just as it is without any alteration or alleviation whatever. And besides, there is any alteration or alleviation is impossible because there is a great gap fixed so that they who would pass &c. the destinies of the other world are fixed unalterable unchangeable. ~~But~~ ~~do~~ Thus repulsed for himself & so justly though kindly that he cannot any longer urge his own suit he thinks of his five brothers on earth & their destinies are not yet fixed, something perhaps may be done for them - & he asks that Saramus may be sent to them to warn them lest &c. The reply of Abraham is they have Moses & the Prophets - they have the SS, God's appointed & sufficient means of warning; let them hear them. Nay but &c. As though he had said nay but father Abraham they will not hear them; but if one went to them from the dead they will surely hear him ^{perhaps}, the point & conclusion of the reply is - If they &c. If they reject the truth of scripture & the evidence by which that truth is attested they would reap truth from whatever source & by whatever evidence attested. And if this could be truly said of the few in former times who had only Moses & the Prophets - that is the old T. SS - how much more forcibly is it applicable to us who have not only the O. T. but the N. T. SS. The second SS contains ^{more} explicit information upon all points necessary for us to know & upon evidence ^{if this could be said of the few} that would not be added to by one rising from the dead. That is the proposition, let us consider whether it is true. I repeat these second SS contain &c. now upon what point necessary for us to know would we desire ^{fuller} more explicit information? I say necessary for us to know. Our curiosity ^{if it} could suggest many ~~good~~ points - upon which the SS not only do not give us explicit information but do not give us any information at all. But it is ever to be borne in mind that the SS were not given to gratify our curiosity in any matter; but that they purposefully & studiously refused to do so. And the difference between them & all professed revelations in this respect is not ~~one~~ ~~of~~ the least evidence of their divine origin. But I ask upon what point necessary for us to know could we desire any more explicit information? Certainly not as to the being & character of God. The SS explicitly declare that there is one God & that one. "Hear oh Israel the Lord thy God is one Lord" - that he is without beginning of days or length of years, the same yesterday today & forever. That he is the Sovereign of the Universe - infinite in all his attributes & those attributes embracing all

excellence & every perfection that he is the self-existent eternal immutable omniscient omnipresent almighty glorious
- infinitely holy & good & wise & merciful & just & faithful & true - the Creator preserver & Ruler of all things. What
more explicit information could we desire here? Certainly not as to the relation he sustains to us. They explicitly
tell us that he is our Creator preserver benefactor & Judge - that in him we live & move & have our
being - that from him we derive all things that we have - that he gives us life & breath & food & raiment &
all things & that we are therefore under every obligation of dependence of self-interest of duty of gratitude & of
love to honor & reverence him. What more explicit information could we desire upon that point? Will certainly
not as to whether we have regarded these obligations. They most explicitly & pointedly declare that we have not
- but that on the contrary we have disregarded & violated them all. That whereas we ought to love him we
hate him - that whereas we ought to do those things that please him we do only those things that dis-
- please him: that we neither reverence him nor regard his authority but that we blaspheme the one
& defy the other & so have disregarded & trampled upon the highest & most sacred obligations. No more explicit
information can be desired here. The only objection here is that the information is a little too explicit. Will
certainly not as how God regards our conduct in this respect. They tell us unmistakably that he does not & cannot
look upon it with the least allowance - that he is angry with the wicked every day - that his righteous indignation
& wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness & unrighteousness of men & that we are under the condemnation
& wrath of an abused & insulted Jehovah. No more explicit information could be asked here. The only diffi-
- culty here again is that the information is a little too explicit. Will certainly not as to how we may
- relieve ourselves from this position & come under the favor & love of God if we wish. The ss give us
information so explicit on this point that the wayfaring man though a fool need not mistake.
