No. 109.

On the parables of the lost sheep and the lost pieces of silver.
Luke xv. 1-11. The parables of the Lost sheep, of the lost pieces of silver. —

Every reader of the N. T. must have observed, that our Saviour discovers no less wisdom in mosting reproof, than in giving instruction. It was neither distaste nor expiation by the calamities of his enemies, but reproof with calmness that seemed to refute their bad reasoning. At the beginning of this passage, just read, we have an example of that **malicious spirit** which was so often stoning itself across the path of Jesus. In order to understand the point of the charge brought against him, we must remember the respective feelings of character.
of the Pharisees and Publicans. The publicans were "set of men who parted from the offices in which they were employed under the Roman government, partly because their general character was extremely odious to the Jewish people. They seem to have been on all occasions the marked objects of contempt and detestation; their name was almost proverbially disgraceful. On the other hand, the Pharisees assumed the highest rank among the people; they were the expounders of the law of Moses, they kept aloof from the common classes, sat on an eminence from which they looked down with contempt on their fellow-creatures. If any great offense to these proud spirits, that Jesus was willing to associate with the despised publicans, with the time. The philosophy of a messenger from heaven, he overlooked all distinctions of rank in his efforts to communicate the messages of grace; whereas there was none to be received or mercy to be achieved on any matter how humble or how was the station of fortune of those sinners or the watchful, he was there to do good. It was an occasion on which he was supposed by some to adopt the humanity of indolence, to slacken him the parables in our text. We are told, that when the Pharisees and Publicans drew near him they said, "The Pharisees go out to see wisdom, saying, this man receiveth sinners; yea, and eateth with them." This is the true language of pride, indignant to see attention paid to those whom it despises. But the answer of Jesus to this is, "The healthy enter into the house of my Father; but the sick go out." He answered this as saying that the true parables before us. He supposes that from a fold of an hundred sheep one had strayed away on a lost. He asked whether the owner of the fold went not seek for the lost sheep? till he had found it, he rejoiced. So, whether he would not rejoice to recover the sinner? Or, if a woman, she sold ten pieces of silver, should take one piece, whether she should not search diligently till she was finding it and call her friends together with joy and say, "Behold, I have found the piece of silver which I lost."
the same way he assures them, there should be joined
heaven over one dinner that repenteth, more than
wes mind gose, and, per son, the need nor repent-
ance. Thus it is with these publications, when you
desire. The most need loss is of as great im- 
ance in the width of God, as that of others. Per-
cess them from the ways of sin, bring them back
the paths of virtue, would give me a pleasure of
that not the faithful steadfast feel when he finds
the lost wanderers from his flock. And it is for this
purpose that I associate with them. I think be
familiarity to open a way for the truth to the hearts
of souls may be in wickedness, gentleness by them
and by them I would reach forth a helping hand
to save them from much sin. Do not offend me
if out understanding their sorrows of humble situation
I am willing to come to them, the love teaching, good
way, to employ, or where appears on earth. If
a single sheep is so much in fortune, that the one-

had will leave the rest of the flock, reach after it,
when it is lost. If a little piece of money be sufficient
to induce the mind to open the house all day, all
call you wish me for going into the company of the publishing
that I may be possible to reclaim them, unless the comple-
tion would add to these things of heaven itself?

Thus we see how admirably these publications were a
branded to answer the complaints of the calam-
ships of the mast. Having thus considered the
and consign, we will proceed to remark on some
promising, not occur in them.

4. The expression, "just persons who need no re-

antance," may lead us to some useful views of example.
tions. On first hearing this expression, we are only
to ask, "are there many of the noble persons who
me no resistance? Persons so pure of soul, that
that they have no cause to be penitent? Are not
wars, all men more or less sinners? And do not sinners
need forgiveness? And in order to obtain forgive-
as to their general great features, need no longer
be considered, because a change would only be for the worse.

