

# THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

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## I.

### THE RELATION OF CHRISTIAN ART TO THEOLOGY.

#### I.

**T**HERE is a reasonable excuse for the many who see no connection between the development of art and that of theological ideas in the history of Christianity, and fail to perceive that art and literature were twin sisters in the service of religion, inspired by the same thoughts, but appealing, the one to the sentiment, the other to the intellect. For this connection was severed long since—fully four centuries ago—never to be fully renewed, and its existence can now be conceived only by an effort of the imagination conjuring up the ghost of departed realities that appeal no more to the common consciousness of the nineteenth century. In art, far more than in literature, the scene shifts as rapidly as the colors of a sunset: words retain their meaning, but a work of art has a different one for every generation. It is strangely difficult for us to grasp the meaning of the fact that through the general illiteracy of the people, works of religious art were the direct means of instruction in religious belief for nine-tenths of the body of Christians up to the time of the Reformation. And yet, what use has been made of this fact? In what history is the aid of the monuments called in systematically? In what work on the development of Christian theology is a place given to the paintings and sculptures which, through a period of over a thousand years, show more strikingly than words the beliefs of the people and their teachers, with all their slight, temporal and local variations? As a modern writer well says: “The faintest shadows that darkened, or the lightest breath that disturbed the

### III.

#### THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

**I** APPEND, at the outset of this article, a few passages of Scripture bearing upon this subject, and also chapter xii of the Confession of Faith, on "Adoption."

"Our Father which art in Heaven" (Matt. vi, 9); "Call no man your Father upon the earth, for One is your Father which is in Heaven" (Matt. xxiii, 9); "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John, i, 12, 13); "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father. Therefore thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. iv, 4-7); "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. i, 5); "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John, iii, 1); "Beloved, now are we the sons of God" (1 John, iii, 2); "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. viii, 14-17). "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren" (Rom. viii, 29). These passages will suffice to show that the doctrine of Adoption is a Scriptural doctrine.

Confession of Faith, chap. xii: "All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for His only Son, Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption: by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God; have His name put upon them, receive the Spirit of

adoption; have access to the throne of grace with boldness; are enabled to cry *Abba, Father*; are pitied, protected, provided for and chastened by Him as by a father; yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation." To the same purport is the answer to the seventy-fourth question in the Larger Catechism, and that to the thirty-fourth question in the Shorter Catechism.

The notion of the "All-Fatherhood" of God is widely prevalent in our day. It is claimed and urged with great insistence and confidence that God is the Father of men, of all men, of all men as they are, in their sins, enmity, depravity and rebellion; that idolators, drunkards, licentious men and women, atheists, skeptics, and all unbelievers and despisers of Christ, as well as all true Christians—all this apostate race—are the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, and that He is their true, real, actual and acting Father. That the brotherhood of man is universal, all admit; but that the sonship to God of man, of the race, is equally universal and true, will not be admitted without a challenge and without proof. It is by no means a clear case that man's first father is not Adam, but God, for we know that the first father hath sinned and we have borne his iniquities.

The view against which this article contends is fairly and squarely and fully stated by Dr. Phillips Brooks, of Boston, in his volume entitled "The Influence of Jesus." It pervades the work throughout. A few sentences will abundantly indicate his teaching: "The inspiring idea (of that influence) is the Fatherhood of God and the childhood of every man to Him. Upon the race and upon the individual, Jesus is always bringing into more and more perfect revelation the certain truth that man, and every man, is the child of God. . . . Jesus came to restore the fact of God's Fatherhood to man's knowledge, and to its central place of power over man's life. . . . He is the Redeemer of man into the Fatherhood of God" (p. 12). "I have already said what that idea is—the relation of childhood and Fatherhood between man and God. Man is the child of God by nature. He is ignorant and rebellious—the prodigal child of God; but his ignorance and rebellion never break that first relationship. It is always a child ignorant of his Father; always a child rebellious against his Father" (pp. 13, 14). That man is the child of God "includes the notions of a common nature between the Father and the son, of a spontaneous affection of the Father, of an essential obligation of the son, and of a possibility of the son's unlimited growth into the Father's likeness" (p. 15). "He (Jesus) must have become aware that all men were God's sons, and felt the desire to tell them so . . . just in proportion as he came

to know . . . the deep and absorbing mystery that He Himself was the Son of God" (pp. 17, 18). "Surely we cannot be wrong if we say positively that to Christ Himself the truth that man was God's child by nature was the great fact of man's existence" (p. 20). This doctrine of man's "own essential sonship" (p. 52) is the underlying and formative doctrine of Dr. Brooks' entire volume.

