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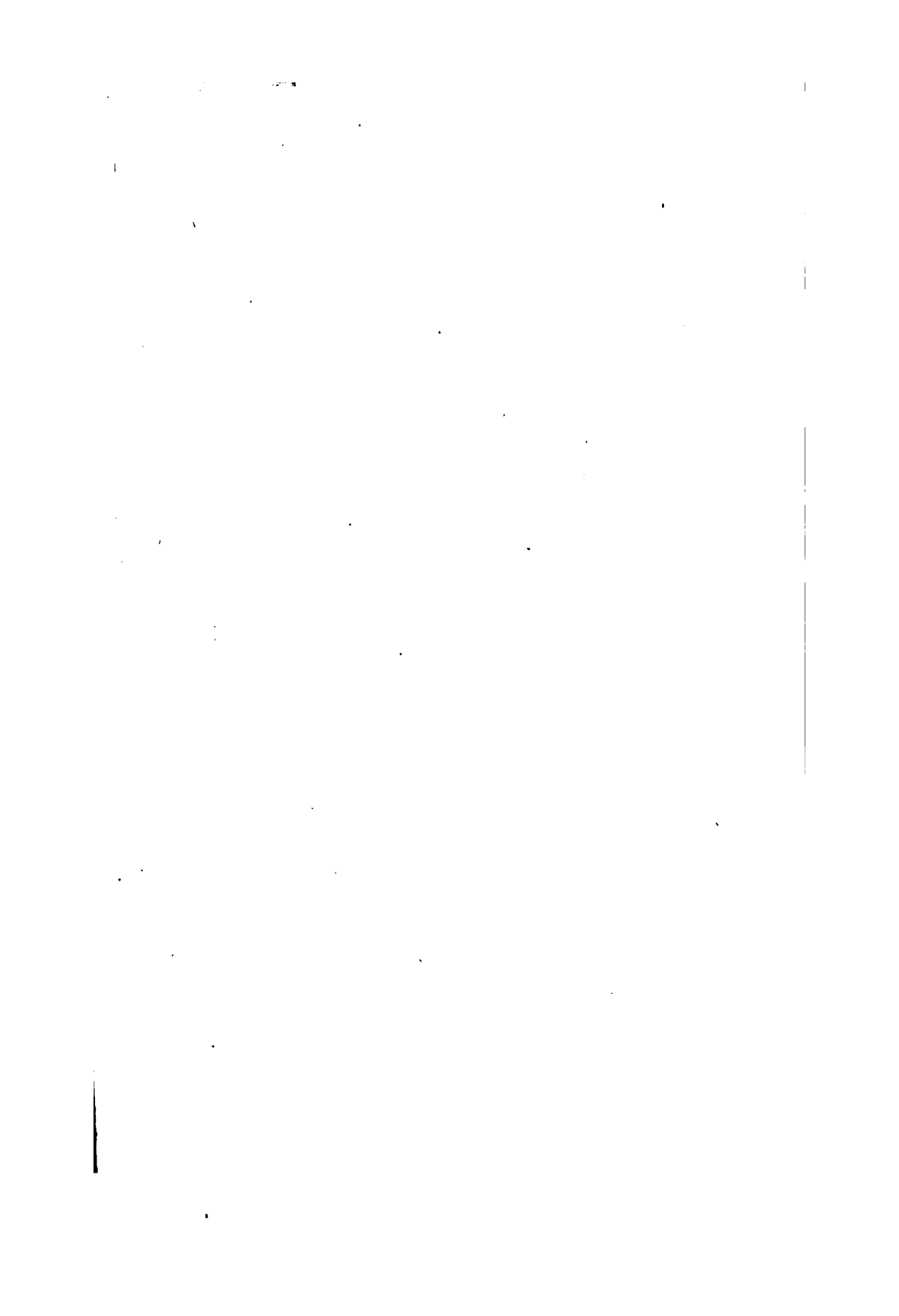
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THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

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THE
FATHERHOOD OF GOD

BEING THE FIRST COURSE OF THE
CUNNINGHAM LECTURES

DELIVERED BEFORE THE NEW COLLEGE, EDINBURGH,
IN MARCH 1864.

BY
ROB. S. CANDLISH, D.D.

PRINCIPAL OF THE NEW COLLEGE, AND MINISTER OF FREE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH.

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EXTRACT DECLARATION OF TRUST, ETC.,

March 1, 1862.

I, WILLIAM BINNY WEBSTER, late Surgeon in the H.E.I.C.S., presently residing in Edinburgh,—Considering that I feel deeply interested in the success of the Free Church College, Edinburgh, and am desirous of advancing the Theological Literature of Scotland, and for this end to establish a Lectureship similar to those of a like kind connected with the Church of England and the Congregational body in England, and that I have made over to the General Trustees of the Free Church of Scotland the sum of £2000 sterling, in trust, for the purpose of founding a Lectureship in memory of the late Reverend William Cunningham, D.D., Principal of the Free Church College, Edinburgh, and Professor of Divinity and Church History therein, and under the following conditions, namely—*First*, The Lectureship shall bear the name, and be called “The Cunningham Lectureship.” *Second*, The lecturer shall be a Minister or Professor of the Free Church of Scotland, and shall hold the appointment for not less than two years, nor more than three years, and be entitled for the period of his holding the appointment to the income of the endowment as declared by the General Trustees, it being understood that the Council after referred to may occasionally appoint a minister or professor from other denominations, provided this be approved of by not fewer than eight members of the Council, and it being further understood, that the Council are to regulate the terms of payment of the lecturer. *Third*, The lecturer shall be at liberty to choose his own subject within the range of Apologetical, Doctrinal, Controversial, Exegetical, Pastoral, or Historical Theology, including what bears on missions, home and foreign, subject to the consent of the Council. *Fourth*, The lecturer shall be bound to deliver publicly at Edinburgh a course of lectures on the

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subjects thus chosen at some time immediately preceding the expiry of his appointment, and during the Session of the New College, Edinburgh ; the lectures to be not fewer than six in number, and to be delivered in presence of the professors and students under such arrangements as the Council may appoint ; the lecturer shall be bound also to print and publish, at his own risk, not fewer than 750 copies of the lectures within a year after their delivery, and to deposit three copies of the same in the Library of the New College ; the form of the publication shall be regulated by the Council. *Fifth*, A Council shall be constituted, consisting of (first) Two Members of their own body to be chosen annually in the month of March, by the Senatus of the New College, other than the Principal ; (second) Five Members to be chosen annually by the General Assembly, in addition to the Moderator of the said Free Church of Scotland ; together with (third) the Principal of the said New College for the time being, the Moderator of the said General Assembly for the time being, the procurator or law adviser of the Church, and myself the said William Binny Webster, or such person as I may nominate to be my successor : the Principal of the said College to be Convener of the Council, and any Five Members duly convened to be entitled to act notwithstanding the non-election of others. *Sixth*, The duties of the Council shall be the following :— (first), To appoint the lecturer and determine the period of his holding the appointment, the appointment to be made before the close of the Session of College immediately preceding the termination of the previous lecturer's engagement ; (second), To arrange details as to the delivery of the lectures, and to take charge of any additional income and expenditure of an incidental kind that may be connected therewith, it being understood that the obligation upon the lecturer is simply to deliver the course of lectures free of expense to himself. *Seventh*, The Council shall be at liberty, on the expiry of five years, to make any alteration that experience may suggest as desirable in the details of this plan, provided such alterations shall be approved of by not fewer than Eight Members of the Council.

PREFACE.

I HAVE delayed the publication of these Lectures, I fear, somewhat beyond the term prescribed by the letter of the Founder's deed, though not so as seriously to violate the spirit of it. I entertained the hope of being able to render them less unworthy of the occasion ; and, in particular, I contemplated a supplementary or preliminary dissertation, in which I might obviate some misapprehensions not unlikely to arise out of my manner of treating the subject, and might also fortify my principal positions by authorities more or less favourable to my views. Various circumstances have so hindered me, that I have judged it best, on the whole, to abandon that intention, and to content myself for the present with a careful revisal of the Lectures as they were delivered. I have given, however, a few explanatory notes. And I have added an Appendix of four

Discourses, or Scriptural Expositions, fitted, as I trust, to confirm and illustrate the doctrines which I advocate.

These are not, in my opinion, novel doctrines ; I would be sorry to think that they were. I may have put some points more sharply, and pushed a certain line of thought more boldly, than some may be quite prepared to approve. I am persuaded that I have really advanced nothing which may not be found, if not categorically asserted, at least fairly implied, in the writings of orthodox and evangelical divines, both of earlier and of later times. But I am also persuaded that in the interest of a sound faith, and in the view of presently prevailing error, it is of some consequence that the aspects of theology which I have endeavoured to present should be more unequivocally and prominently elevated into a conspicuous place of their own, than they have been in some of our systems. This must be my apology, both for the choice of my subject and for my way of handling it.

Thus, for one thing, I am anxious to keep the relation of real and proper sonship quite

distinct and separate from every other. That the original relation of intelligent creatures to God, the relation constituted in and by their creation, is such as to admit of much friendly and loving intercourse and of many mutual endearments, very nearly akin to fatherly and filial fellowship, I freely allow. But I refuse to call it sonship. Satan, in Milton, claims to be God's son, even in his fallen state—

“The son of God I also am, or was,
And if I was, I am ; relation stands.”
Paradise Regained, iv. 517.

And he is logically right. “Relation stands ;” and with relation, duty also. The fallen spirit is God's son still, if he was his son before. And he owes his Father filial love. It may be so. In his case it does not matter much. But if it be so in the case of fallen man, how is his case met? I can see how in Christ his case, as that of a disobedient subject, is met. But what provision is made for healing the hurt which the relation of sonship, still standing, has sustained? None that I can see ;—unless sonship is simply merged in subjectship. And that I take to be the real state of the matter, so far as the sounder portion

of the asserters of an original relation of sonship are concerned.

The truth is, that this original relation of sonship is with them nothing more than a kind of quality of subjectship. It is subjectship realising itself, if one may so speak, in favourable circumstances and under favourable influences;—causing it to partake not a little of the genial, cordial spirit which is wont to pervade the walk of a son with his father. If that is all that is involved in the primitive and primeval sonship of paradise, then it follows that it is all that the perfected sonship of heaven can have in it;—all I mean in kind, there may be a difference of degree. For “relation stands,” after its hurt is healed, the same as it was at first, and has ever been.

But such a view does not really satisfy those who look forward to the believer’s ultimate glory in Christ. I cite a few instances in proof. For I claim all such instances as virtually on my side in this argument. They may not make the sonship so explicitly the point at issue as I do. But I think they admit, or rather assert, all that I require for my purpose.

I begin with Goodwin. Writing of the

superiority of the future state of the redeemed, as compared with man's position in Paradise, he says:—" I grant that this new spirit, begotten of the Spirit, is of a more divine temper, genius, and aspirement than the image of God in Adam was, which though holy, yet (was so) but in a natural way ;—in knowing God in and by the creatures, and by the covenant of works, and so only according to what is naturally due unto a creature reasonable, as he first falls out of the hands of his Maker. And I should not only grant that this new divine nature, born of the Spirit, is supernatural, in comparison to corrupt nature and the dispositions thereof, but also in comparison of pure nature. Insomuch as Adam was but an earthly natural man, comparatively to that which is born of the Spirit, which is the image of the heavenly, and is ordained in the end to see God in himself, and will be raised up thereto ; and at present hath such a way of knowing and enjoying God, and such object spiritual suited to it as Adam's state was not capable of."—*Works*, vol. vi. p. 161, *Nichol's Edition*.

More particularly, in another passage, he uses language so strong, that I would

hold any controversy with him on the subject to be little better than logomachy. "Adam was a son of God's by creation (Luke iii. 38). But to be a son of God by Christ, this is a higher thing, and puts the spiritualness upon it which a holy heart values. For it is to be a son-in-law by marriage unto, and union with, the natural son of God. So then the spirituality of our sonship lies in that relation it hath unto Christ."—*Works*, vol. vi. p. 180.

And still more strongly, if possible, in yet another passage he contrasts the servant and the son;—"So in like manner to be begotten again notes a state of sonship, a being truly made a child; for if God begets, he begets genuinely, it proves always a true child of his begetting; and whoever is born of God hath his image, his nature, or as the apostle speaks, 'true holiness,' (Eph. iv. 24). They (*i.e.*, apostates) are said to be sanctified (Heb. x.) for that may have a counterfeit, namely, a setting apart to outward service by gifts and enlightenments; but to shew it is not true sanctification, or after God in true holiness, they are never said to be born of God. They as servants live in the family, are put into

offices and services, and to that end do receive gifts and graces to lay out as talents, (Matt. xxv.) which, not improved, they lose, but being not made children, therefore it is they abide not always in the house, as Christ speaks (John viii. 35)—“ And the servant abideth not in the house for ever ; but the Son abideth ever.” They are hired servants, not begotten children. They have gifts from him as a lord, but not his image as from a father, and so are never said to be begotten.—*Works*, vol. vi. p. 154.

Another matter which I have sought to elaborate is the connection of our sonship as believers with that of the incarnate son of God, in its nature as well as in its discovery or manifestation.

As to this last point,—its discovery or manifestation,—I have founded an argument on the distinction, which I hold to be very marked and very significant, between the almost unbroken silence of the Old Testament on the subject of the sonship of the saints, and the clear, full utterances of the New. And I am glad to have had my attention called to a criticism of Delitzsch, which strongly corroborates my view.

It is a criticism on Psalm lxxiii. 15. “‘The generation of thy children’ is the totality of those in whom the filial relation in which God has placed Israel to himself has become an inward reality, the Israel of God or the generation of the righteous (Psalm xiv. 5). It is a generic name, as in Deut. xiv. 1, Hosea ii. 1. For hereby is the New Testament distinguished in this point of the *ιουδαία* from the Old, that always in the Old Testament only Israel as a people is called son—or as a totality of individuals, sons. But the individual could not yet venture to call himself a child of God. The personality is not yet set loose from the race, it is not yet independent, it is still the time of the minority.”

The other point is, of course, the more vital one. I mean the nature of the connection between the believer’s sonship and that of Christ. I have not hesitated to avow my belief in the substantial identity of the relation. I have of course insisted upon certain very material differences. In particular I have been careful to discriminate between the original ground of a relation, or the manner in which it is constituted or subsists, and its proper na-

ture. It may rest on different grounds and be differently constituted, in two different parties sustaining it, and yet be truly the same relation. Then, again, it must ever be kept in mind that there may be the widest possible difference also, as to the capacities of the two parties respectively for apprehending the relation in all its fullness. When the one party is divine as well as human, and the other human merely, the difference in this respect must be literally immense. Still it may be held to be the same relation, without in the least confounding divinity and humanity, or making man God, or equal to God.

In illustrating the identity for which I plead, I have not felt myself bound to attempt any exact or formal definition of the sonship which I hold to be the privilege of the believer. If it were, in my view, a relation in which, as a believer, he stood alone, or a relation which he shared only with other believers, such a definition might be legitimately demanded of me. But if it is a relation which he shares with the Son, or rather which the Son shares with him, the thing is not so practicable. Indeed, as it seems to me, the attempt would

be almost presumptuous. It is safer and more becoming to study the outgoings or outcomings of the relation in the actings and utterances of the Son himself, and to seek, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to become more and more one with him in them all.

This, in fact, is what all devout theologians more or less explicitly teach on the subject of the union which faith effects between Christ and his people;—so that here again I may claim as virtually on my side many who do not employ the phraseology which I adopt;—phraseology, however, which I think I see reason more and more every day why the Church should appropriate, if her trumpet is to give a certain sound.