The view, on the other hand, gives us a view of mankind, is undoubtedly in all ages the corrective. It represents
them, as mingled compounded of both good qualities,
not only the world in a body, but individual
characters. There are some, whose reformations
cause joy in heaven; if these are just persons, who with
general principles of conduct need no repentance, yet
each one of these must take in some degree of the charac-
ters of the other. It is too common to divide the world
into two large classes, the converted, and the unconverted,
the saint and the sinner, as forming two bodies absolutely
separate, distinct from each other; to draw a line,
or the one side of which are placed all the good, as
equally good, as in the other, all the bad, as equally
bad, to make no allowance for the intermingling
of all the varieties of nature, or for the differ-
ent shades of character. These varieties, or these shades,
are almost infinitely numerous. No man is all
good, no man, probably, is wholly恶ently bad.

On the brightest name some stains may be found;
there is scarcely one so dark, that it is not relieved
by some single excellence. Not in so far as we are en-
commissioned by enriched nature, cherish bad passions
and yield our hearts to mischievous vices, but we need a change, a new farthing. We are not authors
ed to place all mankind on the same level of exis-
ting, they must all pass, as perfect, beyond the
possibility of falling. But let us forbids us to do this,
when he tells us, that at the same time there
are enemies, there are those likewise, who compare
themselves by need of repentance. Conversion means turning
from one course: new, if a man prevailing con-
duct is good, if principles of virtues have substance
like, from what will you convert him, but from
goodness, from such a conversion is not desir-
able. We know there are some of the best.
Grows than in the world, where goodness, charity, patience, have been altogether of a gradual growth. They have perhaps the blessing to be educated under great parents, whose hearts were early impressed with the best precepts, set in the best example, of their dearest ones, early capable of finding a home of victory. Because those, to the boy I speak of, that new, that young plant, that has not yet to produce its harvest, in due proportion. The character, this young man, has and will be. They have come forward in life to almost that station to serve God, serve man, in this day of generation, to exert a most salutary influence on society, to exhibit a model of the grace of virtues. Now what is common by nature, by conversion, never took place; youth will not to take place, with respect to these men. If they were to be changed, they must be changed from good strong to something else, certainly something better. They can flee from one another in time: more than another, when they considered their strong virtues of disposition, they have grown up with them, gradually imperceptibly. There is no such blood, no such distinction between one part of their lives and another, as that it is commonly said: there is not the state before, from that after, conversion. These are the first person, in their lives, affairs to the most preposterous, meaning not that they never commit, but that cannot be attached of any man being, but that these character is not that of woman, thatwhen they are begotten into some station by the laws of God, it is as is the more by property, the act is made, like a tree in which, on its surface, the more noticed because of the plastic kind, and it is as its wound. The tenet of each man for their own so deep, their characters, the stronger, because it is so able to hold its station, the stability of conscience does not become blunted: imperceptible. These are the character, to them we always look for things greater than in society; they are the stable, enduring, part of one mind, who never destroy their own nature in happiness by action. And will infallibly be the story of some
in the breast.