I think I may say without contradiction that this is not the doctrine of the Church of God. Such an idea cannot be found in any creed of Christendom, from that of Nice to that of Westminster. Neither the Greek nor the Roman nor the Protestant churches have ever affirmed it, but they either directly, or by implication, deny it. Seventeen centuries of Bible reading and study failed to discover this tremendous thing. It is a novelty in theology and in anthropology. One thing appears clear to me, viz.: that if God is the Father, in any true and substantial sense, the real Father of our race; if the world—as it has existed in history, as it is described in the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, as it is manifested to-day—is the household and family of God, it is the most extensively unfilial, disobedient, rebellious, parent-hating, marvellously ill-brought-up family that can be conceived of. Especially emphatic is this when we consider that the alleged Parental head of this family is all-wise, all-good, all-powerful. Yet, such a family! If a man were the father of ten children and their hearts were as one heart, a heart of enmity against him, neither subject to his laws nor capable of subjection to them; if their alliances and associations were with those whose hostility was most bitter against him, one thing is certain, he would not be very active in revealing and proclaiming his paternity or their sonship. The verdict against his parental authority, wisdom and love, would be unanimous and decisive. And if the children proclaimed it, and he was a useful and respected member of society, they would not be believed in what they declared.

There are but two ways in which any being can be, truly and properly, the son of another, and these are: 1st, by *generation*; 2d, by *adoption*.

Children, sons and daughters, are not *created* such. They are either begotten or adopted. Creation is not Paternity. A Creator is not a Father because He is a Creator. If He is, then the Holy Spirit, who came upon the virgin Mary and overshadowed her, would be the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, an idea utterly foreign to the Scripture. He *created* in her, of her substance, "that holy thing," Christ's human nature, but He did not *beget* it. Had He in some ineffable manner, begotten it, He would then be properly called Christ's Father as to His human nature. But, seeing

that His work was a work of creation and formation, and not of generation, He is never called the Father of our Lord, though He was the Creative Author of His humanity.

Paternity belongs to only one of the Persons of the sacred Trinity and He is called, on this account, "The Father." Neither the Son nor the Spirit are properly so designated; and the First Person is called "The Father" because he has one Son, begotten, eternally begotten or generated, His own, His only, His dearly beloved Son; and He has no other. If He had, there would be four Persons in the Godhead. For in generation or begetting there is always similitude and sameness of nature implied. A human father begets a son in *human* nature, similar to and of the same substance with himself. Neither an angel nor a brute could be a true and proper, a begotten child of a human being. The son born to him must be of the same nature with him. In all forms and kinds of generation, the regnant law is, that "like produces like." The animal creation is a universal witness to this, and so is the vegetable world. If Adam had been generated or begotten of God the Father, he would have been His true son, of the same nature with God, and so, as I said, a fourth Person in the Godhead.

Jesus Christ, the Logos, who was in the beginning with God and was God, the Second Person in the Trinity, is a true and proper Son of the First, because He was in eternity and from eternity, out of time and out of space, ineffably and mysteriously, but really and divinely, begotten of and consubstantial with the Father. Hence His sublime name, The Son of God. He is styled God's one, God's only, God's own, God's only begotten, God's well beloved Son; and is declared to be in the form of God, equal with God, the express image of His Father. He is the Son of the Father, one with Him in nature, essence, substance, possessing all the properties and attributes of that nature; also having Divine rights, names, prerogatives, being the Heir of God, co-possessor of the majesty, dominion, and glory of the Father. The First Person of the Trinity is denominated *Father*, not because of His relation to any or to all creatures, but because of His relation to Christ before men, angels or creatures existed. And so the Second Person is denominated Son, not because of any relation formed in time, but because of His eternal relation to the First Person. An eternal Father necessarily implies an eternal Son. So God the Father is truly and properly the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Lord Jesus Christ is truly and properly the Son of God.

This is the primary, original, and fundamental import of the terms Father and Son. They involve generation or a begetting, as distinguished from creation, with likeness and sameness of nature.

They also involve essential and necessary interrelationship, with the peculiar affections implied in Paternity and Filiation. Both ideas must coëxist. Eve was of the same substance with Adam, but Eve was not begotten or generated by Adam and therefore she is never called the daughter of Adam.

