

The Pharisees assigned such a place to publicans and all Jews other than themselves. *Give me*; a not unheard of demand in the East. It is said, that in some provinces of India, as soon as the youngest son reaches manhood, any of the sons can demand a division of the property. *The portion*; half the elder son's share and therefore one third of the father's estate. (See Deut. 21:17.) *Divided . . . his living*. The father, in justice to the elder son, gives him his share also, so that henceforth he would be a partner with the father.

II. The Destination, 13-16.

Vs. 13, 14. *Not many days after*; in hot haste to get away into wild liberty or licence. *Gathered all together*; leaving nothing behind that could gratify his desires; nothing that might induce him to return. *A far country*; away from his father's care and restraint and from the observation of acquaintances. For very shame's sake he could not live his evil life near home. *Wasted his substance*; squandering his possessions as easily as he had got them. *Riotous living*; "living ruinously," giving free rein to every passion. *Spent all*; and had nothing left for days of need. *Mighty famine*. "Famine was a common occurrence in various parts of the Roman Empire in the days of Jesus." *In want*; the result of wastefulness and scarcity.

Vs. 15, 16. *Joined himself to*; literally, "glued himself to, foisted himself upon." *A citizen*; one of another nation, likely a heathen, whom this young Jew served as the publicans served the Roman government. *Sent him*; not that he was needed, but out of a sort of good-natured pity. *To feed swine*; animals so loathed and abhorred by the Jews, that they would not even name them, but spoke of a pig as *dabhar acheer*, "the other thing." (Compare *Light from the East*.) *Husks*; the pods of the carob tree. (See *Light from the East*.) *No man gave*; not even the companions of his vices. These forsook him as soon as his money was gone. There was little enough of either food or love in the far country. It was either half-starvation on swine's food, or home.

III. The Resolve, 17-19.

V. 17. *Came to himself*; coming to his true self, his sane mind,—in his rioting he had

been "beside himself;" as the sinner is when he has forsaken God—and realising the situation. *Hired servants*; not slaves, but lower than these,—chance laborers like tramps hired by a farmer for harvesting. *Bread enough*, etc.; more than they can use.

Vs. 18, 19. *I will arise*, etc.; a decision leading to action, the proof of real repentance. Without this the words of regret would have issued only in hopeless remorse. *Father*; whose love the son had not forgotten or ceased to believe in. *Will say*. Open confession flows from real repentance. *Sinned against heaven*. This word was commonly used by the Jews for "God." *In thy sight* (Rev. Ver.); in thy judgment: he knows how foolish his father must think him. *No more worthy*, etc.; in his father's estimation: what others may say matters not. *One of thy hired servants*. Even this would be promotion from his present position.

IV. The Reception, 20-24.

Vs. 20, 21. *Arose, and came*. The resolution acted upon made repentance complete. *Afar off, his father saw him* (Rev. Ver.); with vision sharpened by love, recognizing him in spite of his changed and beggarly looks. *Ran*; regardless of Eastern dignity and advancing years. *Kissed*; literally "kissed much," with warmth and depth of feeling. *The son said*; making his confession precisely as he had planned; but the father's love and forgiveness, which he had not dared to count upon, seem to have prevented his making the request to be treated as a hired servant.

Vs. 22-24. *The father said*; interrupting his son's confession. *The best robe*; literally, "the first robe," first, that is, in quality, a stately garment worn on ceremonial occasions. *Ring on his hand*; a golden ring, probably with a signet carrying some authority. *Shoes on his feet*; sandals, not worn by slaves, and hence a sign that the wearer was free. *The fattened calf*. There was only one, reserved for some special occasion, but there could be none better than this. *My son*; owned by the father as such, though he had not dared to claim that position for himself. *Dead*; to the father, that is, gone away apparently forever. *Alive*; restored to the father's love. *Lost*; sorely missed by the father. *Found*; like the lost sheep and the lost coin.