I am tempted to give a quotation or two from authors of widely different times and temperaments, bearing on the intimate connection, at least, of Christ's sonship with that of the believer.

I begin with Athanasius. In his epistle on the Decrees of the Council of Nice (ch. 31), he thus writes:—"And Christ would have the sum of our faith to refer to this, for he commanded us to be bap-

tised, not in the name of the unbegotten and the begotten, nor in the name of the uncreated and the created, but in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ; for thus being perfected, we too are truly made sons ; and naming the name of the Father, we recognise from this name also the Word, who is in the Father. And though each one of us may call our Father his own Father, we must not therefore equal ourselves with the Son by nature. For even this is said of us through him : for since the Word bore our body, and was made in us, it follows that on account of the Word in us, God is called also our Father. For the Spirit of the Word in us addresses through us his own Father as ours : and this is the mind of the apostle when he says, ‘God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father.’”

And again, in his second oration against the Arians, he says:—“And this is the love of God to men, that of whom he is the Maker he also afterwards became by grace the Father ; and he becomes so when the men whom he has created, as the apostle says, receive into their hearts

the Spirit of his Son, crying, Abba, Father; and these are they who, having received the Word, receive power from him to become sons of God; for otherwise they could not have been sons, being by nature creatures, unless they receive the Spirit of him who is the true and natural Son of the Father. Wherefore, that this might be, the Word was made flesh, that he might make man capable of receiving the Deity. . . . From this it may be shewn that we are not by nature sons, but the Son in us; and again, that God is not our father by nature, but (the father) of the Word in us, in whom and through whom we cry, Abba, Father. And just so, too, in whomsoever the Father sees his own Son, them also he calls sons, and says of them, I have begotten; since to beget, is the sign of a son, and to make, of creatures. Wherefore we are not first begotten but made; for it is written, Let us make man; but afterwards, receiving the grace of the Spirit, we are said thenceforth also to be begotten. . . . And when men are by grace said to be begotten as sons, yet not the less are they by nature creatures.”

Schleiermacher may not be ranked high

as an authority ; but the following passage is interesting. It will be observed that he makes adoption a part of justification ; but he pleads for a high sort of adoption ; —“As to the second element (of justification), it is not possible that Christ should live in us without his relationship to his Father also forming itself in us, and our thus partaking in his sonship, which is the power that he gives to become the sons of God ; and this includes in it the guarantee of our sanctification. For the right of sonship is to be educated, to be free fellow-workers in the affairs of the house ; and the natural law of sonship is that by means of the vital connection also likeness to the father develops itself in the child. Thus, too, both elements are inseparable ; for a divine adoption without forgiveness of sins were null, since guilt begets fear, and that again bondage ; and by forgiveness without adoption no constant relation to God would be established. Both in this inseparableness make up the complete reversal of our relation to God, which is only called forgiveness in so far as it is connected with the putting off the old man, and adoption in so far

as it is connected with the putting on the new. And both, too, are so mutually conditioned one by the other, that each element may be viewed both as the earlier and the later ; for on the one side it would seem that the feeling of the old life must first be blotted out before that of the opposing new life can form itself. But, on the other side, it is only in the new that there lies the right and the power to shake ourselves free from the old. Thus it can be said with equal correctness, after a man's sins are forgiven he is received into the sonship of God, and after he is received into the sonship of God he receives forgiveness of sins."—*Christliche Glaube*. ii. p. 194, 195.

Nor may it be out of place to quote from Treffry a specimen of what he frequently though incidentally says in his book on the Eternal Sonship:—"The first Adam upon his fall 'begat a son in *his own* likeness;' and so 'the image of the earthy' is set upon his entire posterity. He was the type and model of that degenerate and corrupt condition which was introduced by his sin. It is the office of the second Adam to give back to a lapsed race the forfeited image of God. Nor is he, as the Son of

God, the renewer only of the miserable state of man, but equally the type and model of the new creation. Such he is, both with respect to personal purity, and in his eternal filial relation. It is not without reference to this that the faithful are called *sons of God*; for the entire administration of the gospel is designed to establish, between the human spirit and God, a moral relation in some respect analogous to that which subsists between the divine Father and the divine Son.

“This was one of the objects contemplated in the incarnation of the Son; that thus he who was inconceivably remote from us might be brought near to us; and that beholding the glory, ‘even of the Only Begotten from the Father,’ the process of assimilation proposed in the divine counsels might be accomplished in us. Hence, ‘when the fulness of the time was come, 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.’ He who by nature is the Son

of God becomes the son of man, that we, who by nature are sons of men, may become the sons of God. He assumes our nature that we may be transformed into the likeness of his. The SON is sent forth as our Redeemer, that we may receive at once the *filial relation* and the *filial Spirit*.*

There is a passage in Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* (Book v. sec. 56) which contains some very strong statements bearing on "the union or mutual participation which is between Christ and his people." It is too long to be given entire; and I fear I could scarcely make selections from it in a way that would be intelligible. It deserves careful study; and I am mistaken if the careful study of it will not suggest incidental corroborations, at least of the main propositions which I am anxious to maintain.

I leave my work now to the judgment of intelligent and candid students of theology and of the Word of God. I ask no more than this, that the volume be considered as a whole before it is criticised in

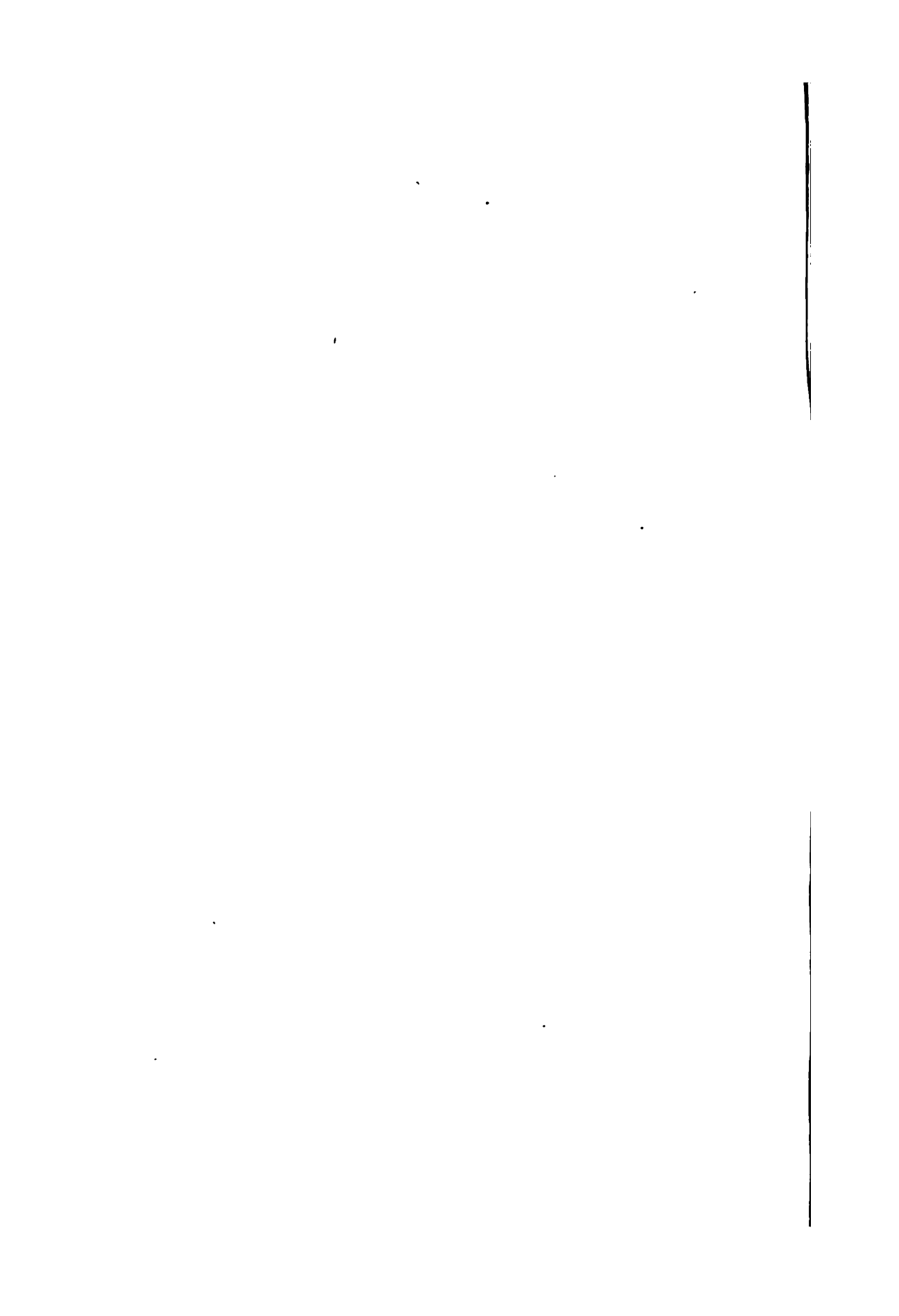
* Pages 403, 404, edit. 1837. The italics and capitals are Treffry's own.

PREFACE.

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detail. And I think I am entitled to beg that favour ; for whatever may be at first sight startling to some minds in my manner of treating the subject, can be fairly estimated only when my whole reasoning is examined.

EDINBURGH, *17th April* 1865.



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LECTURE FIRST.

The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.—ROMANS i. 20.

When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.—ROMANS ii. 14, 15.*

I COULD have wished that it had fallen to one possessed of learning, leisure, and the habit of study—none of which qualifications now belong to me—to inaugurate

* I prefix to the Lectures passages of Scripture, in deference to a practice, in similar cases, of which I quite approve. But I would not wish it to be understood that these are texts, in the ordinary sense of the term—that I either undertake the exposition of them, or found my reasoning upon them. They are simply to be viewed as mottoes or headings, more or less appropriate, indicating in a general way the subsequent line of thought.

this lectureship. The man whose name it bears would have been the proper person to discharge this duty. It was in consultation with him that the founder matured his plan. And had it pleased God to spare him, we would have had here this day, instead of the name, the living presence and voice of Principal Cunningham.

The occasion would have been worthy of the man. It is a new thing in Scotland. And it is what not a few of the best and wisest of Scotland's theologians have for years been anxious to realise. To one person, in particular, the credit is due of having urged upon the church and the community the importance of this object, with an enlightened zeal and perseverance which he will feel to be amply rewarded by the wise and liberal deed of gift of Dr. Webster, becoming palpable as an accomplished fact, in our present meeting. I cannot but congratulate my old friend and beloved brother, the Free Church minister of Newhaven, on his being here to witness this day's proceedings. The church owes not a little to him in connection with this noble institute.*

* See Note A.

I call it a noble institute, because I believe it to be so. And therefore I greatly honour the memory of the man who, when none else seemed to be at all alive to the appreciation of it, or, at least, so much alive as to be moved to practical effort in its behalf, took the matter into his own hands, and by his own act did the thing.

For the thing is done. It may not be done so thoroughly as not to admit of supplement. I do not think that it is. Something more is needed. But the thing is done. The lectureship is established; and whether sufficiently or not, it is yet so far endowed as to be henceforth, as it were, an ordinance in Israel. It is a self-perpetuating institute. Humanly speaking, the Cunningham Lectureship, founded by Dr. Webster, is safe for ages.

What its effect is to be on the church of the future, or on its theology, time with its unknown influences alone can show. It surely must contribute to give fixity to theological investigations; to harmonise originality with conservatism; to stimulate fresh thought and inquiry in divines of the new generation; and yet to link them in close continuity with the graver

and slower meditations of those who may be passing away.

I hope that this result, or a tendency to it, will very soon appear. Naturally, a desire has been felt and acted upon, that the honour and responsibility of some of the first appointments should be assigned to veterans—to those whose spurs, whether on the field or in the study, were won long years ago. But the number of these is now very small. And soon, I would almost say the sooner the better, younger brethren must be called in. This Lectureship must bring forward the representative men of another generation.

Then the full benefit of this institution will begin to appear. Then it will be seen how, not by its emolument, but by the stimulus to honourable ambition which it supplies, it will tell on the lone chamber of many a student toiling in the recesses and far-off isles of our church ; and tell so as to make his ministry all the more hearty, in the proportion in which it makes his study all the more hopeful.

The subject which I have chosen, with concurrence of the council, is the Father-

hood of God. It is a subject which might be handled in a great variety of ways, according to the different points of view, and the different aims of those handling it. My object is chiefly a practical one. It is to bring out the import and bearing of the Scriptural doctrine respecting the Fatherhood of God, as an influential element in Christian experience.

To reach that object, however, it may be necessary to begin with what may seem to be a somewhat abstract and speculative inquiry—an inquiry, I mean, into the relations which God sustains towards his intelligent creatures generally, and the place which the paternal relation holds among them. This inquiry, accordingly, will occupy the first Lecture.

The second will be devoted to a consideration of the Fatherhood of God, as manifested in the person of the Son ; especially with reference to his Sonship in his incarnate state, and its bearing on the sonship of his people.

In the third, I shall inquire how and how far the Fatherhood of God was matter of human knowledge and divine revelation before the incarnation of our Lord.

The fourth will contain an examination of the teaching of our Lord and his apostles on the subject ; with special reference to the question how Christ's Sonship and his people's are mutually related to one another, and connected with one another.

In the fifth, I shall advert to the manner in which the relation is constituted, so far as men are concerned ; and in the sixth, I shall endeavour to point out some of its characteristic privileges and obligations.

Such is a general outline of the plan upon which these Lectures are prepared ; subject, of course, to modifications that may be rendered necessary, as I proceed from day to day with the work of extending and putting in shape the rough materials which I have somewhat carefully brought together.

In the discharge of this duty I crave the indulgence of my audience. And more than that, I ask their sympathy and their prayers. The theme is a very great one, and it demands very delicate treatment. My way of treating it may be in some respects unusual ; on which account I hope my hearers may be willing sometimes to suspend their judgment until they have

my views fully before them. I do not, however, mean to teach new doctrine. I seek to know the mind of Christ.

THE inquiry concerning the Fatherhood of God, its nature and foundation,—in what sense, to what effect, and on what ground, God is to be regarded as the Father of all or any of his intelligent creatures,—is one that ought to be conducted on the principle of a pure and simple appeal to Scripture ; at least it is on that principle that I profess to conduct it. Does revelation ascribe to the Divine Being a relation of paternity as sustained by him towards angels and men? And if so, of what sort is it, how constituted and how realised? That is my idea of the question at issue.

At the same time it may be proper, as preliminary to the scriptural investigation of the subject, to look at it for a little in the light of natural religion ; to see how far, among the elements, whether intuitional or experimental, out of which

the system of rational Theism must be constructed, there is any valid or sufficient warrant for conceiving of God as a Father.

This is all the more necessary because it has somehow come to be taken for granted, in many quarters, that the primary and original relation of God to man is the paternal; and that consequently, any other relations which may belong to him, and in fact all his ordinances and actings in all his dealings with the human race as a whole, and with its members individually, must be viewed as springing out of that first and fundamental relation, and moulded and regulated by it. Nor does this mean merely that God must be held to cherish towards persons capable of being the objects of them feelings and affections similar, in many respects, to some of those which find a place in an earthly father's bosom. It is evident that something more is intended; something of the nature of a real and definite relation. For it is made the basis of arguments *a priori* for or against several of those aspects of the Divine procedure with reference to mankind about which controversies are

still agitated. It is pleaded that God must be held to act in this or that particular way towards men, because he is their Father; or otherwise, that he cannot be imagined to adopt such or such a course, inasmuch as it would be inconsistent with his Fatherhood.