Other uses of the terms Father and Son abound in Scripture, in literature, and in common speech, but they are always metaphorical. Thus Christ Himself is called the Son of God from his miraculous conception, from His mission, resurrection, ascension and enthronement, and all of these uses of the words have their foundation and justification in the primal and essential Sonship which existed in Him from eternity. So Adam is called the Son of God in Luke's genealogy, not because he was generated or begotten of God, as Seth was of Adam, not because he was of the same nature with God, but because in the relations actually existing between Adam and God there was such a sphere and range for Divine dealings with His dependent, finite creature as would not be improperly expressed by terms and forms of speech derived from the more profound and enduring relations between Himself and His eternal Son. Adam was the direct creation of Divine Power and is explicitly so described in the Bible, and the relations constituted between God and him were not those of parent and child, but those of Creator and creature, Supporter and dependent, Preserver and preserved, Ruler and subject, Benefactor and beneficiary, Friend and friend; and these relations were enhanced by a special covenant engagement. There are points of resemblance between the relations, spirit, and acts growing out of Paternity and Filiation, and those that spring from creation, beneficence and service; and hence some of the forms of speech properly applied to the former may be accommodated to the latter. But we must be careful not to be misled by such accommodations and to infer from what are figures of speech the actual things from which those figures are taken. Thus *angels*, who are simply *creatures* are called the *Sons of God*. Thus magistrates are called *Gods* and princes the *Sons of God*. Thus Jabal is styled the *father* of such as play on harps and Jubal the *father* of such as dwell in tents. Hiram was called the *father* of the king of Tyre and also the *father* of Solomon. The younger prophets were called the *sons* of the elder prophets. Job says, I was a *father* to the poor. Joseph says that God had made him a *father* to Pharaoh. Paul says, I have begotten you in the gospel, and that Timothy was his own son in the faith. Christians are called the *children* of the Resurrection, and God is spoken of as the Father of the rain, and the Begetter of the dew. In common speech we say, Washington was the *father* of his country. In these and a thousand other examples the language

is metaphorical not literal, figurative not dogmatic; and is easily appreciated as such. It expresses, by way of allusion, certain similitudes or likenesses of a relation, but not the actual relation itself. So that in the proper, primal, radical and formal sense, the Fatherhood of God is limited to a single Son, begotten before all worlds and dwelling from eternity in His Bosom. All other beings, if denominated Sons, are such by metonymy. Angels and men are not naturally Sons, but creatures in certain relations to One whose eternal character is Love and whose eternal relations to Christ are Paternal. So that He who is God the Father may be spoken of in His relations to His creatures as manifesting acts and affections that are popularly and figuratively called Paternal to those who are not truly and properly Sons. Max Muller says, "Mythology is a disease of language; that is to say, it is produced by the power of language on the mind in causing it to mistake words for things, metaphors for facts." And so there may be a like disease in theology.

I said that there was another way than that of generation in which a person might be a real, living, true, and everlasting Son of God and God be truly and properly his Father, and that this is by Adoption. As the all-Fatherhood of God cannot be established in the first of these two methods, neither can it be established in the second. As all men are not by nature the children of God, so all men are not His children by adoption. The Larger Catechism declares adoption to be an "Act of the free grace of God, in and for the sake of His only Son Jesus Christ, whereby all that are justified are received into the number of His children, have His name put upon them, the Spirit of His Son given to them, are under His fatherly care and dispensation, and admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the Sons of God, made heirs of all the promises and fellow heirs with Christ in glory." It is simply preposterous to say that in this sense God is the universal Father and all men alike His children: and if not in this sense then in no sense worthy of the name can such a relation be said to exist.

The writers of the New Testament who instruct us on this subject take the forms of their expression from the then prevalent Roman law concerning adoption. And the Holy Spirit uses them as His agents in revealing the doctrine, and so by this human law elevates us to the knowledge of Divine relation and acts of the sublimest. The following are the main points in the Roman code which illustrate this matter.\*

1. The person adopted must be actually and of his own right of another family than that whereinto he is adopted.

\* Taken from Owen, Gould's ed., ii, 207-8. See Froude's *Cæsar*, pp. 206-7.

2. There must be a family unto which, of himself, he hath no right, whereinto he is to be grafted. If a man comes into a family upon a *personal* right, though originally at never so great a distance, that man is not adopted. If a man of most remote consanguinity do come into the inheritance of any family by the death of the nearer heirs, though his right before was little better than nothing, yet he is a born son of that family; he is not adopted. In adoption he is not to have the plea of the most remote possibility of succession.