We have no need to say when will I come before the Lord & how shall I bow myself
before the Most High. The word is right very plain & very easy to understand. Let the wicked
man forsake his way & the unrighteous man his thoughts & let him return unto the Lord. Repent
& believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Look to Jesus & live. Nothing plain could be desired. The
only difficulty here is that the way is so plain & so easy that men rather make it harder
& more difficult. Will certainly not as to what must be the final issue if we reject this way &
choose to go on in our own way. The ss give us information here so plain & ~~unmistakably~~ explicit
that I hesitate not to say it could be made plain. And I defy anyone to express it in
language of his own not borrowed from the bible which he thinks would express it more
plainly & I pledge myself to bring language from the bible which expresses far more plainly & a
hundred-fold more forcibly. They say to us - thinketh then oh man who doeth these things that thou
shalt escape the judgment of God? They tell us that we are treasuring up wrath against the day
of wrath. Marry it up - hoarding it up industriously as a miser would his gold. They tell us that God
has appointed a day in which he will judge this world in righteousness: that all that are in their
graves shall hear his voice & come forth: that it is appointed unto men once to die but after
that the judgment: and then we must all appear before his judgment seat: that then & then the
eternal destiny of men will be fixed, some for glory & some for despair - some for reward & some
for punishment. That to them who by a patient continuance in well-doing have sought glory & honor
& immortality he will say Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from
the &c; ~~and~~ ^{but} to them who have not obeyed the truth but obeyed unrighteousness he will say depart
ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared - not indeed for you but for the devil & his angels
but justly due to them: and these shall go away into everlasting punishment but the right-
- eous into life eternal. Now, if one were to rise from the dead could he state the information
upon these points - any more explicitly than it is already stated? How could he? I doubt see how he
possibly could for it seems to be ~~now~~ ^{now} stated, I say it deliberately & distinctly, as explicitly as
it is within the capacity of human language to state it - & if one were to rise from the dead he
would be obliged to use human language for that is the only language we understand. Upon what
points then I ask needful for us to know would we desire more explicit information? The ss contain a
complete & explicit revelation from God; one rising from the dead could not make it more complete
or more explicit. Of what advantage then, pray, would ~~the~~ ^{one} rising from the dead be if he could
only repeat the information already communicated & in language as explicit as the risen dead could
communicate? But perhaps it may be suggested that if he could not communicate any more explicit infor-
- mation perhaps he could communicate some new & additional inducement to heed the information already
given. Will how could he do that? These inducements are already drawn from heaven earth & hell. The treasury of a
world has been exhausted in finding inducements & in what love untouched spot of God's universe would he gather
a single additional one. The human mind cannot possibly conceive of another. Or will it be urged that
~~God~~ ^{God} ~~then~~ ^{then} he might ^{perhaps} more forcibly present the inducements we have. Will how could he do that? Think a moment
my hearers. How could he? Could he tell us of a higher heaven than the ss already tell us of? Could he tell us of
a darker hell than the ss already tell us of? Could he tell us of any more enduring reward or punishment than
everlasting reward & everlasting punishment? Could he tell us of any higher reward or punishment than a far
more exceeding & eternal weight of glory on the one hand & weeping & wailing & gnashing of teeth & the smoke of fire
ascending forever & forever on the other? Of he had Gabriel's experience of the one & the watched fallen archangel
experience of the other could he find sublimity & more comprehensible language or darker & more appalling imagery by
which to portray the one or to depict the other? No my hearers he could not - he could not. If he were to search
the universe over - if there is any outmost verge of creation he might go stand upon it - lofty summits &
range the illimitable fields of space without being able to find a single additional inducement - & if he were
to chrom mind heart some feeling passion, all into the language of expression he could not more forcibly ex-
- press these inducements. Of what advantage then would be one rising from the dead if he could ~~not~~ ^{no} give us
~~any~~ ^{no} more explicit information than we already have, no new inducement to heed that information ~~nor~~
nor the present inducements any more forcibly? Will it be said that at all events he would be able to give
us some additional evidence that would cause us to believe & repent? Will would he do that? Let us not indulge