I do not here speak of this mode of reasoning as unwarrantable and unsafe. I do not raise or argue that point at this stage. I allude to the fact which I have stated, simply as proving that the paternal relation into which some would resolve all the Divine dispensations is in their eyes a great, or rather the only great, reality; and as rendering it therefore a matter of not a little consequence to attempt to ascertain what root it has, if any, in the original conceptions which nature teaches us to form of her glorious Author.

In making this attempt, I am not called upon, at least in the first instance, to define exactly, or to describe particularly, the relation now in question. It is rather incumbent on those who assert it as a natural and original relation, and who insist upon it as their all in all, to do so. For the most part, however, they decline

the task. They are more inclined to deal in somewhat vague generalities ; losing sight, as it seems to me, of an important distinction which, in view of the ambiguity of language, ought to be carefully observed.

We speak familiarly of the relation in which two persons stand to one another, when we mean nothing more than the state of feeling, or the manner of intercourse, that subsists between them. They are related to one another, in amity or in enmity, as friends or as enemies. The relation between them is one of mutual confidence, or of mutual distrust and disaffection. It is that of a benefactor to him whom he benefits, or of a wrongdoer to him whom he injures. Relation, in that sense, or relative position,* is not fixed, but variable. And as

* It may be worth noting here that Dr. Kidd, in his book on the Eternal Sonship of Christ, to which I shall have occasion afterwards to refer, makes constant use of the term "related state," when speaking of the relationship between any two of the three persons in the Godhead ; in particular between the Father and the Son. It seems at first sight a somewhat awkward phrase. I am persuaded, however, that Dr. Kidd used it on purpose, and with his usual regard to technical accuracy of theological expression ; having in view the very distinction which I am now endeavouring to explain.

such, or as being so, it may modify more fixed and permanent relationships, even to the extent of reversing their legitimate mode of action. The actual, *de facto*, consciously realised relation subsisting at any given time,—say between sovereign and subject, or between brother and sister, or between husband and wife, or between father and son,—may be very different from what the permanent mutual tie binding them, whether by birth or by covenant, to one another, must be held, *de jure*, to imply. The difference may be either in defect or in excess; in shortcoming or in superfluity. The tenderest bond,—the conjugal, the fraternal, the parental, the filial,—may thus be practically made void by unloving spouses, brethren, fathers, sons. And on the other hand, a connection not in itself necessarily involving any of the affections and obligations of these unions may have their warm and loving spirit infused into it, by the warm and loving hearts of the connected parties themselves. Thus those who till yesterday have been utter strangers to one another may unite to-day in an embrace closer than either ever gave to his nearest of kin; just as nearest of kin may draw off

from one another more than any two mere strangers would ever think of doing.

I do not now enlarge upon this distinction. Its importance, especially when God and man are the parties concerned, may appear more clearly as my argument advances. Meanwhile it is enough for my purpose, in the outset, to have indicated the distinction thus briefly, and, as it were, in the form of a caveat against a possible misapprehension of the introductory observations which I have to offer in this opening Lecture ; the object of which is chiefly to clear and define the state of the question (*status questionis*), when viewed in the light of natural religion and its teachings.

Let it be understood then that it is the relation, or relations, in which God stands to the other intelligences in the universe, that constitutes the subject of my present inquiry. It is an inquiry which has respect to relationship, and to that only.

I say relation, or relations. For one point of inquiry,—and that a primary and principal one,—must be this :—Are the relations in which God stands to the other intelligences in the universe, manifold,

and essentially distinct? Or may they all be ultimately simplified and reduced into one?

That there is, and must be, a certain thread of unity running through them all, and harmonising them all, is probable, *a priori*. It is probable, as a mere deduction or inference from the unity of God; the oneness of the Divine nature. And accordingly, it may be anticipated that in the end or in the long run,—as the result or issue of the actual dealings of God with the other intelligences in the universe,—a unity of the strictest sort may come to prevail and be established, in the final adjustment, whatever that may be, of the terms on which He and they are to stand related towards one another for ever. It may not be the same unity for all. There may not be the same adjustment in respect of all. Undoubtedly two opposite poles are indicated, not by Scripture only, but by reason and conscience as well; both of them simple enough; the one simply penal and accursed; the other simply free and blessed: to one or other of which the conflicting elements in the troubled chaos of created will appear to be all tending. But

that simplicity, whether as "a savour of life unto life," or as "a savour of death unto death," is not yet. As things now are, a somewhat more mixed and complex system of relationship would seem to be, if I may so speak, the order of the day.

Certainly, common language suggests the idea of a variety of relations being sustained by the Supreme toward subordinate intelligences ; such as those of Creator, Preserver, Benefactor ; Lawgiver, Ruler, Judge ; Friend, Father. Thus, one would say, the common sense of mankind recognises complexity rather than simplicity ; the manifold rather than the one.

The enumeration which I have made of these relations may be too manifold ; too various and complex. Let that be at once admitted. Still, let my enumeration be sifted and simplified ever so carefully, it gives at all events a threefold notion of what I may be allowed to call the normal Divine relationship ; meaning by that term, exhaustively, the entire relative position which God occupies, or may occupy, with reference to his intelligent creatures, considered simply as such.

First, there is the relation springing out

of the bare fact of creation ; a relation implying certainly preservation and benefaction. The Creator, in virtue of his being their creator, preserves and benefits his intelligent, as well as his other creatures.

Secondly, there is the relation necessarily constituted by the fact of the creation being a creation of intelligent and responsible beings ; a relation implying moral rule and government ; authoritative law and retributive judgment.

Thirdly, there is the relation of which intelligent and responsible beings may fitly, though not necessarily, be the objects ;—the relation of friendship, rising, it may be, into fatherhood.

The popular mind, as it expresses itself in all languages, recognises this threefold conception of God. The distinctions which it involves, between the first view rising into the second and the second culminating in the third, are of such a nature, and the sense of them is so deeply rooted in the very constitution of all created intelligence, that science the most scientific,—system the most systematizing,—cannot be allowed to overlook or disregard them ; or so to aim at their obliteration as absolutely to

confound creation with government,—or creation and government with friendship or fatherhood.

But another question here arises. May not these relations involve one another, or run up into one another? May it not be the case, *first*, that creation implies government; and, *secondly*, that creation and government necessarily imply friendship and fatherhood?—necessarily, I mean, in essential principle, *ab origine*, as well as ultimately and practically, in actual result or issue?

To a large extent, or rather indeed unreservedly, the former of these two questions must be answered in the affirmative. Whatever God creates, he must not only preserve and benefit, but also govern.

Let it be observed, however, that this necessity does not arise out of any right which creation may be supposed to give to the creature;—any claim which the creature, as such, may be imagined to have upon the Creator. Nor is it founded upon any such right or claim. It arises solely out of the absolute sovereignty of God, the Creator, and is founded entirely on that inherent and inalienable prerogative of

Deity. Whatever God as Creator makes he must rule. If it is not to rule him, he must rule it. And he must rule it, in all its actings and workings ; through all the stages of its development.

And the rule must always be, in a sense, by law and judgment. In a sense, I say, more or less proper. For the nature of the law and judgment by means of which God rules must correspond to the nature and constitution of the thing or being to be ruled.

If it is inert matter that is to be ruled, the law will be of a material or physical kind, whether mechanical or chemical. And the judgment, if it may be so called, by which the law is enforced, will be the material or physical disorganization which any interference with its uniform and orderly working, or any disregard of its uniform and orderly working, inevitably tends to cause. Such interference or disregard, it is obvious, cannot come from inert matter itself, but only from a living voluntary agent handling and using it. Upon the living voluntary agent, therefore, the judgment, or quasi-judgment, falls. Inert matter itself never is and never can

be disobedient to the law by which it is ruled ; and consequently never can incur the penalty of disobedience.

But now, let what is to be ruled be, not inert matter, but beings possessed of animal life, having the capacity of feeling and the power of voluntary motion ;—with the sensational propensities which we class as instinctive, and those dawnings of intelligence which, rendering them teachable, look so marvellously like reason, as they are unfolded, in growing shrewdness, from the lowest to the highest order of the brutal tribes. The sort of law by which such beings are ruled,—the law of instinct, and it may be added, in a measure, of experience,—is adapted to their sentient and motive nature. It tells or operates upon them blindly ; that is, without any consciousness of it on their part, or any faculty of either assenting to it, or dissenting from it. Nor are they more conscious of the judgment enforcing the law, as judgment, than they are of the law, as law. They receive good through compliance with the law, whether the compliance be their own act or another's act upon them, with equal unconcern. And so also, with equal un-

concern, they receive evil through the violation of the law, when either their own act, or another's act towards them, is such as to make it work to their hurt. There is an entire absence, equally in either case, of anything like the feeling of moral obligation fulfilled or outraged ; of moral guilt and culpability avoided or incurred.

That feeling is the exclusive property of intelligence, when it rises to the possession of consciousness and of conscience ; consciousness of the personal self ; conscience toward the personal God. And it is that feeling which identifies and attests the peculiar character of the law and judgment by means of which the Creator rules his really intelligent and accountable creatures. His rule now becomes government, properly so called ; government worthy of himself ; in full harmony with his own personal nature, and with his ultimate purpose in creation, to have persons under his sway, with whom he, as a person, may personally deal. It becomes a rational and moral government, by means of a law and a judgment of which reason and the moral sense take cognizance ; a law, which the

soul or spirit, consciously free, voluntarily accepts or disowns ; a judgment, which the soul or spirit, consciously responsible, cannot but confess to be either the appropriate reward of innocence or merit, or the deserved recompense of crime.

Thus it would seem that, from the very nature of the case, creation implies rule and government. The Creator must, of very necessity, be a ruler and governor ; unless his own creation is to be independent of himself. And, as regards his intelligent creatures, his rule or government must be, in the proper forensic sense, legal and judicial, if it is to be adapted to the constitution and relative position of the persons who are to be governed. Only thus can he rule them as really persons.

For the same reason also, it is a matter of necessity, as regards himself, that the Creator's rule or government shall be absolute and sovereign. This is a capital point in the argument from creation to government, which must be clearly apprehended and steadily kept in view. If it is as Creator that he rules and governs,—if it is as his own creatures that he rules and governs all things, all animals, all persons

in the universe,—by whatever sort of law, by whatever sort of judgment, accommodated to their several natures,—it is not possible to conceive otherwise of his dominion than that it is of the most thoroughly royal, imperial, autocratic kind. For it is the dominion of him to whom all creation belongs. It is the dominion of him who must, if he is to be God, be supreme over all. It is the dominion of him to whom this worship belongs: “Thou Lord hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and they were created.” (Rev. iv. 11.)*

Now, if this is at all a right view of the original relation of God to his created intelligences,—the relation necessarily constituted by creation, and necessarily implied in creation,—where is the idea of fatherhood? Is there, at this stage, and so far as the inquiry has been hitherto pushed, any room for it at all? Is it not rather excluded? Has that great thought any place among those original, fundamental, primary, and elemental conceptions of the connection between the Creator and his intelligent

* See Note B.

creatures, which must lie at the very root and foundation of all religion, and must enter into its heart's core ;—at least if it is to be theistic and monotheistic? Set pantheism and polytheism apart. Let the proper personality of the one only living and true God be assumed. Let it be taken for granted that the Creator is a living, personal intelligence, distinct from his own creation ; and in particular, distinct from his own intelligent creatures, who are themselves, as he is, living, personal intelligences. It may be clearly shown and certainly inferred that he must, as Creator, govern them ; and govern them in a manner suited to their organisation or constitution, as that of beings made capable of owning righteous authority and reasonable law, and therefore capable of receiving recompense or retribution. Standing to them in the relation of their creator, he must of necessity stand to them in the relation, as thus explained, of their ruler ; their sovereign lawgiver and just judge. These apprehensions of God, and of his relation to the rational and responsible inhabitants of his universe, are of the essence of all belief in him, and all worship of him. They originate,

and what is more, they fully explain and vindicate, both belief and worship. But the paternal relation, the Fatherhood of God, has no place among them.

Let the precise question here at issue be carefully cleared and ascertained. It is not a question about the existence of a certain attribute in God, such as goodness, kindness, pity, sympathy. Nor is it a question about the sentiments and feelings which God may be supposed to entertain towards the beings whom he has made, and which he may express or embody in his actual dealings with them. The question is much more precise and definite. It is about the existence of a certain positively real and actual relation of fatherhood and sonship, between the Creator and his intelligent creatures ; such a relation as, like all real and actual relations, implies this at least, that in virtue of it, certain specific reciprocal obligations, of a peculiar nature, are incumbent on the parties embraced in it,—having certain specific reciprocal rights, privileges, and endearments associated with them. It is not a divine feeling that may be called fatherly,—as it might be equally well named from some other kindly human

analogy,—that we are in search of ; but a real and actual divine fatherhood. We want not merely one who, in his other relations, acts as far as possible a fatherly part towards us ; but one who is in fact our father.

If any choose to say that fatherhood is simply origination,—that the essence of it lies in being the cause or occasion of a new living person beginning to exist in the universe,—that paternity consists in bringing a new living person, whether instrumentally or otherwise, on the stage of the universe, and in that alone ; that it is that, and nothing more ;—then of course creation and paternity are identical. God, simply as creator, is the father of all his creatures. But, not to speak of the obvious difficulty that this establishes somewhat too wide a fatherhood, since it makes it comprehensive, not only of all the higher intelligences, however ultimately sunk and lost ;—for fatherhood by creation can scarcely be conceived of otherwise than as natural, necessary, and inalienable ;—but also of others besides, who may be still less welcome associates ;—who does not see that it really evacuates the idea of fatherhood

altogether of any precise or definite meaning ; making the name little more than a euphonious synonym, or figurative personification, for causation ; and in truth denying that there is any real paternal relation on the part of God at all !

Nor will it avail to hold, by way of limitation and definition, that it is his creating them "in his own image, after his own likeness," that constitutes the Creator to be also the father of the higher intelligences ;— as if his fatherhood consisted in his being the originating cause of new beings like himself coming into existence. For this only brings us back to the former inquiry, What is it, as regards the relation between God and them, that their being thus created "in his image and after his likeness" necessarily involves ? It can scarcely be proved to involve any more than this ; that they are capable of understanding his will, feeling their free responsibility under it, and receiving reward or punishment in terms of it. His government of them therefore must be of a reasonable and moral character ; by means of a reasonable, moral law, having annexed to it suitable and corresponding judicial awards. If the relation

of fatherhood arises out of the fact of creation, it may be admitted that, in the case of intelligent creatures, it involves that. But it cannot be shown to involve more than that. And really, if that is all, the fatherhood of God, I repeat, is but a name. It is little, if anything, more than a mere figure of speech. For it cannot, in my judgment, be too strongly asserted, that among the primary and original elements of our relational conception of God, there is absolutely no trace of anything peculiar in the constitution and condition of his rational, as distinct from his other creatures, beyond the bare fact of intelligent responsibility.*

Nay, not only so. There is absolutely no room, no place, for anything more. The intrusive introduction of anything more deranges and disturbs the whole great economy of creation. The notion of the Creator's government of the very highest of his intelligent creatures being anything else, in its principle and ideal, than simply and strictly legal and judicial, is, as it respects the radical and essential relation of Creator and creature, an inconsistency ; an

* See Note C.

intolerable anomaly; a suicidal self-contradiction. Were it admitted it must break down,—so far as it is admitted, it does tend to break down,—the vast, infinite distance that should ever be felt to subsist between the Creator and the creature. It is fatal to the real recognition of absolute sovereignty on the one hand, and absolute dependence and subjection on the other. It introduces necessarily the idea of some sort of intermediate relative position, modifying and qualifying the Creator's sovereignty and the creature's subjection; as if the Creator owed something to the creature beyond strict legal justice; and as if the creature had some right or claim, irrespective of mere legal justice, which he might assert, if not against, yet at least upon, the Creator. A paternal government, in any fair and full sense of the term, imagined to spring out of the mere fact of creation, or to be implied in it, must be fatal to the prerogative of God the Creator; and therefore also fatal to the true happiness, because fatal to the right position, of his intelligent creatures. It could only be realised by their being as gods themselves.