3. There must be an *authoritative legal* translation from one family into another. The mere desire and pleasure of the person to adopt another could not affect the result. The supreme power must consent to and *authorize* it.

4. That the adopted person be freed from all the obligations that are upon him unto the family from whence he is translated; otherwise he can be no way useful or serviceable unto the family whereinto he is ingrafted. He cannot serve two masters, much less *two fathers*.

5. That by virtue of his adoption, he be invested with all the rights, privileges, advantages, and title to the whole inheritance, of the family into which he is adopted, in as full and ample a manner as if he had been a born son therein.

Such in general were the ideas on the subject of adoption in the minds of those to whom the apostles wrote, and they could not but adapt them to the teachings they received in regard to the Divine relations and acts to which they were applied. The expressions would be meaningless to them unless this were so.

1. In the first place, it is evident that mankind do not by nature belong to the Divine household. That family, in the just and proper sense of the word, is otherwise composed. The original and proper Paternity of God revealed in the Bible is, as we have seen, in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one, the only, the coëqual, and coëternal Son of the Divine Father. The loftiest intelligences are at an infinite remove from any such relationship. And to this Divine family of the eternal Father and Son belongs the Holy Spirit, not as a second Son, but as the *vinculum Trinitatis*, the bond of the Father and the Son, called in the Scripture "the Spirit of the Father," and "the Spirit of the Son," one and the same Spirit of and with the other twain. To this Divine household of the Father, Son, and Spirit, it is self-evident we do not belong by nature. Herein we have no name, nor right, nor title, nor inheritance.

Then we do belong to another family. As men, as physical, intellectual and moral beings, we are all by nature the children of

Adam. He is our first father, the generative head and source of the whole human race, the family of man. We are his posterity by ordinary generation. The race is a unit in him. They are of one blood from and with him, seminally and germinally descended from him. He is our natural and proper parent. He is, and He only is, the All-Father of mankind.

Then, as the procreation and propagation of the race began after Adam fell, not only are we one with him as to our essential human nature, but we are likewise *begotten* in his image and likeness as *fallen*, even as he was *created* in the image and likeness of God as *upright*. We are not only *born* spiritually dead, but we are conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity and are by nature the children of wrath. We sinned in and fell with him. We were made sinful and sinners by his disobedience. We *inherit* sin and wrath and condemnation. In respect to our original and native family connection, we are as far as possible removed from the family of God. Neither physically, nor intellectually, nor morally, nor spiritually have we the most remote kinship to God as our Father.

Yea, and more. The Bible allies Adam and all his posterity by ordinary generation to another family, attributes to them another parentage. It is needless, for the purpose I have in view, to expound and justify by criticism the language of the Scripture on this point, but I will simply quote a few familiar passages by which it will be made palpably clear that the first condition essential to a Divine adoption is most abundantly vindicated. The Pharisees claimed that they "had Abraham to their father," and, after the manner of many now, they further claimed, "We have one Father, even God." Our Lord, conceding their natural parentage from Abraham, denied any higher relation to him and said: "If ye were Abraham's children ye would do the works of Abraham," and added, "If God were your Father ye would love Me." But ye belong to a different family: "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." So, in the parable of the tares, He says: "The tares are the children of the wicked one." Paul styled Elymas, "Thou child of the devil." And John says: "He that committeth sin is of the devil," and, "In this are manifested the children of the devil."

If it is urged here that this is a metaphorical and not a literal use of the terms, because a man cannot properly and truly be said to have two fathers, I answer: (1) I do not dispute this, but fully concede it. But then, the objection cannot be urged by those who hold to the All-Fatherhood of God, for this makes each and every man to have two all-fathers, Adam and God. This was the plea of the Pharisees. As Jews, they claimed Abraham and God to be

their fathers. Christ took them up on their own ground and said, that while indeed they were the natural and proper children of Abraham, yet in the sense they called God their Father they were mistaken. In that sense, the devil, and not God, was their father. And (2) I answer: We must here, as in all other metaphorical uses of the words *father* and *children* in the Bible, discover the truth that underlies the metaphor. And I need only say, that when the expressions are so precise and emphatic, and are designed to convey most solemn and tremendous truth, as they are in these quotations, we must, at least, interpret them so as to exclude and deny the real and literal Fatherhood of God and the natural sonship to Him of men. The Lord Jesus and the apostles did mean to convey the idea of the most thorough union and communion in spirit, relationship and conduct of the devil and men. With such teachings in the Bible, it is perfectly evident that actually and in our own natural right we belong to another family than that into which we may be adopted.

