was not yet made known in any such  
manner as that they should be represented   
as of one family with the Jews;—  
not to mention that this interpretation  
fails in the very root of the parable; for  
in strictness the Gentile should be the  
*elder,* the Jew not being constituted in his  
superiority till 2000 years after the Creation.

The upholders of this interpretation   
forget that when we speak of the  
Jew as elder, and the Gentile as younger, it  
is in respect not of birth, but of *this very*  
return to and reception into the Father’s  
house, which is *not to be considered yet.*  
The objections of these interpreters  
do not touch the reasons here given.  
The relations of elder and younger have a  
peculiar fitness for the characters to be filled  
by them, and are I believe chosen on that  
account; as Euthymius says, “He names  
the sinner the younger, as being childish  
in mind and easily led astray.”

**12, 13.**]  
The part of the parable relating to the  
prodigal himself divides itself into three  
parts—1. *his sin:* 2. *his misery:* 3. *his  
penitence.* In these verses his *sin* is described.   
It consists in a desire to depart  
from his Father’s house and control, and  
to set up for himself,—to live a life of  
what the carnal man calls *liberty.*

**12.**] Such a request as this is shewn by Orientalists   
to have been known in the East,  
though not among the Jews.

The firstborn had two-thirds of the property,  
see Deut. xxi. 17. The father, as implied  
in the parable, reserves to himself the  
power during his life over the portion of  
the firstborn, see ver. 31. The parable  
sets before us very strikingly the *permission*   
*of free will* to man.

**13.**] The  
images of both the preceding parables are  
united here:—in his *taking his journey,* we  
have the straying sheep; in *his state when*  
*he got into the far country,* the lost piece  
of money. But in this case the search is to  
be carried on *within him*—we are now on  
*higher ground* than in those two parables,  
“The far-off country represents forgetfulness  
of God.” Augustine.

**profligate**]  
The old English word **retchless** expresses  
perhaps best the meaning, which is not  
‘unsparing,’ but **incorrigible**, past hope of  
reclaim.

**14–18.**] *His misery* set  
forth in these verses. He soon spends all:  
—there is a fine irony, as Stier remarks, in  
the word **spent**, as compared with **wasted**  
before—he *spent* his money for that which  
was no bread.

**14. a mighty famine**]  
This famine is the shepherd seeking his  
stray sheep—the woman sweeping to find  
the lost. The famine, in the interpretation,   
is to be *subjectively* taken; he begins  
to *be in want*,—to *feel* the emptiness of  
soul which precedes either utter abandonment   
or true penitence.

**15.**] He sinks  
lower and lower—becomes the despised  
servant of an alien (is there here any hint  
at the situation of the *publicans,* who were  
but the servants of wealthy Romans?) who  
employs him in an office most vile and  
odious to the mind of a Jew.

**16. husks**]  
‘These are not the husks or pods of some  
other fruit, as of peas or beans, but *themselves   
a fruit,* that of the *carob* [or  
*caruba*, found not only in the East, but in  
South Europe, e.g. in abundance on the  
Riviera between Nice and Genoa. H.A.]  
like a bean-pod, though larger and more  
curved, thence called *keration* or little horn  
.... they have a hard dark outside and  
a dull sweet taste.... the shell or pod  
alone is eaten” Trench. His appetite even  
drove him to these for food;—**for** (this is  
the real sense involved in and) **no man gave**  
(aught) to him.

We see him now in  
the depth of his misery,—the sinner reaping   
the consequences of his sin in utter