Let it be settled, then, as a great fundamental truth, that on whatever other ground the relation of fatherhood in God may rest, and in whatever other sphere of divine operation or creature experience it may unfold itself,—it cannot have its rise in creation, and cannot have its place in that rule or government which is consequent upon creation. Let there be no confounding of things separate and distinct. Government by law and judgment is one thing ; fatherhood is something altogether different. It is only by keeping them quite^r apart in our conceptions of them that we can do justice to both. It is only thus that we can conserve the sovereignty inalienable from the one, and give full and free scope for all the affection which is the peculiar glory of the other. And it is only thus that we prepare the way for the harmonious adjustment of the two, in the complete development of the gospel plan,—for their being so married that “ what God hath joined, man may not put asunder.”

But, while it is maintained that the only proper and original idea of the rela-

tion in which the Creator stands to his intelligent creatures,—the only idea necessarily involved in his having made them, and made them such as they are,—is that of rule or government by law and judgment,—it by no means follows that there may not have been from the first indications pointing to the higher relation of fatherhood, and a foundation, as it were, laid for its subsequent adjustment and development. On the contrary, the fact revealed in Holy Scripture of the agency of the Eternal Son in the creative work, coupled with what is not obscurely intimated as having been the design of that arrangement,—the glorifying of the Son through the unfolding of his filial oneness with the Father,—would seem to make it not unreasonable to expect that in the original constitution, mental and spiritual, of the higher intelligences there should be found some aptness, at least, for realizing the great divine ideal, and taking on the impress or image of it ; or in other words, that they should be found so constituted from the first as to be capable of apprehending the paternal aspect of the divine character and administration, when made

known to them,—and capable also of entering themselves, in due time and on due warrant, into that state or standing with reference to God, for which the apprehension of his fatherhood may open up the way. These are subjects of inquiry which must come up afterwards. For the present, it is enough to observe that in whatever manner and in whatever measure the notion of God being a Father,—and more particularly, the notion of their being personally interested in his being a Father,—may be supposed to have dawned on the minds of the intelligences, this must have always appeared to them and been felt by them to be something quite distinct from their primary, normal relation to him as their moral ruler; something superadded to that relation, or superinduced upon it, and not to be either identified or confounded with it. His being a Father to them, if they rightly reflected on their true position, must have been regarded as a pure and simple act of grace; not an essential element of their creature state or condition; not discoverable by them as creatures through any inference or deduction from the fact of their being creatures; to be known there-

fore only by direct communication from God himself, who alone is competent, in the exercise of his mere and sovereign good pleasure, to determine, and consequently to unfold, the nature and the terms of the relation which it indicates.

These conclusions, as it seems to me, are applicable to the intelligent creatures of God, as such ; and to all of them ; not merely to the guilty and fallen, but to the innocent and unfallen also. There may indeed be a loose and vague sense in which, for popular or poetic uses, the holy angels may be said to be the sons of God by their creation or from their creation ; and man may be spoken of as having been a child of God in Paradise before, he lost by his transgression his original standing there. Even if it could be established as a theological truth or a historical fact, that God was pleased to regard and treat these innocent subjects of his rule as sons from the very beginning of their existence, still it must be maintained that his doing so was simply an exercise of his own free discretion ; that it was no necessary inference from, no necessary consequence of, his having created them such as he did create them ; that it

was a distinct and independent benefit, posterior to creation, in the order of nature, though on the supposition now made, simultaneous in point of time. I am persuaded, however, that there is really no valid proof or sufficient presumption, either in natural religion or in the word of God, in favour of that idea. I do not think that there is in either any trace of sonship constituted at creation *ex gratiâ*, any more than there is of sonship constituted by creation *ex necessitate*. This also may be matter of future investigation.

There is one deduction from the views advocated in this lecture to which before I leave the subject I must ask particular attention ; for it seems to me to be all-important.

If I am right in holding that any relation of fatherhood into which God may be pleased to enter towards his intelligent creatures must be, in the sense now explained, posterior to the original relation which he sustains, as being their Ruler, in virtue of being their Maker,—then it clearly follows that the former relation, the paternal, cannot be allowed to super-

sede, or even to modify the latter, the governmental. That prior relation is a necessity of nature, if one may so speak, and not a discretionary arrangement. The mere existence of intelligent creatures involves their subjection to rule by law and judgment. Their creator, if his sovereignty in his own creation, and over it, is to be, as it must be, absolute and inviolable, cannot but so govern them. And he must continue so to govern them, whatever other relation he may think fit to assume or to announce. That other relation, of whatever character it may be, and however originated, cannot be conceived of as making any change in the conditions of the primary relation. For if it did, it must be through their ceasing to be creatures and God ceasing to be their Creator. A monstrous imagination!—to which however I must feel myself to be literally shut up, if I am asked to make the fatherhood of God the all in all of my religion.

I contend earnestly for the distinction of the two relations. Neither must be suffered to override the other. Neither must be merged or sunk in the other. It is one thing for me to have God as my

ruler, lawgiver, judge. It is another, and an altogether different thing for me to have him as my Father. What the points of difference are, it would be premature, at this stage, to discuss. But I may briefly refer to two of them, as illustrating the importance of our keeping the relations in question quite apart, in all our conceptions and reasonings regarding them.

Rightly understood, as it seems to me, the paternal relation, in the first place, implies the enjoyment by those towards whom it is sustained of a permanent footing in the family, as opposed to one that is contingent and precarious (John viii. 35). And secondly, in consequence of its implying this, it excludes the idea of punishment, properly so called; admitting only that of chastisement (Heb. xii.) It is not the function of a father, as such, to try, or put upon probation. It is not his function to inflict a penal or retributive doom. But these are functions of that rule or government by law and judgment which God the Creator exercises and must ever exercise. Surely there is here a line of distinction and demarcation that is sufficiently clear, and that ought to be kept

clear. For observe what follows if it is obliterated or lost sight of. Let the view which some extreme lovers of simplicity would advocate be adopted. Let God be a Father, and nothing else. Let all the acts of his universal administration be held to be done by him as the Father of his creatures. Then this dilemma immediately presents itself. Either, on the one hand, you must include among the actings of a father, in his paternal character, the imposing of an arbitrary or discretionary conditional test and the inflicting of penal judgment ; in which case, you make fatherhood little more than a name ; descriptive, perhaps, and suggestive of the general benevolence which may be supposed to temper the severity of strict rule ; but not otherwise significant of any special affection, or any special mode of treatment. Or else, on the other hand, giving to fatherhood its full and true meaning, and maintaining it to be wholly and exclusively a relation of pure and simple fatherly love, you deny, and consistently deny, that one who sustains that relation, and no other, can test for the mere sake of testing, or punish for the mere sake of punishing.

Probation, and especially retribution, in the true and proper sense, become thus simply impossible.

Let a merely human instance, in contrast with a divine ordinance, be referred to, in explanation and confirmation of my opinion, as to the evil and danger of confounding the two relations.

In the Roman law, the authority of a father over his children was the very same, in nature and extent, with the authority of the civil magistrate. The Roman father had the power of life and death over his son. He was irresponsible in the exercise of his power. No other power, not even the magistrate's, could interfere with his. Nay more, he had a right to demand that his son, even when a public accusation was brought against him, should be handed over by the magistrate to the parent, for the trial of the case and the execution of the sentence. Thus in Roman law, the functions of ruler and judge were mixed up with those of father. And with what result? Surely, as every reader of history knows, with sad damage to the one relation which is the source and centre of all the sacred tenderness of home; and with no

corresponding benefit, in respect of strength or stability, to the other, on which the leal-hearted, patriotic, public spirit of the true citizen must rest. The Roman knew no substantial difference between his relation to his father and his relation to the state. Domestic affection was thus weakened, almost to extinction ; while, to say the least, the spirit of loyal subordination to law and its awards was not greatly strengthened.

In marked contrast with the Roman law, the Jewish law on this subject may be quoted. It draws the distinction for which I plead in a most unmistakable and emphatic way. "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother ; and that, when they have chastised him, will not hearken unto them ; then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place ; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice ; he is a glutton and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die" (Deut. xxi. 18-21).

What can be clearer or more admirable than the distinction here drawn between the paternal and the judicial? The limit of fatherly authority and fatherly discipline is pointedly marked. It reaches to chastisement, "when they have chastised him." But there it stops. The rebel passes from the familiar house and warm heart of a loving and broken-hearted father, who has done his utmost and whose utmost has failed,—to the cold, calm, tribunal of "the gate of his place;" the awful seat of judgment; there to be judicially tried by "the elders of his city," and thence to be delivered over, for judicial execution, to the appointed ministers of the last sentence of the law.

I cannot stay to show the working and effect of this divine ordinance among the Jews, as contrasted with the working and effect of the merely human legislation of the Romans. With all their faults, I do not know that the Jews have ever been chargeable with want of family affection. Nor may their national loyalty be lightly called in question. All that it concerns me, for my present purpose, to insist upon, is the careful discrimination which the

Jewish law makes between the parent and the magistrate ; between the relation in which a son stands to his father, and the relation in which he stands to "the elders of his city." Nor would I press the analogy too far. One qualification at least is needed ; and it is a material one.

Among the Jews, as indeed ordinarily among all the nations of mankind, the two characters or relations, the parental and the judicial, are in separate hands. They belong to separate and distinct parties. The father and the magistrate are two different persons. And in the order of nature and of natural development, the father comes first. He first makes proof of his paternal relation, before he hands over his son, as a subject, to the magisterial ruler and judge. It is otherwise in the divine economy to which this analogy applies. There, the two relations are sustained by one and the same being ; the one Supreme God, who is both ruler and father.

Nor is he in the position of that Roman father who, being also judge, when his own son appeared at his bar, had either to pronounce the inevitable sentence of condemnation against the criminal, or to satisfy

outraged justice by giving himself to suffer along with him, or to suffer instead of him. In the case of fallen man, the Creator, as governor and judge, sees before his tribunal, not a disobedient son, but simply a rebellious creature and subject. He sees indeed a creature whom he meant to be his son ; whom he made to be his son. And so far, in that view, his regrets and longings are those of a deeply disappointed father. But the criminal at his bar is not his son ;— as he was not his son before he became a criminal. He has no filial standing ; no filial rights or claims. He is simply a creature and a subject.

No doubt his Creator, having intended originally to adopt and own him as a son,— after probation probably as a subject,— may be pleased to draw near to him, even when upon probation he has failed and fallen, in a way indicative of that original intention ; and may show his willingness to welcome him, on his return ; with the fulness of the parental love and the parental blessing which he meant him from the first to possess ;—for which indeed, I repeat, he made him. Even this, however, implies a very special and peculiar manner

of dealing on the part of the Creator, with his fallen creature ; the rebellious and guilty subject of his government.

For the difficulty of combining the paternal element with government properly so called,—or introducing it as a modifying or mollifying influence,—is very great. It is found to be so, when the attempt is made in human affairs ; in the administration of the kingdoms of this world.

A paternal government ! A king or an emperor the father of his people ! A supreme Court of Parliament legislating paternally ! A bench of magistrates or judges awarding paternal sentences ! These are fine ideals. But how, in its application to facts, is the theory of the ruler in the state, ruling as a father, apt, and almost sure, to work ? It will turn out for the most part to err, both by excess and by defect. It errs by excess ; for it is apt to become too paternal in the administration of law and justice. It substitutes discipline for punishment ; the rod for the sword. It errs by defect ; for after all it falls far short of what a fatherly discipline would really require. It does not and cannot wield the rod with the discrimination and discretion

which the use of it, as a fatherly instrument, requires ; and which only the intimate familiarity of minute home-inspection, and constant home-fellowship, can enable a parent to exercise. It is ordinarily better, therefore, on the whole, that the magistrate should be content with the enforcing of his magisterial authority; under such influences as the general principle of benevolence may suggest. He cannot safely or usefully unite in himself the relation of ruler, and that of father.*

To do so, is pre-eminently the glory of God. And it is his glory in his Son Jesus Christ. It is his having it in his power, if one may so say, to manifest and reveal a relation of fatherhood altogether distinct from the relation constituted by creation,—though closely connected with it,—that solves the difficulty and explains the mystery. He “bringeth in the first-begotten into the world” (Heb. i. 6). Sitting on the throne of sovereign and universal dominion, he does not, in fond and weak pity, sink the character of the righteous ruler in that of the relenting father. But he introduces his Son ; his co-equal, co-substantial, only

* See Note D.

begotten, well-beloved Son. And he proclaims his purpose, to make all his intelligent creatures, if they will, his sons in Him.

Are they to whom the proclamation comes innocent and upright,—proved to be so by a sufficient test of their loyalty to their Creator as their righteous Lord? For them, it might seem that the mere discovery of this divine relation of fatherhood,—coupled with the assurance that it admitted of their being, so far as their nature is capable of such elevation, comprehended in its wide embrace,—would suffice to make them, without their ceasing to be subjects, sons, in and with “the first-begotten.”

Is it, on the other hand, to creatures guilty and depraved that the proclamation comes? Alas! it is, as it might seem, all in vain. For in their case also it is a fixed principle, that if they are to be made sons, it must be without their ceasing to be subjects. But as subjects, they are helplessly and hopelessly condemned. They have violated law and are doomed to the penalty annexed to its violation. They are moreover incapable of obedience to law; their carnal mind being enmity against God,

the lawgiver. How then, continuing subjects, can they ever become sons?

How otherwise than by the wondrous provision of divine grace, according to which he in whom they are to be sons, undertakes to right their position as subjects? First he deals with their case as it stands in law. They are condemned criminals at the bar of the righteous judge. He joins them there. He sists himself and takes his place beside them; not to plead in extenuation of their crime, or for mitigation of their punishment; for indulgence; for impunity; but as their substitute, to answer for them; to take upon his own head their guilt and doom, that a righteous sentence of legal and judicial acquittal may, by the Father's grace, be freely theirs. So he clears the way. So, being justified in the relation in which they stand as subjects under law to God their ruler and judge, they may pass into that new and divine relation in which they are to stand for ever; the relation of which Christ spoke when he sent the message from his empty sepulchre, "Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God" (John xx. 17).

NOTES TO LECTURE FIRST.

NOTE A. (Page 2.)

THE letter which follows was addressed to the present lecturer so far back as February 1853. It was accepted by an influential meeting of friends in December following, as the ideal of what ought to be established. As such, and in justice to the writer, I now give it all the permanent publicity I can.

My object in this letter is to lay before you the substance of what I have stated to you in conversation, in regard to my scheme for promoting the more general production of a religious literature of a high class in Scotland.

My proposal is to procure the institution of a Lectureship in the Free Church, similar to the Boyle, Warburtonian, Bampton, or Hulsean Lectures of the Church of England, or to the more recent series, called "The Congregational Lectures." I would propose that a series of such lectures be delivered by some minister or professor of the Free Church during the session of the college—in the Free High Church of Edinburgh, if possible—and that they should be re-delivered during the same, or other convenient period, in the city of Glasgow. It might more certainly keep the selection of lecturers among the men of highest qualifications, and so elevate to a higher point the character of the works to be produced, if this delivery should take place only every third or even fourth year; the effect on the public mind would, I think, even be increased by the interval. But this might be shortened, if necessary, by extending the Lectureship in all, or at least in some cases, over two sessions.