2. There is a family into which we may be adopted in which we have no rights whatsoever. This is the household and family of the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But it is an essential and necessary thing that in all adopting families the parties adopted must be of the *same nature* with the parties adopting. There must be natural affinities between the two families. And hence a stupendous difficulty at once emerges; for Humanity and Divinity are separated by an illimitable and infinite distance. I cannot now fully enlarge upon the manner in which this difficulty is surmounted. It is wholly supernatural and a matter of simple Divine Revelation. Its solution is found in the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Godhead, the eternal and only-begotten Son of the First, His assumption of human nature into personal, vital, indissoluble and everlasting union with Himself, His taking to Himself a true body and a reasonable soul. He took not on Him the nature of angels, and therefore angels cannot be the subjects of adoption; but He did take on Him the seed of Abraham, so that human beings can be. The Son of God, the eternal Word who was in the beginning with God and was God, the Creator of all things, was made flesh and dwelt among us. He was Immanuel, God with us, very God of very God, and very man. God sent forth His Son *made of a woman*, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the *adoption* of sons, and so become the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ the Incarnate God. It is because the only-begotten Son of God became a true and genuine man that He is the first born among many *brethren*, the *elder brother*, by a Divine designation, of the human

family. It is because of this, as I said, that not angels, not celestial creatures of any rank or order, but men and only men, can be adopted into the Divine family, and this because He who is in and of and with the Godhead, being truly and properly and perfectly man, has taken Humanity up into the Godhead and has exalted it to the middle place on the Divine throne of the universe. He is the Son of the eternal Father, and He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and one spirit with us. He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person, and yet He is not ashamed to call us *brethren*. And hence, when we are united to Him by the Holy Spirit through faith, we are united to Him who is not only truly man but truly God. And being spiritually renewed, born again, begotten of God into His image and likeness, we are thus the true, loved and loving, brothers of Christ, and so we become the proper subjects of adoption into this august, glorious, Divine household; and God the Father beholding us thus closely related to His only and eternal Son, and seeing that Son so bound up with us in the ties of nature and love and life, for His sake and in Him takes us into His fellowship and makes us His sons and heirs, joint heirs with His only-begotten Son. For God has accepted that Son in His *Humanity* and taken Him, with all the scars and insignia of His infinite humiliation, into His Bosom, and has seated Him as a man on His throne, and has committed all rule and authority and judgment to Him, and has commanded all the angels to worship Him as a Lamb that was slain. So that there is a wonderful congruity and concinnity in our adoption into the Divine family. Because through the ineffable mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption we are the real brothers of the Second Person of the Trinity, we are properly made the sons of the First Person by adoption, and He, when He has thus adopted us, sends the Third Person to impart to us the *filial* instinct and spirit of His only and eternal Son, so that with Him and like Him we can say to the First Person of the adorable Trinity, Abba, Father; that Spirit, at the same time bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. Thus is answered and fulfilled the prayer of our Lord, "that they all may be one; as Thou Father art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us:" explicating and illumining His other words, "the *glory* which Thou gavest Me, I have given them that they may be one even as we are one, I in them, Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in One . . . that the Love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." In conclusion, under this point, let me refer to the language (1) of Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge, in his "Knowledge of God Subjectively Considered" (pp. 185, 186), who says: "There is

no conceivable way in which any being, much less a fallen sinner of the human race, can become a son of God in any sense bearing the most distant resemblance to the one I have been pointing out—except by becoming, in the very way declared in the Scriptures, the brother of the Son of God, and by adoption the son of God. . . . Admit that the Son of God has taken our nature—and that by the new birth we are made partakers of His nature: does it not necessarily follow that we are to share, not only *all* His grace, but *all* His glory? Does it not necessarily follow that we are to share with Him His infinite inheritance as the Son of God? Above all, does it not necessarily follow that we shall do all this as absolutely His brothers—as absolutely sons of His Father; and that by His own procurement, and through the boundless love of God, a divine sentence shall award to us in this life, an indefeasible title as sons and heirs, not only to the whole inheritance, but to the actual possession and fruition of the earnest of it, here below?” and (2) of Prof. Godet, in his “Defense of the Christian Faith” (pp. 307, 309, 310), who says: “God became man in One man, in order that by faith in this One all others might be raised into the closest and most direct union with God Himself! . . . The truth is, that by establishing the fact of the Divinity of our Saviour, we gain God Himself for our Brother, and that by our union with this Brother we become fit to share in the state of Deity. . . . There has existed a God-man in order that in Him we all, becoming His brothers by His Incarnation, might be transformed into a family of creatures in whom the Paternal love of God might shine forth in its glory; even in a certain sense a family of God-men. I should not dare to use such an expression, if St. Paul himself had not, in speaking of the Son, written the words, That He might be the First-born among many brethren.”

