distinguished and free person, see James  
ii. 2; Gen, xii, 42.

The **shoes**, also  
the mark of a free man (for slaves went  
barefoot), see Zech. x. 12; Eph. vi. 15.  
These are the gifts of grace and holiness  
with which the returned penitent is clothed  
by his gracious Father; see Zech. iii. 4, 5.

**23. the fatted calf**] So Judg. vi. 25.  
Gideon is commanded to kill *thy  
father’s young bullock of seven years old*  
(rendered by the LXX *thy father fatted*  
*calf*): some calf fatted for a particular  
feast or anniversary, and standing in the  
stall. No allusion must be thought of to  
the *sacrificing of Christ:*—which would  
be *wholly out of place* here,—and is *presupposed*  
in whole parable.

**be merry**] So ver. 6., “joy in heaven;”—*all  
rejoice.*

Some of these are servants who  
have entered into the *joy of their Lord:*  
Matt. xxv. 21, 23.

**24.**] **dead, and is  
alive again,**—*the lost money:* **lost, and is  
found,**—*the lost sheep:* see 1 John iii. 14:  
Eph. ii. 5: 1 Pet, ii, 25.

**began**, a  
contrast to the “*began*” in ver. 14,

**25–28.**] As far as *the penitent,*  
the parable is finished:—but those who  
murmured at his reception, who were the  
proud and faultless elder son,—always in  
the house and serving, but not, as will  
appear, either over-affectionate or over-respectful,   
—they too must act their part,  
in order to complete the instruction. As  
regards the penitent, this part of the  
parable sets forth the reception he meets  
with from his *fellow-men,* in contrast to  
that from his *father;* see Matt. xviii. 27, 30.

**25.**] **in the field**—probably  
*working*, in the course of his “*serving*,” as  
he expresses it, ver. 29. He was apparently   
returning at meal-time.

**musick and dancing**] This is one of those  
by-glances into the lesser occupations and  
recreations of human life, by which the  
Lord so often stamps his tacit approval on  
the joys and unbendings of men. Would  
these festal employments have been here  
mentioned by Him on so solemn and  
blessed an occasion, if they really were  
among those works of the devil which He  
came into the world to destroy?

**23—32.**] Stier well remarks that this  
elder is now the *lost son:* he has lost all  
childlike filial feeling; he betrays the hypocrite   
within. The love and forbearance  
of the father are eminently shewn—the  
utter want of love and humility in the son  
strongly contrasted with them.

**29.**] **Lo, these many years de I serve thee,**  
the very manner of speech of a Pharisee:  
as the continuation. Let us ask with  
reference to the differences in the explanation,   
Could the *Jewish nation* be introduced   
saying, even in the falsest hypocrisy,  
that *they had never transgressed God’s  
commandments?*

**thou never gavest  
me** answers to the younger son’s “*give  
me*” in ver. 12;—it is a separation of the  
individual son from his father, and, as  
there pointed out, the very root and  
ground of sin.

**a kid**, of less value  
than a calf.

**my friends**—who are