I would have a great latitude permitted in the choice of subjects. Certainly the lecturer should not be limited, as in England, to demonstrations of the Being of a God, or Expositions of the Christian Evidences, but should be left free to select any topic—doctrinal, controversial, exegetical, practical, biographical, historical—that might be of general or

present interest. The sole limitation would be that the subject be approved of by any body of Trustees, or Committee of Assembly, that might have the management of the whole matter, and this limitation would give a certain power to that body to procure the selection of any subject that might specially require illustration. The lecturers, being ministers or professors of the Free Church, would of course be responsible to her for the soundness of their teaching.

Each lecturer should be bound to publish his lectures within a certain time after delivery, in such a form that the whole might constitute a uniform series; and he would, of course, be entitled to the profits of such publication.

The sum required for the support of this lectureship would be, say £4000, which, at the present current rate of interest ($3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent), would yield an annual return of £140; and this, if the lectures were to be delivered every third year, would yield to the lecturer £420; if every fourth year, £560. The church-door collections at the time of delivery would cover the incidental expenses. This, with the profits of publication (and I have no doubt these would be considerable, seeing that purchasers would like to keep up their series), would be good remuneration—a prize worth competing for.

The lecturers would be selected by the managing trustees or committee.

Last of all, I propose that the Institution should bear the name of some eminent Father of our Church who might be selected by the subscribers; unless, indeed, some wealthy and patriotic individual could be found to take upon himself the burden of the whole, and to gain, as in England, a well-earned immortality for his name, by connecting it with an Institution so noble and enduring.

This is a rough sketch of what I would wish to be done. Should the scheme be approved of, the details could easily be adjusted.

But surely, my dear sir, I cannot doubt that the proposal will meet with general approval. For one thing, the adoption of it by the Church would, in process of time, wipe off all ground for the common reproach against our Church and country—that of being destitute of a high-class theological literature. This reproach is not by any means a just one. Our Church has never wanted able and learned men who have, in their own sphere, zealously contended for the faith once delivered to the saints. Still it must be owned, that owing probably to the mould in which their precious thoughts

were cast, their works have not obtained that standing in the republic of letters to which they were entitled. The effect of such a state of things on the general standing of our Church may be measured, on the one hand, by the contempt with which the literary world has hitherto looked upon her, and, I fear, upon her religion too ; and on the other, by the powerful redeeming influence in her favour which the works of Chalmers have produced.

Now, what is the cause of this inferiority in our theological literature ? It is not want of natural capacity ; for I hold it to be a fact, that for the last 150 years, in nearly all the great walks of human thought, the first and pre-eminent British name has ever been that of a Scotchman ! This is no vain boast. Look at this list :—

<i>Mental Philosophy</i>	- - - HUTCHISON, HUME, REID, STEWART, BROWN, HAMILTON.
<i>Natural Science.</i>	
— <i>Chemistry</i>	- - - BLACK, THOMSON.
— <i>Medicine</i>	- - - The MUNROS, HUNTER, GREGORY, Sir C. BELL, ABERCROMBIE, and their illustrious living Successors.
— <i>Geology</i>	- - - HUTTON, PLAYFAIR, LYELL, MURCHISON, MILLER.
<i>Natural History</i>	- - - JAMESON, FLEMING.
<i>Mathematics, pure and mixed</i>	{ MACLAURIN, LESLIE, BREWSTER, PLAYFAIR, IVORY.
<i>Mechanics</i>	- - - JAMES WATT.
<i>History</i>	- - - BURNET, HUME, ROBERTSON, M'CRIE, MACAULAY, ALISON.
<i>Fiction</i>	- - - SMOLLETT, SCOTT.
<i>Poetry—</i>	
<i>Descriptive</i>	- - - THOMSON.
<i>Pastoral</i>	- - - RAMSAY, BURNS.
<i>Dramatic</i>	- - - HOME.
<i>Narrative</i>	- - - SCOTT.
<i>Didactic and Lyrical</i>	CAMPBELL.
<i>Political Economy</i>	- - - HUME, ADAM SMITH, MACCULLOCH.
<i>Biography</i>	- - - BOSWELL.
<i>Voyages and Travels</i>	- - - BRUCE, PARK, ROSS.
<i>Periodical Writing</i>	- - - JEFFREY, WILSON, HORNER, MACKINTOSH, CARLYLE, CHAMBERS.
<i>Painting</i>	- - - WILKIE.
<i>Engineering</i>	- - - RENNIE, TELFORD, FAIRBAIRN.

Is not that a noble array of pre-eminent names? Still we are deficient in four branches—Scholarship, Military Talent, Statesmanship, and (till Chalmers) Theology. Now be it remarked that these are just the four which require the greatest expense of production, and poor Scotland seems to want the political influence or wealth needful to produce and sustain them. Rich England and its wealthy Church may keep up a theological literature of a high class. But there is not water enough in Scotland to float vessels of so large a draught. Even England would have had difficulty in doing so, but for the very kind of institutions which I propose to have established. Let us have the same appliances and means to boot; that is, let us make the thing physically possible, and we shall succeed as well as they. Wherever there has been such encouragement we have not been behind. Neither the oppressive toils of the ministry, nor any want of natural capacity, have hindered the land of Boston and Willison from having a *popular* theological literature equal, if not superior, to that of any nation in Christendom; and only give high-class literature the adequate encouragement, and you will soon have that too.

Now, my dear sir, is not this a scheme that ought, nay, that *will* call forth the sympathy and aid of the liberal and enlightened friends of the Church. Only think how such an institution as I propose would tell on the *people*, by supplying them with weighty and sound materials of thought—on the *students*, by setting before them high models of thought and composition—and on the *ministry*, by opening up to them a noble arena for the exercise of their powers, and by instituting a legion of honour, in which it would be any man's pride to be enrolled! The office too, being limited to ministers and professors of the Free Church, would be to that extent an endowment of the Church.

Then how useful would such an institution be as a defence against prevalent error! The enemies of the truth have the advantage common to all other assailants, that of selecting their own time and point of attack. They come therefore first upon the field, and gain a great advantage by this priority of occupation. Before the friends of the truth can, if left to the ordinary chances of demand and supply, be aroused to the rescue, the enemy has made himself master of a wide field, and swept multitudes of prisoners away. Does not the present state of the rationalistic controversy furnish a striking and lamentable proof of what I say? And would not such a lectureship as I propose be in all time to come a ready means

of sending forth, on the shortest notice, a champion fully accoutred—to flee to the post of danger—to meet the first movements of the foe, and to hoist the standard of truth, by which to rally all its friends to the help of the Lord against the mighty ?

And then how noble would such an institution be in the permanence of its character. Those who contribute to its establishment may have the assurance that what they are doing “is not for an age, but for all time.” Throughout every future generation it would have the effect of collecting and preserving every drop of pure and profound thought that might spring up in any part of the Church, and which would otherwise run to waste, or water but the desert—and would concentrate all such supplies into one deep and ever-widening stream of Divine truth, which through all coming time would contribute to refresh and make glad the city of our God.

May I request you then, my dear sir, to give your attention to this matter, and to devise some way or other by which this great object may be accomplished ? I believe it will only be necessary to bring the matter before the public, in order to awaken a deep and general interest in it. Surely there will be found among the generous friends of the Church at least thirty or forty who would contribute a hundred pounds each to the scheme. Or rather there may be some one noble-minded and patriotic individual who would take upon himself the whole charge of this matter, and thus perform a service of vast importance and immortal renown to the resources of his church and the literature of his country.

Mr. Fairbairn continued to press his views from time to time. He published various letters on the subject ; one, in particular, in connection with the tricentenary of the Scottish Reformation, dated 7th May 1860, in which, among other things, he says :—

I am glad to observe that in view of the approaching tricentenary of the Scottish Reformation, there is a general desire to institute some permanent memorial of that great event. It appears to me, therefore, that this is a fit season for my endeavouring to recal public attention to a suggestion which I ventured to throw out some years ago. What I proposed was, that steps should be taken to institute and endow a Lectureship similar to the Boyle, Bampton, Warburtonian, or

Hulsean Lectures of the Church of England, or to the more recent series called the Congregational Lectures. . . .

I now beg to suggest that the institution and endowment of such a Lectureship would be a most fitting and profitable memorial of our glorious Reformation. There can be no doubt that this great change originated in a mighty movement of the higher order of minds, both on the Continent and in this country; and every one who has studied the details of our Reformation period knows that the movement in this country was promoted, if not originated, by the study of the great works of Continental Protestantism. There were numerous acts, both of the civil and ecclesiastical powers, having for their object to prohibit the importation of these great works into this country. Let us, then, by all means, be possessed of a literary institute for the defence and illustration of the great principles of Divine truth, which were for the first time promulgated in this country by our glorious Reformation.

I cannot doubt that such a Lectureship would do much to take away our national reproach—the want of an adequate theological literature. It would, I make bold to say, speedily originate a first-rate national school of theology, and would at all events, even in less-favoured cases, be the means of supplying us, as in the case of the English Lectureship at present, with a seasonable and instructive volume on some of the great topics of the day. And then, how noble would such an institution be in the permanence of its character! Those who might contribute to its establishment would have the assurance that what they are doing “is not for an age, but for all time.” Throughout every future generation such an institution would have the effect of collecting every drop of pure and profound thought that might spring up in any part of our Church, and which would otherwise run to waste, or water but the desert; and would concentrate them all into one deep and ever-widening stream of Divine truth, which through all coming time would contribute to refresh and make glad the city of our God.*

* I single out Mr. Fairbairn, as entitled to special notice, because it was he who kept his eye steadily on the accomplishment of the object, and because I believe that it was his persistency that accomplished it. I by no means wish to overlook the claims of other men. In particular, I think much credit is due to Mr. James Knox, who advocated the cause anonymously, in an influential journal, some time before Mr. Fairbairn published anything on the subject, though not before he was known to be actively moving in the matter.

NOTE B. (Page 21.)

It might seem almost necessary to offer an apology for dwelling so much on what may be thought by some to be very elementary principles. But they are, in my view, very vital. And there is in many quarters a strange incapacity to apprehend or unwillingness to admit them. I shall give an instance, by referring for a little to a recent work bearing this title, "On the Fatherhood of God," by "Thomas Griffith, A.M., Prebendary of St. Paul's" (1862).

I may premise, however, that I regard the title as altogether inapplicable to the book, and fitted, though of course not intended, to mislead. It is not the fatherhood of God at all, as it seems to me, that the writer discusses, but an entirely different subject, the moral government of God. This is his formal definition or description, at the outset of his treatise;—"I mean by this phrase that we must conceive of God as no mere universal Breath, and no mere blind Force, but as a Personal Will endued with wisdom and goodness, the intelligent Author, moral Governor, and righteous Judge of all things" (p. 5). That, and nothing more, is what he sets himself to "assert, vindicate, and establish." And he is consistent throughout in holding to this view of God's fatherhood. Over and over again he repeats it. Thus he says:—"In his relation to us, God is all that a Father can be to his children; not alone the Author of our being, but our moral Governor, our righteous Judge" (p. 84). Again he speaks of "the working out of a universal system of retributive justice, or paternal government" (p. 184). Mark the identification of "retributive justice" with "paternal government." In another place, he formally explains the matter thus:—"The Fatherhood of God, in its widest sense, is of vast extent. It comprises his upholding all things by his power; his prescribing

to them their laws of action by his wisdom; his keeping up throughout the universe one vast system of paternal administration in pursuance of one purpose of eternal good" (p. 214). But I need not multiply quotations.

As an exposition and defence of the moral government of God, the work of Mr. Griffith is one of considerable value. It contains some striking enough arguments and illustrations in proof of the personality, authority, and will of God. I think it is defective in the views given of moral evil, the manner of its entrance into the world, its effects, and the method of its cure.

Perhaps its defectiveness in some of these particulars may be partly explained by the opinion which he seems to hold on the subject of law, an opinion which appears to me to be erroneous and dangerous.

He is dealing with objections to the fatherhood of God,—that is to the doctrine of there being a living will concerned in the government of the universe,—taken from the fixedness of order and the prevalence of law. He proves that interference with law is no part of a paternal government as thus explained:—"The true idea of God's Fatherhood is that of the government of a constitutional King, who is the embodiment and executive of *law*, who sits at the helm of *law*, and superintends the working of *law*, as himself the fountain of *law*,—with no personal caprices, no personal interferences, no mending of defects by sudden incursions of *ex post facto* will, but providing against defects by the quiet constancy of an ever-present purpose underlying and actuating all things" (p. 182. *The italics are the author's.*) I am not quite sure that I understand these closing words. But let that pass. It is what comes after that I am concerned to notice. He goes on to argue for what he calls "a universal system of retributive justice, or paternal government" in connection

with law ; and he lays great stress on its being universal. " A system of *universal* retribution is being carried out by the divine will, not in one direction only, but in all ; not with reference to personal character merely, but with reference to all the actings of life throughout the universe. And according to this system, we are amenable not only to the so-called, in a narrow sense, Moral laws, but equally to the Mechanical laws, the Physical laws, the Mental laws, all the laws which regulate, each in its own department, universal being. All equally have their sanctions, which must be enforced ; all equally their authority, which must be vindicated by reward when they are attended to, by punishment when they are interfered with" (184, 185). He enlarges on this topic ; placing, as it seems to me, obedience to all these different kinds of law, precisely on the same footing in respect of obligation and title to reward, and disobedience also to all of them precisely on the same footing in respect of culpability and ill-desert.

And this is his answer, and his only answer, to the objection that " God does not adapt his dealings with us to our notions of moral justice." In reality, as might easily be shown, it is no answer at all ; since it leaves the ineradicable craving for justice as unsatisfied as ever, and the enigma which perplexes it as hard as ever.

But that is not to my present purpose. I wish simply to point out the fundamental error which runs through all this reasoning. It is a very serious one. It strikes at the root of conscience in man and judgment in God. It resolves all virtue in the creature into prudence ; and all government in the Creator into the mere action and reaction upon one another of the forces of the universe. I can scarcely think that this writer is fully aware of the real import of his statements and reasonings, or of the extent to which he commits himself to the doctrine of Combe's

“Constitution of Man ;”—though really, his argument, as an answer to the objection with which he is dealing, has not even any shallow speciousness unless he means to put exactly in the same category, as a fair antithesis, the ill-desert of a “godly man,” who “through negligence or ignorance, violates the laws of physical life ;” and the good-desert of an ungodly man who, “whether intentionally or not,” “fulfils the laws of his organic system.” It is very sad to see a Christian divine trifling so egregiously with the solemn and awful term, the solemn and awful thought, “retribution ;”—applying it equally to what follows from a man’s falling on the ice and to what follows on his uttering an oath or an untruth.

I might ask, in this connection, what does the writer mean when he talks of “the so-called, in a narrow sense, Moral Laws?” Is it that the term “Moral” should be used in a wider sense, as applicable to the “Mechanical laws, the Physical laws, the Chemical laws,” equally with the laws, or the law, of duty, commonly designated by that name? I cannot understand him to mean anything else. And yet, if that is his meaning, he commits an egregious logical fallacy, and what is worse, surrenders the entire principle of the moral government of God.