3. Adoption into the Divine family being thus made possible and practicable in the intimate and personal participation of our nature by the eternal Son of God, and by our vital union with Him in regeneration, the next thing to be remarked is, that when the gracious act of adoption takes place, it is the authoritative and decisive act of the Eternal Father as the Supreme, Sovereign Law-giver and Arbitrator of the Universe. As God is just when He justifies the believing sinner, so He is *just* when He *adopts* him. No interest suffers. No rights of angels, men, or creatures, are infringed. The transaction is as equitable and righteous as it is authoritative and complete. The believer in Christ is the true brother of Christ who is the only-begotten Son of God, not only as possessing a common human nature with Him, a true body and a reasonable soul, but by being one in heart and mind and spirit with Him. He is regenerated, begotten and born again by the Holy

Ghost, and is thus brought into a vital, loving and fully fraternal relation with Christ; and as such he is presented by Christ to His Eternal Father for adoption. Then the great God, by an act of sovereign righteousness and grace, formally, authoritatively and forever receives him into His family, makes him His son and heir, a joint heir with Christ, His Eternal Son, but now the Elder Brother of the family, to a Divine inheritance. The form or method of this transaction is, of course, unknown to us. The procedures of Heaven's High Court are beyond our ken. But while the form is unknown, the effect of some form is revealed. On this point, I use the language of Owen (Vol. ii, pp. 210, 211): (1) The giving of the believer a *new name* in a white stone (Rev. ii, 17). They that are adopted are to take new names; they change their names they had in their old families to take the names of the families whereinto they are translated. This new name is "a child of God." That is the new name given in adoption, and no man knoweth what is in that name, but only he that doth receive it. And this new name is given and written in a white stone; that is the *tessera* of our admission into the house of God. It is a stone of judicial acquitment. Our adoption is bottomed on our absolution in the blood of Jesus; and therefore is the new name in the white stone privilege grounded on discharge. The white stone quits the claim of the old family; the new name gives entrance to the other. (2) An enrolling his name in the catalogue of the household of God, admitting him thereby into fellowship therein. This is called the "writing of the house of Israel" (Ezek. xiii, 9); that is, the roll wherein all the names of the Israel, the family of God, are written. God hath a catalogue of His household; Christ knows His sheep by name. When God writeth up the people He counts that "this man was born in Zion, that that man was born there." This is the record of the new name God gives to His adopted children. It is an extract from the Lamb's Book of Life. They are thus translated from the kingdom and family of Satan into the kingdom and family of God's dear Son.

4 and 5. I put the fourth and fifth particulars together. Those who are adopted into the family of God are freed from all obligations unto that family to which they belonged, and are invested with all the rights, privileges, dignities, immunities, and prerogatives of that into which they are translated.

(1) They are freed from all the obligations to law and justice which held them in the Adamic connection as children of the apostasy. They are not under the Law as a covenant of works, but are freed and delivered from it, and are under grace. There is no condemnation whatsoever to them. They are delivered from the

guilt\* of Adam's sin, from the guilt of their own actual sins, and from the guilt of their indwelling sin. They are freed from all the authority and power which held them to the fortunes of that family. The dominion of sin, the dominion of Satan, the dominion of the world, the dominion of the flesh, all are escaped. They are emancipated, set free, from the bondage of sin, death, hell and wrath, to which they were subject by reason of their birth and being in the family of apostate Adam.

(2) They are introduced and welcomed into the home and family of God, and are, as we have seen, invested with the family name. They realize the deep, spiritual, sublime meaning of their baptism into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They are called sons of God, the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, brethren of Christ: a new name, such as comports with their filial relations to their Eternal Father.

