

A

Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a commandment of thine: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: 30. but when this thy son came, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou killedst for him the fatted calf. 31. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. 32. But it was meet to make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again.

B

father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound . . .

32b. and he was lost and is found.

There are here two complete narratives, agreeing in some points, and disagreeing in others, and each has its special characteristics. The only deficiencies are enclosed in parathenses, and may be readily explained as omissions by the redactor in effecting the combination. A clause must be supplied at the beginning of B, a subject is wanting in ver. 13b, and ver. 25b, and the verb "said" is wanting in ver. 23. As these omissions occur exclusively in B, it may be inferred that the redactor placed A at the basis, and incorporated B into it with only such slight changes as were necessary to adapt it to this purpose.

A and B agree that there were two sons, one of whom received a portion of his father's property, and by his own fault was reduced to great destitution, in consequence of which he returned penitently to his father, and addressed him in language which is nearly identical in both accounts. The father received him with great tenderness and demonstrations of joy, which attracted the attention of the other son.

The differences are quite as striking as the points of agreement. A distinguishes the sons as elder and younger; B makes no mention of their relative ages. In A the younger obtained his portion by solicitation, and the father retained the remainder in his own possession; in B the father divided his property between both of his sons of his own motion. In A the prodigal remained in his father's neighborhood, and reduced himself to penury by riotous living; in B he went to a distant country and spent all his property, but there is no intimation that he indulged in unseemly excesses. It would rather appear that he was injudicious; and to crown his misfortunes there occurred a severe famine. His fault seems to have consisted in having gone so far away from his father and from the holy