There is a logical fallacy here which imposes upon many. It is admitted that the Natural laws,—embracing under that phrase the Mechanical, Physical, and Chemical laws,—fall within the range of the Moral law ; as indeed “all the laws which regulate, each in its own department, universal being,” necessarily must do. In other words, we are morally bound to have respect to the natural laws which are observed to operate in the created world, and to keep them in view, as ordinances of the Creator, in the regulation of our conduct. Ordinarily also we are bound to act according to these natural laws,—to act so that their operation

shall benefit and not hurt us. But the obligation to do so does not arise out of these laws themselves; nor is it measured or determined by them. It is not constituted by these laws. It belongs to another category altogether;—the category of a higher law; a law which, being itself unchangeable as the nature and will of the Supreme, must rule me always in my dealing with these other laws, and may compel me often practically to set them at defiance. For they have no standing beyond the material creation; and consequently they have no right to control the immortal spirit in its allegiance to the Creator. The hero, the patriot, the philanthropist, the martyr,—even the enlightened self-disciplinarian seeking his own highest perfection,—may suggest instances in point.

But the logical fallacy is the least evil involved in the loose way of talk in which this author, with many others, indulges. To extend the term "Moral" to these natural laws, is not really to exalt the latter, but to debase and destroy the former. If my obligation to keep the laws of the decalogue, or the two commandments which are its sum, is of the same sort as my obligation to have respect to the law of gravitation,—if the one is neither more nor less moral than the other,—then duty, as "*a categorical imperative*," on the part of God, and responsibility, as conscience toward God on the part of man, become mere names. Government, properly so called, is out of the question. The entire system of "universal being," in the midst of which I find myself, from its lowest to its highest range, is still no doubt a system in which, after a sort, law prevails, and order is upheld by law. But it is a kind of self-acting law, working out its end by the equable pressure of its various departments on the various constitutions, and constitutional powers and susceptibilities, of those under it; enforcing itself or avenging itself in the same way upon all, from the

meanest monad to the loftiest archangel; and so ultimately securing universal conformity to the purposes of the great Creator. That may be a theory of the universe satisfactory to some minds. But it cannot be satisfactory to any who defend, as this author does most strenuously, and in the main successfully, the view of the Creator which represents him as a real living Person, ruling real living persons made after his image;—ruling them by the assertion of his rectoral authority, as their sovereign, over them, and of their accountability, as his subjects, to him.

On the whole, I conclude that the only safeguard of morality and religion, the only defence of human duty and the divine throne, is to keep the moral law clear and distinct, as being radically different, in its essential character and nature, from all the generalized observations of fact which have been suffered to usurp, or allowed for convenience to borrow, the name; and I would add, almost as a corollary from that, to keep clear and distinct from one another God's necessary government of moral beings by law and judgment, and his free fatherhood.

NOTE C. (Page 26.)

I would not have my argument become a mere logomachy, or fight about words. And, in particular, I would not wish to be supposed to run counter to the line of thought, or even to the phraseology, customary in the writings of the old and sound British divines. They certainly seem to speak as if they held that a natural and original relation of fatherhood and sonship subsisted between God and his intelligent creatures, in virtue simply of their being his creatures, or in virtue of their being his intelligent creatures. They carefully distinguish, however, that natural and original relation from the relation consti-

tuted *de novo*, in the case of all true Christians, by regeneration and adoption ; of new, I repeat, and not simply in the way of restoration. It is this last relation that I am chiefly concerned to vindicate. I may differ from them,—in appearance, however, more than in reality,—in my way of vindicating it. But we agree in holding it to be a part of the dispensation of grace, dependent on the joint work of the Son and of the Spirit. If I take any exception to their suggestion of a natural and original relation of fatherhood and sonship, it is mainly because it seems to me to bring in at the very outset of creation an altogether inadequate ideal or type of that relation—falling far short, in my apprehension, of what is realised as the issue of redemption. Still there is really nothing in their usual mode of putting the relation of intelligent creatures, as such, to their Creator, to which I would seriously object ;—excepting only on the ground that it tends, as I fear, in some degree, to substitute a figurative for a real notion of the fatherhood.

I take Pearson and Barrow as authorities.

Pearson, in his Exposition of the Creed, Article 1, "I believe in God the Father," opens the subject thus : "Although the Christian notion of the Divine paternity be some way peculiar to the evangelical patefaction"—let the reader mark that—"yet wheresoever *God* hath been acknowledged, he hath been understood and worshipped as a *Father* : the very heathen poets so describe their gods, and their vulgar names did carry *father* in them, as the most popular and universal notion." In his foot-notes on this sentence, he quotes a statement from Lactantius, to the effect that every god worshipped by man must be styled father, "not only by way of compliment, but by force of reason, both because he is more ancient than man, and because he gives to man life, preservation, and sustenance, as a father." Then he brings in Homer's favourite expression, "Father of gods

and men," and cites Servius as "observing of Virgil, that the paternal title is poetically added to almost all the gods, that they may become the more venerable." He goes on to enumerate the different grounds upon which God may be called a father, beginning with "the creation or production of anything, by which it is, and before was not;" which, he says, "is a kind of generation, and consequently the creator or producer of it a kind of *father*." In this sense he says, with reference to the rain and dew (Job xxxviii. 28), "God, as the cause, may be called the *Father* of it; though not," as he adds, "in the most proper sense, as he is the *Father* of his Son" (*Ἐπίσης γὰρ τῆς ἰσοῦ πατέρα Θεὸν ἀπολεῖ καὶ ἐπίσης υἱοῦ*).^{*} Of course, he distinguishes the rational creatures of God, as being his sons by way of eminence; but without really implying more on their behalf than that they can know who their maker is. And this, with the addition of "conservation," is literally all that Pearson holds to be implied in the idea of an original and natural fatherhood on the part of God. For he goes on immediately to speak at much greater length of God's fatherhood by redemption, by regeneration, by adoption—as to all which grounds of fatherhood I substantially agree with him, with this qualification, that I would transpose the two parts of his exposition. I would place first his most admirable statement of the fatherhood of God with reference to his Eternal Son, and deduce from that, as founded upon it, the fatherly relation which, in his Son become incarnate, he sustains to those who are savingly interested in the work that he became incarnate to accomplish; who are, in short, one with him by faith.

Barrow is fuller on this subject than Pearson. But

* "One understands God to be father of the dew in another sense than that in which he is father of the Son." Sever. in Job, as quoted by Pearson.

much the same may be said of him as of the other. In his parallel treatises, "The Christian Faith Explained and Vindicated," and "A Brief Exposition of the Creed, etc.," he enlarges on the article, "I believe in God the Father." In doing so, he makes much use, according to his custom, of the classic writers and the early fathers. But the sum of what he thus gathers is given by himself in this compendious form :—"In so many several respects is God our Father : we are his children—(1) as being his creatures, made, preserved, and maintained by him ; (2) as we are intellectual creatures, being placed in degree and quality of nature so near him ; (3) as we, by virtue and goodness (produced in us by his grace), do anywise approach him, resemble him, and partake of his special favour ; (4) as we are Christians, adopted into his heavenly family, renewed by his holy grace, and destined to a participation of his eternal glory."—"The Christian Faith," etc., Sermon X.) Of the four grounds on which the relation is here made to rest, the first two alone are natural, the others being confessedly of grace. And in the first two nothing really is involved beyond mere origination in the one, and in the other, such resemblance, in respect of intelligence, as makes intelligent personal intercourse possible. There is a remarkable passage immediately preceding that now quoted, to which I may afterwards refer, as connecting the sonship of believers with the incarnation of the Son. Meanwhile, it is enough for my purpose to show that, in whatever sense, and whether properly or not, these divines make God, as Creator, to be the Father of his creatures, this can mean nothing more, even in the case of the highest intelligences, than that he and they can understand one another, and can converse and commune accordingly.

NOTE D. (Page 42.)

A singular and striking confirmation of this view is to be found in "Locke's two Treatises on Government," and in the two works of Sir Robert Filmer, Bart.,—his "Observations, &c.," and his "Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings," (1680),—to which Locke's Treatises were a reply. The Baronet's brochures are of little worth. Their only value is that they called out such an antagonist, and gave that great man occasion for not only destroying his opponent, but erecting a stronghold on the side of liberty that has never since been shaken. I cannot enter into details. But I may note it as a significant fact that Sir Robert's fundamental position makes all government paternal, and that he builds upon that position the most unrestricted doctrine of absolute power that has ever been propounded in an intelligent age. Passive obedience and non-resistance are his cherished tenets. The right of kings to make laws and overrule laws, to command their subjects as they see fit, with no counter-right of opposition recognizable in any circumstances whatever, is pled to the most extreme point. And the basis of the whole pleading is the idea of a paternal government. All government, according to him, is originally paternal; and as being so, it is hereditary. He has great difficulty in tracing the hereditary line of descent. The inextricable complexities of ever-changing dynasties, empires, kingdoms, commonwealths, puzzle him somewhat. But in spite of facts, his theory carries him through, just as the High Church theory of apostolic succession carries divines through in the face of all historical embarrassments. The High Church divines contrive, in spite of endlessly doubtful ecclesiastical genealogies, to invest the modern bishop with all the prerogatives belonging to what they hold to be the primary

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episcopate. And so also, Sir Robert, as representing the ultra-loyalist party of his day, makes no scruple about placing all existing legitimate kings in the position of the first parent of our race, and assigning to them the very same sort of authority which, according to him, Adam had over his family begotten of his loins and living under his roof. And what follows, according to Sir Robert's logic? Nothing short of the most absolute right, on the part of all kings, to treat their subjects, who are their children, as dependants wholly at their disposal, without natural privilege or claim of any sort, beyond what a mere infant, or a mere boy, has in the household of his father. No other warrant is needed for the cruellest tyranny on the one hand, and the tamest acquiescence on the other. Hence the zeal with which Locke repudiates the paternal theory of human government, and insists on its being based on another principle; a principle which by no means, as some suppose, excludes a divine ordinance as sanctioning human government, but only makes the actual carrying out of the divine ordinance dependent instrumentally, as it must always ultimately be, on the consent of the community.

Of course, the only point of analogy here, between the human government and the divine, is the entire separation and seclusion of the paternal element from the proper and original ideal of both. Whether the government rests immediately on the sovereignty of God, or mediately on the consent of men, makes no difference, as regards the present question. In either case it is a government based fundamentally on mere law and judgment, and altogether exclusive of the paternal relation or the idea of fatherhood. The intrusion of that relation or idea, when it is human government that is to be considered, inevitably leads to tyranny, for the popular voice is excluded. When it is the divine government that is to be considered, it introduces a

corresponding disorder; not perhaps in the way of establishing tyranny, but rather in the way of tending to anarchy; for in that case the divine supremacy, in virtue of which God necessarily vindicates his just rule, is practically excluded. For there are these two opposite ways of working out the theory of all government being paternal, and paternal only. In the case of human government, it exempts the governor from the obligation of observing as well as enforcing righteous law, and so gives him a discretionary power which he may push to any extent of severity. In the case of the divine government, it does the same thing, but with an opposite issue. It makes the Divine Governor independent, in his government, of his own righteous law; and so gives him a discretionary power which he may push to any extent of laxity. The only security for liberty in human governments, and for authority in the divine, is the recognition of the principle,—and the recognition of it as a first and fundamental principle,—that the foundation of all government is law, in the strict forensic sense of the term; and that the essential function of all governors is to administer law, and to administer it judicially and not paternally.

LECTURE SECOND.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD, AS MANIFESTED
IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST, THE INCAR-
NATE WORD.

God sent forth his Son made of a woman.—GAL. iv. 4.

THE only relation or relationship, properly so called, which can be fairly held to be constituted by the fact of creation, so as to be implied in it, or legitimately inferred from it, is that of rule or government by law and judgment. And the only distinction which the possession of intelligence akin to that of the Creator confers on the higher order of creatures, as compared with the lower, is that they are capable of understanding and appreciating the law by which they are ruled, so as either to consent to it or to dissent from it; and that, consequently, the judgment enforcing the law is to them an experience of conscious personal responsibility. In other words, they are endowed with the faculties

of free will and the moral sense. In virtue of their being thus distinguished and thus endowed, they are capable originally, by their very constitution, simply as creatures, of a kind of intercourse on their part with the Creator, and a mode of treatment of them on his part, altogether peculiar.

The peculiarity of it lies in its being personal. The Creator and the creature face one another as persons. Now, proper personality, as I need scarcely say, implies capacity of intelligence and freedom of will. When two parties are brought together as persons, so as to have dealings with one another as persons, they must be able to understand one another, and they must be at liberty to choose how they are to stand related to one another. You and I, as persons, dealing with one another upon any point at issue between us, must be able to comprehend the point, and must be free to say whether we are prepared to agree or resolved to differ regarding it. It is not easy to see how anything beyond this can be held to be involved in the original relation, constituted naturally by creation, between

God and the highest of the intelligent inhabitants of his universe.

Let it not be supposed that I regard that original relation as imperfect or defective, or that I underrate the rank which it confers. On the contrary, I hold it to be the very climax and consummation of the creature-state, when there comes forth a godlike person, intelligent and free, with whom the personal God may have personal intercourse and personal transactions. No limit can be set to the intimacy of personal communion and the reciprocity of personal affection thus rendered possible.

But the possibility is necessarily conditional on the assertion, on the one hand, and the recognition, on the other hand, of government by moral law and its judicial awards. The very perfection of the creature-state, in the case of intelligent beings, consists in that reciprocal assertion and recognition. Neither angels nor men could have been originally perfect, as creatures, on any other footing. They cannot, on any other footing, be perfect as creatures ultimately and eternally.

All this, however, is consistent with its being matter of legitimate inquiry whether

there is not revealed in Scripture a relation of fatherhood on the part of the Creator, and sonship on the part of the creature, quite distinct from any relation constituted by creation? And, in particular, it is consistent with the question being raised, whether it may not be indispensable to the full realisation of the perfection of the creature-relationship itself in the unfallen, and to its recovery in the fallen, that this new and superadded relation of fatherhood and sonship should somehow come in?

At the present stage of the inquiry, I take up the former of these questions. And I begin with a consideration of the fatherhood of God as manifested in the person of his incarnate Son.

It is not my purpose to enter at any length into the proof of the eternal sonship of the Second Person in the Trinity—involving, as it necessarily does, the eternal fatherhood of the First. I rather assume the fact or doctrine, as plainly taught in Scripture, and, with scarcely an exception of any note, universally admitted by all believers in our Lord's supreme divinity, in

all ages of the Church. But as I consider this eternal relation of fatherhood and sonship in the Godhead to be the real origin, root, and ground, as well as the archetype, prototype, and model of the relation of fatherhood and sonship between God and any of his creatures, it may be proper to bring out briefly, though with great prominence, what is usually held to be the import of this glorious truth.

These are in the undivided essence of the Godhead relations, or "related states."* And these are and must be from everlasting. The one living and true God is revealed, not as God absolute, but as God related, or as God subsisting from the beginning with certain internal relations; in a way admitting, in some sense, of mutual action and reaction; of a certain reciprocity of loving and being loved.

So we are to conceive of God as love. He is love. And his being love is not dependent on what may be called the accident or contingency of his having creatures to be loved. It springs out of the very necessity of his nature. It is his essential man-

* See footnote, p. 10.

ner of being. Before the existence of any creature—before all time—God is love.

And he is not love potentially only, but actually : not capable of loving, but loving. He loves and is loved. He is love itself. He is not love quiescent, but love active and in exercise. He is so from all eternity. And he is so, and can only be so, in virtue of the eternal distinction of the divine persons in the Godhead, and the eternal relations which they sustain towards one another.

More particularly, it is in respect of the eternal relation of fatherhood and sonship that God is thus, from everlasting, love. It is chiefly in virtue of that relation that God is revealed as consciously, if I may so say, and energetically, love. From everlasting the Son is in the bosom of the Father. And the infinite, ineffable complacency subsisting between the Father and the Son in the Holy Ghost, is the primary exercise of that love which God is ; that love which is of the essence of his nature.

