

He will forgive our iniquity, and remember our sins no more. But it is, and must be, because we are sons, and for and through the merits of His dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ.

And it seems if it were for the especial encouragement of us Christians who have fallen into sin, and who, therefore, might justly fear lest this aggravation of it shut us out from God's pardon, that our blessed Lord delivered this parable of a disobedient, and rebellious, and subsequently pardoned *son*. And so there are few passages in all Holy Scripture which have been so effective in setting forth God's love, and in awakening repentance as this which is now before us.

But there are one or two other points to notice. I do not insist on that which my text sets forth, and which not one of you can fail to observe—how God's readiness to pardon is beautifully shewn in the Father seeing the prodigal a great way off, (doubtless, He was longing for his return, and had often wistfully looked out for him), and then running to meet him, and greeting him so lovingly, so forgivingly. What is of still more importance to observe is, that this did not hinder the confession which he had resolved to make. Now this is not merely a proof of the reality of the portraiture, an evidence of the master hand which delineated the character. It embodies a very important doctrine. It teaches us that though God's pardon is certain, aye pledged—yet we must seek it—seek it in humility of spirit—seek it with confession of our unworthiness. There are many that cannot understand this. There are many that reason thus with themselves—"God knows all things—He knows that I am repentant—what need of saying it in words?" I will not say if the prodigal had not confessed he would not have been forgiven; his very return was evidence of repentance and humility, but with ourselves God requires the actual confession, just as He requires prayer, albeit every one knows that He know-