(3) They are quickened with the life and gifted with the spirit of the Only-begotten Son. The love of God as the Father of Jesus Christ, and as their Father is shed abroad in their hearts, permeating, filling, controlling them and becoming a spiritual, filial instinct in them, so that they can say, just as Christ says, *Abba Father*. The Holy Spirit, who is the bond of the Trinity, the cement and seal of their union and communion, is the very bond which unites believers to Christ, and so is the common centre and source of that ineffable union and communion declared in our Lord's intercessory prayer, "I in them, Thou in Me, they in Us. Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

(4) They are blessed with the confidence and affection of sons. God is not only their reconciled God, but their everlasting Father who loves them with an ineffable paternal love, such as He feels towards His only-begotten and eternal sons. Twice did that Son affirm this in His intercessory prayer: "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me;" and, "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them." And in accordance with this, the Holy Spirit residing in them bears witness with their spirits that they are the children of God. And the joy and delight of God in these sons of His brought to glory by Christ is simply inconceivable. He joys over them with singing; He sings His joy and His love to them. They are His rest, His love, His crown and royal diadem, His jewels, His glory, His portion, His treasure, His inheritance. He calls them the dearly beloved of His soul. We read of the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

\* The word *guilt* is here used in the sense of *reatus*, liability to legal consequences, and not in the sense of *culpa*, blameworthiness.

In the same line of thought with this, expressive of something ineffably great and glorious and surpassing all thought, there are passages which I do not profess any ability to interpret, but which are in perfect accord with all that has been said. The Church, made up of believers in Christ, united to Him, and adopted by God as His sons, is said to be the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. They are said to be partakers of the Divine nature and to be filled with all the fullness of God.

(5) In their adoption as the sons of God, believers are exalted above all the other creatures of God. Angels and archangels, all the hierarchies of heaven, seraphim, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, are all below them in privileges, position, rank, dignity and familiarity with God. These all worship the God-man in the midst of the throne, ascribing to Him power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. In the last great day, when Christ is lifted to the highest heights of His glory, He proclaims them to the universe, not His servants or subjects, or friends, but His *brethren*. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My *brethren*," etc. As assessors with Him on His throne, they shall *judge angels*. And angels are the appointed servants of the adopted sons of God. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who are the heirs of salvation?" It is written that, the same power, "the exceeding greatness of God's power, which wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;" works in believers to quicken and raise and exalt them to the same heavenly places, where they sit with Him on His throne, as He is seated with His Father on His Father's throne, and reign with Him forever and ever. And so, by their union in a common humanity with the Son of God, who is God over all, blessed forever, their everlasting preëminence as sons of God is established.

(6) They are invested with the form, lineaments, beauty and glory of God's eternal Son. They have the image and verisimilitude in soul and body of the only-begotten Son of the Father. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." "We are changed into His image from glory to glory." "These vile bodies shall be changed and made like unto His glorious body." "The glory which I had with Thee before the world was, I have given them;" surely a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

(7) They have the liberty, the glorious liberty, the liberty in glory of the sons of God.

(8) They have the protection and tutelage of sons. God dealeth with them as with sons. "Like as a *father* pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." "Like as one whom his *mother* comforteth, so will I comfort you." He numbers all the hairs of their heads. He that toucheth one of them toucheth the apple of His eye. *All things* work together for *their good*.

(9) They have the right and title to the possessions of the Divine Father. They are heirs of God just as His only-begotten Son is His heir, for they are joint heirs with Christ. This inheritance is the mediatorial purchased possession of the Son of God, the reward of His infinitely meritorious righteousness. This inheritance consists of: 1. The world and all things in it, Paul and Cephas, and life and death, and things present and things to come, the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens. 2. Heaven and all it contains, its throne and dominion and splendor and wealth and glory, and that forever and ever. As wide and vast and enduring as is the inheritance of Christ, so wide and vast and enduring is the inheritance of the adopted sons of God.

But I pause in this attempted explication of the doctrine and the fact of God's adoption of believers in Christ, into His family. I freely confess that the subject is transcendent. Like the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Love of Christ, it passes knowledge and understanding. I have simply collected and studied the words of Scripture and tried to make them speak and declare their own meaning. They teach something other than and beyond pardon and acceptance, regeneration and sanctification and everlasting salvation. There is scarcely a subject of more elevating, ennobling and thrilling interest connected with the unsearchable riches of Christ. To call God the *Father* of men when we do not mean that He is the Father of men either by *generation* or by *regeneration* and *adoption*, but merely a kind Creator, a loving and merciful Friend under the plan of redemption, is practically to deceive them. If we use the term metaphorically, as a figure of speech, we should do so in such a manner as not to mislead. A sonship without the prerogatives, immunities, liberties, rights, heirship and instincts of sons is of little worth, and a sonship with them is only by adoption.