2. We are to notice the remarkable expression in the parable, that "there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety nine just persons that need no repentance." At first this seems like a very strange unequal estimation of man's appearance to assert, that the reformation of one sinner is of more value in the sight of heaven, than the permanent and habitual goodness of ninety-nine just persons, as if it were the change from bad to good, not actual goodness, that gained the favor of the All mighty. The expression, however, is doubtless not designed to teach any such lesson as this: for it would be contrary to all we know of the nature of moral actions, of the character of the Deity, to suppose that he regards in the greater approbation one who has turned from a long and profligate course of sinfulness, than one who has never occasion to turn from such a course. What then is the meaning of the passage as the parable? The answer is, that the expression is designed to represent the joy of the conversion of an abandoned sinner, as inferentially in the breast of every just sinner of God. And when this sinner is represented as being greater in the mind of the angels in heaven than that with whom they regard a very long and laborious course of virtuous, we are to consider it, as not a strong and bold figurative manner of expressing the exceeding value, with which they would hail the reformation of an angel. In such cases, the joy is described, as for the moment so great, as to overwhelm all other things, to make them forget the goodness of others more conform'd in virtue. And this is a very material representation. Whatever is now conjectured, at the same time seemed to be of great importance, does not first almost entirely ensnare us, though I draw them off from other things. — when the
mind is intensely fixed on any particular object, the joy it derives arising from that particular object will, I am sure, be greater than the joy of senses arising from any thing else, because it is more the object of our thoughts and attention for the time being than any thing else. This principle is illustrated by the case before us. When a shepherd has lost one of his sheep, and has been absent, as he must have been, from the piece of good fortune comes so and so, as unexpectedly that his mind is wholly engrossed with it; he forgets entirely the rest of his flock, or thinks of them but very slightly, knowing that they are safe; still this joy by no means proves that he values this small sheep more than the whole flock besides, or did not care strongly. Thus too with the person who unexpectedly finds a lost piece of money: the gladness for the moment is greater than that of the possession of all the other pieces given; but this does not show that it is more valuable than all the rest. So the manner, a good of affectionate parent, whose heart has been torn by the folly and weakness of a frail creature, may naturally be supposed when the first discovers the evidences of repentance and reformation in him, to have felt a thought more occupied of his feelings of joy more excited by this happy amendment, than by the virtue, integrity of another son, to whose good and worthy character he had long been accustomed: yet this latter son is more eminent or deserves more praise, than the first one. Thus it is with the reformation of a hard and vicious; it is an event of an unexpected shifting nature; if therefore according to the principle just illustrated, it is perfectly natural and correct to represent the angels as rejoicing over this returning repentant more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance; although morally the stable of long continued virtue of those last is of higher price, than the new-born converted virtue of
a single sentence...

This is in brief the explanation of this parable as it seemed to me.

Two reflections important in a moral point of view, may be drawn from it.

1. Let us learn not to be frightened from our duty by ridicule or reproach. The Pharisees perished because Jesus was willing to carry to the light of Heaven only truth to publicans and sinners; and those who in society are the class of men who endeavor to laugh out of countenance those who strive to do good—men who succeed at every effort to prevent the mutual welfare of the community—at every effort to snuff vice in its various forms, or to spread the fruits of benevolence and good will. But let them succeed.

2. Let us learn from this parable, whose neglect is no matter the reformation of a sinner is in the sight of Heaven. It is represented as rolling the egg of angels in the world of vice. How finely does this suit before us the value of moral excellence, of the intelligence of vice. Sin is a little in God's creation; it is a defilement of pollution of his works; of every good being must rejoice to see this stain in any case removed; to see this defilement wiped off. When God created the world, the morning stars singing together called the sons of God desired for joy: but a still finer...
more feeling strain of gey springs from the best
of the celestial hosts, when a part wanders into
back to the heavenly fold, when they who had
strayed away into the thenly汪汪 paths of per
restored to the father of nature, flow that
peace of God, and justice all understanding. It
oners remembers, that God from his throne is in-
writing them home, that in his eyes, is appli-
my faith a hand to help them, that angels will
forth the hymn of gey to witness their reforming
but them think her much is done for them, of
much is at stake, then considers what expense they
will henceforth render for refusing to return.

June 1821
He, of Eternal God, may our hearts be filled with gratitude to thee, for all the best that makes us wise unto salvation. We thank thee for him who came to seek, to save that which was lost, to bring back wandering men to the fold of the great Shepherd of our souls. May we listen to the voice which invites to turn from the paths of vice, to walk in the ways of wisdom, and are ways of pleasantness. May we improve as we ought under all the means of spiritual culture, which hast afforded to us. May our light be such before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father, who is in heaven. Give us grace to remove all the works of darkness out of the temple, and do, even in the hour of height of men, in the time of the present life, guide and lead us by the spirit in this world, if the receive us to those of in glory.

At home, June 17th, 1821. - afternoon.

At home, Friday lecture, Nov. 4, 1834.