It is thus that love in God has never been, properly speaking, the love of himself, or self-love. For there have ever been in the one undivided Godhead the holy three,

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, mutually loving and loved. And especially in the second person, and in the real and intimate relation of fatherhood and sonship between the first person and the second, the deep disinterestedness of the divine love is proved. The Father loveth the Son. The Spirit glorifieth the Son. For it is in the Son, as the Son, that the fatherly love of God flows forth in full stream. It flows forth to create and bless the countless multitude of intelligences who are, throughout eternity, to rejoice in calling the highest Father, in and with the Son.

Thus, then, the paternal relation, the relation of fatherhood and sonship, exists primarily and originally in the Godhead itself. And, as thus existing, it is natural, necessary, and eternal. It is not constituted by any creative act, or any sovereign volition or fiat of will. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father; "begotten, not made;" of the same substance; participating in the same nature; "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God." In this eternal relation between the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is eternally and intimately concerned. Being one with the

Father and the Son in the undivided essence of Deity, he is—if one may venture to use such language on such a subject—from all eternity, a conscious, consenting party to the relation. It is in the Holy Spirit that this wondrous relation of divine fatherhood and sonship, with all its inconceivable endearments, is realized from all eternity. It is by the Holy Spirit that it is developed, so far as it is to be developed, in time. He is the Spirit of God, and of his Son (Gal. iv. 6).

I cannot here deny myself the gratification of quoting a passage from the very remarkable book of a very remarkable man ;—“ A Dissertation on the Eternal Sonship of Christ,” by Dr. Kidd, of Aberdeen.* He sums up his argument from Christ being said to dwell in the bosom of his Father, in these terms:—

“ Language cannot convey in stronger words the existence of the only-begotten Son of the Father in the Godhead. If the expression Son, be a mere title conveying no relation to the person who is Father,—terms must

* A singularly graphic and interesting notice of Dr. Kidd, drawn up chiefly from personal recollections, by Professor Mason, will be found in “ Macmillan's Magazine,” Dec. 1863.

cease to include meaning, and be stripped of the property of including rational ideas. Could such expressions be used, in any other case, where an unbiassed mind would not instantly affix the notion of a related state between persons thus described?—Could an unprejudiced mind adopt any other conclusion? The love of the person of the Father, and complete participation in his counsels and designs, are attributed to the only-begotten Son. If there were not the Son eternally enjoying this love, and participating in these counsels and designs, there never was the Eternal Father loving, counselling, and designing. This is the utmost verge of knowledge which the human intellect is permitted to apprehend. When it has explored creation and creation's laws—when it has risen to higher contemplations than the investigation of matter can elicit—when it has surveyed farther than planets roll or spheres glitter—when it has exhausted the wonders of the telescope and microscope—when it has studied the soul, whose powers have directed these pursuits—when it has left the observation of kindred minds, and learned what is announced of the ranks of the pure spirits—when it has, in thought, ascended to the illimitable vastness of Godhead,—it is permitted to know that harmony active, energetic, eternal, subsists therein, enjoyed between the adorable persons, the Father and the Son!

“ In our nature complacency is the sweet, refreshing influence which hallows enjoyment, which is the unison of the mental powers, which introduces repose from all that is harassing, and a soul-felt intensity of delight. The mind is alive to enjoyment, and misery is hushed. It feels the flow of what is good, and the retrocession of what is evil. Existence is experienced more alertly, more gladly, more exquisitely. The periods when we were without this feeling were, in our estimation, either those of tem-

pestuous confusion, or the dull, dead level where emotions are absorbed in vacancy.—In complacency we feel joy; we wish joy to be felt by all. The very ardour of our happiness longs for a congeniality of feeling and sentiment. The aspect of creation is more pleasing. For us, the sun shines brighter, and the earth gives its thousand sweets more lovely. We act better; we think better; we are better. We long to enjoy this for ever! We hold communion with those suited for happier, purer scenes. We wish for the time when this complacency shall be warmer—when communion of soul shall be dearer—when we shall increase in the expanse of this feeling. Such is the complacency of men.—But, in the Godhead, complacency is undefinable, because it is immense,—vast as the Being in whom it dwells,—vast in the nature of him who ‘fillet all in all,’—vast in that boundless expanse of delight, from whose stores angels’ joys have flowed, man’s delights have been given. There—is the only-begotten Son, in the bosom of the Father. He sees him; he is with him; he is God.” (Pages 221-223. Edit. 1822.)

Thus far I have adverted to the original and necessary relation of fatherhood and sonship, as subsisting from everlasting in the Eternal Godhead. For the farther investigation of that great subject, I refer inquirers to such works as that of Dr. Kidd, and the more recent unanswered and unanswerable treatise of Treffrey. My present object does not require me to dwell longer upon it. Assuming the eternity of the relation, I proceed to inquire into the man-

ner in which it is manifested and acted out, if I may so say, in time.

And here, generally, it may be observed that the development of this relation, its being disclosed and unfolded, is by means of creation, and its history; of which, indeed, the development of this relation is the one chief and capital design. The created universe is the stage on which it is to be displayed. The succession of events in the created universe is the process through which it is to be displayed.

The interest chiefly centres, at least so far as we are concerned, in the one great event of the incarnation. It is the incarnation that illustrates all the preceding, as well as all the subsequent steps in the process of this development of the divine fatherhood and sonship. For it is the incarnation that brings this eternal relation within the range of human cognizance and experience in time.

There may have been other ways of making it partly and partially known to other intelligences. It is possible, perhaps even probable, that the Father may have found other occasions, and adopted other methods, for introducing his Son to the

angels, so that they might recognise him as his Son, and worship him accordingly. Still I am persuaded, even as regards these high intelligences, that their full insight into the fatherhood of God, and their full participation, to the extent of their capacity, in the sonship which that fatherhood implies as its correlative, must be found ultimately to be connected with the incarnation and its accompanying incidents—"the things which the angels desire to look into."—(1 Peter i. 12.) Certainly, for all created minds and hearts, the incarnation is the clearest, brightest, most gracious, and glorious exhibition that has ever been given, or may I not add, that ever can be given, of the divine fatherhood. And it is the manifestation of it too, that must ever be most intensely interesting to all holy beings and all saved ones, for its momentous bearing practically on their everlasting state and prospects.

Let the several principal points which the incarnation brings out be in this view carefully considered.

In the first place, the incarnation, as a great fact, discovers the communicableness,

if I may use such a word, of the relation of fatherhood and sonship, as it exists in the Godhead. It proves that it is a relation which may be communicated to a creature, and shared in by a creature. The incarnation demonstrates, by a plain palpable proof, that this relation is not like an incommunicable property or attribute of Deity, but is something in or about Deity, in which others besides the Divine persons may participate and have fellowship. For in fact the incarnation shows this relation actually communicated to humanity, and shared in by humanity, in the person of the man Christ Jesus.

For the man Christ Jesus is the Son of God, in respect of his human nature as well as his divine. He is, as he goes about on earth doing good, the Son of God, in the very same sense, in the very same fulness of blessed significancy, in which he is the Son of God, as dwelling in the Father's bosom from everlasting.

Let it be ever remembered that, though possessed of two natures, Jesus Christ, come in the flesh, is one person; one individual person; as truly and literally so as I am, or any one of you is. It is the one

person, the man Christ Jesus, who is, from and after the incarnation, the Son of God. There are not two sonships belonging to him, but only one; not two fatherhoods of God towards him but only one. For the relation of sonship, being strictly personal, must be one, as the person is one. There are not, there cannot be, two distinct relations of fatherhood and sonship subsisting between God and the Incarnate Word; the one proper to his divine, the other to his human nature. The sonship of the one person cannot be conceived of as thus divided. It has, and must have, the character or quality of perfect unity. Again, it is to be remarked that the original and eternal relation in which the First Person in the Godhead stands to the Second, as his uncreated, only begotten Son, cannot be conceived of as altered or modified by that Son's becoming incarnate; by his taking into personal union with himself the nature of the creature man. His proper personality is not thereby affected; nor the relation between it and that of the Father. He continues to be the Son of the Father in the very same sense exactly in which he has been the Son of the Father from ever-

lasting. Any other imagination would make that divine relation mutable in time, not, as in his case it must be held to be, necessary and eternal. If it is in any respect, or to any extent, susceptible at any time or in any circumstances of any modification whatever, it cannot be regarded as what we hold it to be, the original and inherent condition of Deity itself, of the everlasting and unchangeable God.

From all this it clearly follows, that in the one undivided person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God come in the flesh, humanity enters into that very relation of sonship which, before his coming in the flesh, he sustains to the Father. From thenceforth fatherhood is a relation in which the Supreme God stands, not merely to a divine, but now also to a human being; to one who is as truly man as he is truly God.

This is not, let it be carefully observed, making man as God; confounding the two natures in Christ, and ascribing to the one what can only be truly predicated of the other. It is not implied in the view which I have been giving that there is any communication of any divine property or attribute, any quality or perfection of the divine

nature, to the human nature, in the man Christ Jesus. The question is not a question about nature at all; it is simply and exclusively a question of relationship. The two natures, being distinct, and continuing to be distinct, may nevertheless, if united in one person, be embraced in one personal relationship. That is what is meant, and all that is meant. And that surely cannot reasonably be said, either to derogate from the supreme divinity, or to deify the humanity, of the Incarnate Son. As God and man, in two distinct natures, he is one person, standing in the one personal relation of sonship to the Father. That is what he begins to be from the moment of his becoming incarnate.

And he is so, all throughout his earthly course. This also it is important to bear in mind. There is no such thing as dualism, or duality, about this thoroughly human Son of God, as he is seen walking before our eyes in Galilee and Judea. There is no need of any line being drawn, or any distinction being made, between his sonship as God, and his sonship as man; as if he sometimes spoke and acted in the character or capacity of God's divine Son, and at

other times in that of his human Son; as if he sometimes called God Father by a right or title proper to his divinity, and at other times by a right or title belonging to his humanity. To conceive thus of him is really to break the unity of his person. And it does not elevate; rather on the contrary it lowers him. It lowers him as man, in the human aspects of his position and standing towards the Father and his fellowship with the Father, without at all elevating him as God, in any of his divine prerogatives. The true honouring of him in his incarnate state, is to hold that whatever he says as the Son, to the Father; whatever he asks, as the Son, of the Father; whatever he does, as the Son, for the Father; he says, and asks, and does, as the "one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;" the one Lord Jesus Christ.

Here it may be proper, for the purpose of preventing, if possible, misrepresentation and misconception, to interpose an explanatory caution, which, but for there being some men of peculiar minds, apt to pervert even the plainest statements, I might not have considered necessary.

I would not like the inference which

I deduce from the fact of the incarnation to be confounded with the notion, which seems much in vogue in certain quarters, of that great event having somehow affected beneficially humanity in general; the human nature as such; the human race universally and at large; so as to impress a kind of filial character on the intuitional apprehension which all men are said to have of God, and on the position which they occupy towards him. I confess, I never can feel quite sure that I thoroughly understand the language used on this subject by the class of writers I refer to; it seems to me so vague and hazy. I would not do them injustice. And, therefore, I wish it to be observed, that it is not my present object to comment on their opinions, but only to make my own meaning clear. The idea of some at least seems to be, that the Son of God, becoming man, has taken all manhood, wherever and in whomsoever found, into a sort of incorporating union with himself as regards his sonship; that simply in consequence and in virtue of humanity being a partaker of the filial relation in his human person, it is so in all human persons; that altogether apart from

any dealing with men individually, the Son, having assumed the nature common to all, invests that nature everywhere with the dignity which it has in him, and makes all who possess it *ipso facto* sons. Whether I am right or wrong in believing that to be the teaching of any theologians is not at this stage of any consequence. All I wish to say is that it is not mine.

I limit my contemplation, for the present, to the one glorious object of the person of our Lord ;—the most glorious object of contemplation, I suppose, in all the universe. I fix my eyes exclusively on him. And I follow him with admiring, adoring gaze, all along the path he trod, from Bethlehem's cradle to Calvary's cross. I see him doing works, I hear him uttering words, which unequivocally proclaim him to be God ; while, evermore, suffering, sympathy, tears, sighs, groans, as unmistakably prove him to be man. Here are manifestations of power and glory which I hesitate not to ascribe to his divine nature ; there are traces of weakness, weariness and woe, which I at once ascribe to the human. But while I distinguish the natures, I cannot divide the person. And,

consequently, I cannot divide the sonship. It is the one Son of God, sustaining but one relation as Son to the Father, who lives and moves before me, in all his earthly history, whether I behold him putting forth his power, as God, to raise the dead, or submitting, as man, himself to die.

Thus, I think the fact of the incarnation may be shown to involve this consequence, that the relation of fatherhood and sonship subsisting between the first and second persons in the Godhead is not incommunicable ; that it is a relation in which one having a created nature may participate. Undeniably, in point of fact, humanity actually shares in it, in the person of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, come in the flesh.

Let it be observed that I do not here assert the actual communication of this relation to others besides the incarnate Son. Far less do I undertake, at this stage of the argument, to define either the extent and limits, or the terms and conditions, of such communication. It is admitted, or rather asserted, that the relation in the incarnate Son is a personal one ; and consequently, that the mere fact of his incarnation does

not of itself prove its communicableness to other persons. It is in his case a relation retained by the divine person in the new human nature assumed by him. The new human nature communicates in the sonship by entering into the person.

But this shows, at least, that human nature, as such, has nothing in it or about it which should preclude, in certain circumstances, the being and exercise of sonship in that nature. This is all that I at present contend for. What the circumstances are or may be in which this may be possible, is another question. In Christ, we have the divine Son retaining his sonship in his assumed humanity. In the believer, we have a human being divinely united to Christ by the divine Spirit, in the exercise of a divinely originated faith. And he is thus united to Christ, as the divine Son retaining his sonship in his assumed humanity. I do not say that the circumstances in the two instances are the same. Nor do I, in the meanwhile, even say that they are so far analogous as to warrant a valid conclusion with regard to the identity of the relation. But the incarnation surely renders this, beforehand, a not impossible,

may, a not improbable, opinion ;—which is all that I now assert. And it seems to me to do so without involving the least risk of our being shut up into the wild mysticism which would make Christ and the believer literally one person, or represent the believer as losing his own distinct and proper personality in that of the incarnate Son. On the contrary, my reasoning is all in the opposite line. It is the communicableness of the original, divine, filial relation to manhood as subsisting in an individual that I contend for. Christ preserves his proper personality when he shares with the believer what is characteristic of him as man—his being a creature. Is there any reason why the believer should necessarily lose his proper personality when, by a divine act or operation, he shares with the Son what is characteristic of him as God—his being the Son? Is it really a question of personality at all, in any fair sense of the term?*

But I am anticipating. I return to the subject on hand. I speak of what the incarnation proves, with reference to the person of the incarnate Son of God.

* See Note A.

In that view, I have noticed one conclusion or inference which I think may be deduced from it. I now proceed to point out another. It is this:—Not only does the fact of the incarnation establish the communicableness of this divine relation of sonship to God the Father ; it discovers also its entire consistency, when communicated, with another relation ;—that of subjectship, if I may be allowed to use the term, to God the ruler, to God the king. In the person of Christ, the two relations, while continuing distinct from one another, are yet found combined.