It has been argued that Adam was originally in some way or other, how and to what extent is not stated, a true and proper son of God. He held the relation with the consequent rights and title and prerogatives of a son, and possessed the *filial instinct*, and this irrespective of the incarnation of the Second Person of the Godhead; which incarnation, being based upon the apostasy of Adam, could

not be the ground of Adam's sonship before he sinned. It is also held that while the relation of sons continues in his posterity, the *filial instinct* having been destroyed by sin is restored in regeneration, and so the sonship in its completeness is restored.

I do not see how the plain and explicit doctrine of adoption, taught in the Scriptures, is compatible with this. An existing *relationship* of father and son is not destroyed by the abandonment of the family by that son, nor is the *paternal instinct* eradicated by such abandonment. The *relationship* exists in the *nature* of the case, and cannot be rendered non-existent either by disinheritance on the part of the father or by desertion on the part of the son. The Roman law of adoption, certainly, never contemplated such a case. The Scriptural doctrine of adoption, as stated in our Standards, seems to me to be evacuated by the claim of an original sonship of man to God. An "official" fatherhood, a "providential" fatherhood may be well enough, but this is not the fatherhood revealed in the Bible towards those that are adopted and made heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

The tendency of the doctrine of the All-Fatherhood of God is to Universalism. The whole Bible view of law and penalty and punishment is undermined. A *Father* ought not to be a judge: his paternal relations and instincts disqualify him. If God deals with the race of men as with *sons*, then *chastisement* and not punishment is what they receive. And as there are no bastards in *God's* family, it follows that all are subjects of only paternal correction and not of strict judicial administration. The Word (2 Sam. vii, 14, 15), "I will be a father to him and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chastise him with the rod of men and with the stripes of the children of men, but my mercy shall not depart from him," states the true principle of paternal government. The doctrine of satisfaction to the Divine justice by a substitute is stripped of its meaning and its power, and paternity, paternal love and compassion and spontaneous forgiveness take its place. The person of the sinner rises superior to the sin he commits, owing to his filial relation and position; and the immanent, eternal and necessary justice of God gives place to the compassionate will of God. Sin, satisfaction, atonement, penalty, punishment, Divine judgship and Divine sovereignty are all weakened and soon obliterated, and the doctrine of universal salvation emerges and ere long comes to the front. God as a parent and God as a "consuming fire" do not go together. In the Bible God never finally punishes His adopted children; they are all saved. And if all men are His children by nature, not only is adoption an irrelevancy, but all must be saved; for the dealings of God with His sons are educational, disciplinary,

corrective, reformatory, not punitive. If the sons of God are punished with everlasting destruction from His presence, then the paternal government is a failure. Doctor Candlish says, "The merely analogical view of the Fatherhood of God lies at the root of much if not all of our modern infidelity."

I had designed to refer to several places in the Scriptures which some have held to teach the All-Fatherhood of God, but I remark:

1. The truth of adoption being established, a different explanation is necessitated. 2. It is easy, in most instances, to detect their metaphorical character. 3. In the Old Testament passages referring to Israel, their *typical* character must be recognized.

I close with a brief explanation of the parable of the Prodigal Son, so far as it bears on the subject we have considered. There are three complementary parables in the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. They are all spoken for, certainly they all point to and serve, one and the same end, viz., to vindicate Christ against the scornful charge of the Pharisees made in the second verse: "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them," for they saw that "all the publicans and sinners drew near to hear Him." The accounts of the lost sheep, the lost piece of money and the lost son are given to illustrate and exemplify the fact that Jesus Christ is just what the Pharisees accused Him of, the friend of lost sinners. This is very evident. Why the third, that of the Prodigal Son, the most striking, powerful and effective of them all, should be taken out from its connection and diverted to a wholly different matter, entirely irrelevant to the purpose of Christ, and made to illustrate not *His* love, but the love of God the Father, for the lost, I cannot see. It is a dislocation of Christ's argument, and the introduction of a subject which has no bearing on Christ's defense. But this parable, derived, as are the others, from common life, and the story told concerning a kind and well-to-do father among men, with two sons behaving in the manner related, serves with great force and effect to make Christ's vindication of His matchless love complete and triumphant. He says, I am like the shepherd going after the one lost sheep; I am like the woman searching for the one lost piece of silver; I am like the father welcoming his lost but penitent Prodigal Son. The parables are each and all of them proofs of Christ's own personal love to perishing sinners. They are designed and adapted to prove this beyond all question, and they are not designed to prove anything else, assuredly not the all-fatherhood of God to the human race.

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