in "may be" & "seem-eds". Let us look at the matter calmly & philosophically. Upon the supposition that we disbelieve & reject

the evidence we now have for the truth of the SS would we accept the evidence of one rising from the dead & believe them? Suppose for instance that the Apostle Paul could descend from the height of glory or the traitor Judas from the depths of misery if we reject their evidence now would we accept it then? What greater evidence would either be able to give them he has already given? What greater evidence would Paul be able to give than he has already given when after a long life of toil & denial & sacrifice & self-immolation in preaching the truth he declares "I have fought a good fight - there is a crown laid up for me which the righteous judge will give me". If he could stand here & men you by that eloquence that moved Felix & entranced the Emperor Ananias he could only tell you "I am wearing that crown" - that would be nothing more than he has already told you he was going to do. In either case it is only his testimony & if you think you see some reason for rejecting his testimony now it is morally certain you would think you saw some reason or other for rejecting it then. What greater evidence could Judas give than he has already given when writhed from remorse he committed suicide declaring that he betrayed innocent blood? If he could stand there he could only say "Oh my offence is rank, it smells to heaven, it hath the traitors curse upon it" - that would be nothing more than he has already told us by words & actions that speak louder than words. In either case it is only his testimony - given I admit under ^{great} ~~great~~ ^{glorious} circumstances - but if you think you see some reason for rejecting his testimony now it is morally certain that you would think you saw some reason or other for rejecting his testimony then. Suppose that Abraham or Isaac or Jacob or any of the prophets or apostles or some departed friend of yours who would be the most likely therefore to impress you, should appear at your bed-side to night & in the solemn sepulchral tones of the grave should say to you - "I am come from the spirit-land - there is a heaven & there is a hell - repent & believe on the Lord Jesus & you will be lost" - upon the supposition that you doubt now believe these very things upon the evidence the SS furnish do you really think you would believe them then? What do you suppose would be the only impression such an occurrence would make? It might indeed & probably would produce momentary alarm some seriousness for a while, but you would soon banish it from your mind as a nervous fancy, an optical illusion, a little fever of the brain or bad digestion & be ashamed to mention the circumstances to your most intimate friend for fear of being laughed at as one who believes in ghosts & apparitions, & remain the same unbeliever you are now. Why the dead have arisen. We need not speculate or theorize about the matter. We can submit it to the test of actual facts. The dead have arisen. Another Lazarus rose from the dead but died the unbelieving Jews believe them? They did not deny or doubt the fact. What did they believe? Why they only sought the men to kill Jesus. Jesus himself arose. But did they believe them? There is overwhelming evidence to prove that they did not doubt that fact. The very lie - the most clumsy & unpalatable lie they would be able to deny it is proof positive when you examine it in connection with all the circumstances that they were satisfied that he had as he said actually arisen. But did they give up their opposition & unbelief? Not at all. The unbelief & opposition of the human heart to the truth of the gospel, & I beg leave to call special attention to the remark, does not proceed from any want of explicitness as to those truths, or of evidence to prove them. There is no want of either. They are as explicit as human language can make them & the evidence of them actually reaches the maximum of moral demonstration. Men are convicted in our courts of justice & hanged - & you are acting every day in matters of the highest temporal & eternal consequence that does not reach one eighth the weight of the evidence in favor of the truth of the gospel. It is on this ground in fact that unbelief is so great a sin. It is a sin against light & knowledge. It is on this ground that the condemnation of the lost will be felt by themselves to be without excuse. And hence the Apostle breaks forth into that impassioned exclamation "O foolish Galatians! who have crucified you that you should not obey the truth. Foolish indeed that any man should not accept & obey the gospel. Foolish indeed that any intelligent man with the clear light of God's revelation shining upon his path should lose his soul - a loss imperable unalterable without any mitigation, not even a little drop of cold water. But thank God my heavens your souls are not yet lost. You are in the condition of the few brothers of this rich man. Hear the SS. "Now God invites! now bless the day! How sweet the gospel's charming sound! Come sinners haste oh haste away While yet a pardoning God is found."