

who had made atonement on the cross, inviting sinners to the Father's feast of good things.

It is instructive to notice that the triple expression of joy is all on the divine side, a fact of much importance for the solid comfort of the believer in Christ. He finds no comfort in his changeable feelings, but looks away from himself and is satisfied with his object, Christ on high. He is silent but the language of his heart is, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, etc.," (Is. lxi. 10).

It is interesting too, to notice the three stages in the history of the "younger son." First, having "gathered all together," he struck out *for himself*, to have his fling in the distant land. The second stage was reached when having "spent all," and was about to "perish with hunger," "he came *to himself*," and said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee." Happy moment, only surpassed when at the third stage in his history, he came to the *end of himself* in his father's arms.

How many really born of God have lingered in the by-paths of the world, having a most uncertain christian experience with mingled doubts and fears, through not having reached the third stage of the prodigals path? These know not "the love of God," which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Rom. v, 5).