

sinner, and that the Pharisees, and then exalt the repentant one far above the one who needed no repentance, if they do not end by esteeming this last an uninteresting, despicable character.

This is one mistake, arising partly from what I have said, partly from not observing the wonderful praise and commendation contained in the words of the text, and the marvellous privileges declared to be his to whom such praise is due.

And another error which is in some measure built up on this former one, is that terribly false doctrine, that very snare of the evil one, which underlies the proverb, common I dare say to every one of you, but them which I venture to assert none is more ungodly, none more untrue—"the greater the sinner the greater the saint." I say it is built on the former error. They see the prodigal forgiven, and think of the blessedness of his state; they do not observe the greater blessedness of the other, and they do magnify one feature in the story which they incorrectly set down as a trait, a distinctive trait in his character, and condemn him for it. As a consequence, in their reading of the parable, the repentant sinner is more blessed than the never fallen saint. I desire to protest against this error, at the same time that I endeavour to enlarge upon the true view of the elder brother's character. But some one will say, Is there not Scripture warrant for this interpretation which you condemn? Do not the very words of the chapter, twice repeated, bear testimony to its truth; "There is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just men that need no repentance." No, my brethren, it is not so. Consider a moment. Is joy upon an unexpected arrival a mark of love beyond that which is bestowed on others? Surely not. Take the cases of the two short parables which come before this one in the chapter. Do you value a piece of money that has been found after