I do not see how, before the appearance of the Son of God in his incarnate state, the possibility of such a combination, or the manner in which it might be effected, could be made clearly manifest ; how it could be shown, at least fully, to the satisfaction of any created intelligence, that the relation of proper sonship, and the relation of real and actual subjectship, might co-exist in one and the same individual person. For certainly, as it seems to me, all *a priori* presumptions, all antecedent probabilities, must have been felt to be against the union ; the two relations being

to all appearance, as regards their respective natures and conditions, opposite and contradictory. The problem might well be regarded by any one who had to deal with it beforehand as all but insoluble—to produce, or even imagine, a being, who should unite and combine, in his own single and individual person, the filial relation, as it has subsisted from all eternity in the uncreated Godhead, and the subject or servant relation, which began to exist when intelligent creatures came upon the stage of the universe.

The problem is now seen to be solved by the union of the two natures, the uncreated Godhead and the created manhood, in Jesus Christ as come in the flesh. In virtue of the one nature, he is the Son ; in virtue of the other nature, he is a subject and a servant. And being one person, combining in himself both natures, he is at once both son and subject ;—both son and servant.

This, as I cannot but think, is the special wonder and the peculiar mystery of the incarnation. Even more, I would almost say, than in the union of the two natures in one person,—the wonder, the

mystery, to my mind, lies in the union of the two relations. If we at all worthily realise to ourselves the eternal sonship of the second person in the Trinity, I apprehend that we must feel this to be the true state of the case.

Theophanies are quite conceivable. The eternal Son of the Father may be imagined to make himself visible in many ways; assuming on occasion the semblance of angel or man, or any other suitable symbolic form. Personal intercourse is conceivable. The uncreated Son of the Father may be supposed to visit the created subjects of the Father, and to have dealings with them, of various sorts. But that he should himself, continuing to be the Son of the Father, come to stand, in his own person, in the relation of a subject and servant to the Father,—this might well be held to be all but inconceivable beforehand.

It is not inconceivable now. The incarnation has made it palpable as a great accomplished fact. And it is a fact pregnant with great results. His coming in the flesh, demonstrates that it is possible for him, who is naturally the Son, to be also a subject and a servant, as all God's

reasonable creatures are. May it not, must it not, be regarded as going far to demonstrate the converse also, that it is possible for those who are naturally subjects and servants to be sons, as he is—to enter somehow and to some extent into his relation to God as his Son, as he enters into their relation to God as his subjects and servants?

I have thrown out the idea that there may have been beings far back in the history of the created universe, interested in having the possibility and the manner of this union of the two relations in one person made patent to them. And I have suggested that before the incarnation this may have presented itself to their minds as a difficult, if not insoluble, problem. I refer, of course, to the unfallen angels.

If, as I venture to think it may be shown to be at least probable, on grounds of reason and Scripture which I may have occasion afterwards to state, these blessed spirits, having stood some decisive test of their allegiance as subjects and their obedience as servants, were on that account, and as the appropriate reward of their faithfulness, invested with the character and title

of sons ;—and if especially their being invested with that character and title was connected with some introduction to them by the Father of his eternal Son, as such, and some act of homage on their part to him ;—I can well imagine how, having before their eyes an ideal or exemplar of sonship, so august, so intimate, so dear, so transcendently glorious and ineffably complacent, they may have felt themselves at a loss to grasp all the fulness of the blessing so graciously bestowed upon them, in their being called the sons of God. The lowly posture of subjects under dominion, of servants under the yoke, they had been well content to take. But what manner of love is this ? Can it indeed be possible that sonship, after the only model of which they have any knowledge, is to be, nay, that it already is, theirs ? They cannot doubt, they must believe it to be so. And they must thankfully rejoice in its being so.

But I can suppose that the divine privilege is at first only very imperfectly realized. I can suppose that, even for a long period, it may be all matter of faith with them, rather than matter of clear-sighted know-

ledge and experience. I can imagine them looking for clearer light to be shed on what may seem to them so strange, so unaccountable, so all but incomprehensible, a state of things, as that their humble standing as creatures should be found compatible with their sharing the high standing of the Son. And as they wait upon the Son in all the stages of his march along the line of his own creation's opening history ;—as they mark his footsteps on this earth, his wondrous goings forth from of old, and the ever-brightening signs of a coming forth more wondrous still ;—I can almost, I would say, see these blessed spirits, waiting, watching, on the tip-toe of expectation, on the very rack of hope, till—Lo ! The babe is born at Bethlehem.

Now at last there bursts on them the great discovery. The Son of God, taking upon him the form of a servant, explains all, harmonizes all. Now the joy of their sonship begins to be complete ;—completely intelligible, completely realizable ;—as they fix their gaze on the proper and eternal Son of God become truly and in all respects a servant. Now is their worship of the Son recompensed indeed. They see him who is

the Son become a servant as they are servants. They can understand, how they, being servants, are sons as he is Son.

Is this an altogether wild and unwarranted speculation? I do not think so. I think I find some warrant for it in what all Scripture indicates of the attendance of angels on the Son, and in that very significant intimation of the Apostle Peter already quoted—"Which things the angels desire to look into"—(1 Peter i. 12).

At any rate, this speculation, if it be a mere speculation, as to what the angels may have known and reasoned about it, does not touch the conclusion which I am now asserting to be deducible from the mere fact of the incarnation itself. It is that fact which proves, and which alone could prove, the possibility of the two relations of sonship and subjectship meeting in one and the same person ;—the sonship, let it be very specially noted, being the very relation in which the Son stands to the Father from everlasting ; and the subjectship, let it be also very specially noted, being the very relation in which the creature stands to the Creator, as his lawgiver, ruler, and judge.

Much importance, therefore, is to be attached to the keeping of the two relations which meet in the person of Christ apart and distinct. As much importance, at least, is to be attached to that as to the keeping of the two natures apart and distinct. The person is one, though the relations are to be regarded as distinct, even as the natures are distinct. The Son in the bosom of the Father, and the subject or servant learning obedience by suffering, is one and the same person. The Son is the suffering and obedient servant. The suffering and obedient servant is the Son.

This thought suggests a third consequence following from the fact of the incarnation, which it is important to notice. The incarnation not only brings the eternal Son into the relation of a subject and a servant, but brings him into that relation after it has sustained a great shock—a fatal jar, as it might seem—after it has become thoroughly disordered and deranged.

I assume here, in the meanwhile, the reality, not so much of substitution as of identification ;—not so much the eternal

Son's substituting himself for us, as his identifying himself with us. The Son of God, in his incarnation, becomes one of us men, one with us men. He becomes one of us, one with us, as fallen creatures, guilty, corrupt, condemned. He shares with us the relation in which we stand to God as subjects, not in its original integrity, as it was at the first, but as it is now, I repeat, disordered and deranged. In its essential nature, of course, the relation is one and the same throughout. It is that of subjection to authority. It is being ruled by law. But as the Son takes it, in our nature, being still the Son, it is subjection to outraged authority—it is being ruled by violated law.

No doubt his human nature, when he becomes incarnate, may be different, so far, from ours, in respect of its being such as it was in Adam before he sinned and fell. It may be different from ours, not in its essence, not in anything necessary to identify human nature as human nature, but in the circumstance or accident of depravity and corruption attaching to it, or rather to those who inherit it. I have always felt a difficulty in conceiving of the

Holy Son of the Most High becoming man, altogether as man now is since the fall, without qualification or reservation. It has always seemed to me to imply a derogation from his holiness. That he should become what Adam was when he was first made in the image of God, involves no difficulty beyond what lies in the idea of a union of the two natures in one person, however put. But that he should become what I am, when I am begotten in the image of fallen Adam, born in iniquity and conceived in sin,—that theory exceedingly complicates the difficulty. And then, I never have been able to see how, if the human nature of the Son of God had in it anything of the blight or taint which the fall has entailed on it as transmitted to us—if, when he came into our world in human nature, he had any stain of sin, original or actual—he ever could have stood us in stead, as the Lamb of God offered for us without blemish and without spot; or, in other words, as the Holy One of God, taking our place, and answering for us, by substitution, under a sentence of condemnation from which, as it would seem, if he is really to do so, he must himself be free.

I cannot, therefore, reconcile myself to the idea of his assuming the human nature in the corrupt condition, and under the personal liabilities, consequent upon the fall. I hold his manhood to be what unfallen Adam's manhood was.*

But the question of relation is altogether different. For the very same reason for which I maintain that he assumes our nature in the incarnation, not as it is now, but as it was before the fall, I maintain also that he enters into our relation to God, as his subjects and servants, in its present, not its original state.

The incarnation, if real, necessarily implies this. Or, at all events, the end or design of the incarnation requires it. He comes into our place or position as that of subjects and servants who have disobeyed, and have justly incurred the penalty of disobedience,—to relieve us of our liabilities by taking them on himself. The incarnation of the Son of God is his entering into our relation to God, as a relation involving guilt to be answered for, and the wrath and curse of God to be endured.

How does this enhance the wonder and

* See Note B.

deepen the mystery of the incarnation! For what does it imply? In the person of the man Christ Jesus, the incarnate Son of the Living God, the relation of Sonship to God which from everlasting is his glory and joy in heaven, must now for a time co-exist with the relation of criminality and condemnation, under God's righteous sentence, which is to be the misery of lost intelligences in hell to everlasting! That these two opposite relations should meet in the incarnate Son of God, in him and in his experience, even for a moment, is an amazing thought. How much more so is it when we consider that, however the full agony of the felt contrast between them may have been concentrated into one dark hour, he must have been conscious, for a lifetime, of their really meeting in him! Surely this is indeed a great wonder and mystery. And yet, as it would seem, nothing short of this is implied in the incarnation of the Son of God. Nor, if anything less had been implied in it, would our case be really met;—not at least if we, being by nature not merely servants and subjects, but, as servants and subjects, criminal and condemned, are to find our

relation to God in that character and position,—yes! even this relation of ours to God,—not ultimately incompatible after all, through his marvellous grace, with our being admitted into participation in the relation which He sustains to God, who washes us in his blood, and renovates us by his Spirit;—that relation of sonship which gives to his mediation on our behalf all its value and all its efficacy, and which alone opens up the way to our being sons, as he is the son.

There is yet a fourth inference or deduction which I would draw from the fact of the incarnation as uniting in the one person of Christ, not only the two natures, the divine and the human, but the two relations, that of Son and that of subject and servant. It is this. Not only does the incarnation bring the Son into the relation of a subject, under the inevitable condition of criminality and condemnation now attaching to that relation in our case; it proves that the relation itself, apart from that condition, may be one in spirit with that of sonship; and it secures that, as

regards all who are in Christ, it shall ultimately be so, and that for ever.

I assume the union of the two natures in the one person of Christ to be indissoluble. And I argue that, the two natures being indissolubly and for ever united in him, the two corresponding relations are also united in him indissolubly and for ever. How they are so, and how they are to be seen to be so in the world to come, it may be difficult to imagine. But that they are so, would seem to follow as a necessary consequence from his unchangeableness, as Redeemer, Lord, and King,—his being “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

Of course the relation of subjectship must be divested conclusively and thoroughly of the character or condition of criminality and condemnation attaching to it when he comes into it. How that is effected I need not now state at length. I simply refer to his “obedience and death,” as satisfying the claims of outraged authority and violated law. That being over, there is no more criminality, no more condemnation, to mar this relation assumed by him, as it thenceforth co-exists in him with his own natural and divine relation of sonship.

Thus the relation of subjectship adapts itself in a wonderful manner, and through a wonderful process, to the relation of sonship ; and that too, even after it has been so deranged and broken by the introduction of sin, that even its restoration to its original integrity could scarcely have been anticipated, far less its elevation to so high an honour in the person of its Great Restorer, who, in virtue of his incarnation, " is, and continues to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person for ever ;"—and therefore also, on the same ground, Son and subject, in two distinct relations, and one person for ever.

To some, this view of our Lord's manner of existence throughout eternity may seem, at first sight, strange and startling ; and beyond all question, it is a great inscrutable mystery. The idea of the Eternal Son, the Maker, Lord, and Heir of all things, not only condescending to occupy for a time the position of a subject, but consenting to make that position his own inalienably and for ever, is very solemn and awful. It is one from which the reverential adorer of the Divine Redeemer may be apt, on its being first presented to him, to

shrink and recoil. And yet I do not see how that conclusion can be avoided or evaded, if the fact of the incarnation is admitted, together with the doctrine founded upon it,—the doctrine of the indissoluble union of the two natures in the one person of the incarnate Son.

Nor, I am persuaded, will the devout student of scripture, the humble searcher after truth, upon fuller, deeper meditation, be disposed to turn away from it. It will probably occur to such a man that there is one remarkable passage, at least, which seems to indicate something like what I have been inferring. I mean the passage (1 Cor. xv. 28) in which the consummation of the Son's mediatorial reign is anticipated. Whatever difficulty there may be in determining the precise nature of the change which, as there announced, is to take place in the Son's state at that era, one thing would seem to be expressly asserted. He is to be "subject unto him which did put all things under him." So direct a declaration cannot but have weight with all who are content to believe the simple word of God; and it will go far to reconcile them to a view which otherwise they might be slow to admit.

Then, besides, it may probably occur to them, as they reflect upon the whole subject, that any feeling they may have had against the view in question, may have arisen out of inadequate and unworthy conceptions of what subjection or service in the kingdom of the Father really is ; especially of what it is when it is associated with sonship.

Certainly, when he was on earth, our Lord gave no indication of his considering the position of a subject and servant either irksome or degrading. He counted it an honour and a joy to be subject to the Father, and to serve the Father. Why, then, should it be deemed incredible that this should be his honour and his joy for ever? Why should we not hail and welcome the thought that it is this honour and this joy that he is to share with us, when we, having overcome, sit with him in his throne, even as he, having overcome, sits with the Father in his throne?*

I am afraid that some of my hearers may be inclined to find fault with my manner of treating the great subject I have on hand in this, as well as in my

* See Appendix I.

former lecture. It may seem to them to be too speculative, and to make too much of merely inferential reasoning. My object has been to clear the way for a direct appeal to the word of God. The next lecture, in which I propose to inquire in what manner and to what extent the fatherhood of God was matter of human knowledge and Divine revelation before the incarnation, will bring me into more immediate contact with the sacred volume.

NOTES TO LECTURE SECOND.

NOTE A. (Page 84.)

As this view of the communicableness of the original divine relation of sonship lies at the root of my whole argument, and as it is that which has appeared most startling to some who heard the lectures, I may be excused if I add a few words of explanation.

One chief difficulty here lies in the apprehension that we may lower the original divine ideal of sonship, as subsisting from all eternity in the Godhead, by reducing it to the level of a relation which may have a beginning, being formed in time; and a relation, moreover, in which a mere creature may be a party.

The difficulty, I fear, when the question is once raised, cannot be very easily evaded or set aside. The fact or phenomenon of Christ's sonship in his incarnate state must be fully met; and it must be met according to the ordinary doctrine concerning his humanity—that is, on the assumption of his being “both God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.” The difficulty does not arise when it is a question as to nature; for the two natures, the divine and the human, exist in the one person, the man Christ Jesus. But it does arise when it is a question as to relation. How does the one person stand related to the Father? In what sense is he his son?

I might here, as I think, roll over the question upon those who hold the original relation between God and his intelligent creatures, whether angels or men, to have been filial. I might ask them to dispose of it, according to their view. When the eternal Son became truly and thoroughly

man, he became of course man, as sustaining that original filial relation to the Supreme. Is that his sonship, since then, until now, and for ever? Has it come in the place of his own proper eternal sonship? Or are the two identical? What has become of that original filial relation, which is alleged to be the birthright of the intelligent creature man, in the man Christ Jesus? Is it lost? Or does it still attach to him? If so, to what effect? *Quid valet?* Or is it absorbed and merged in the higher sonship? Then does he not so far cease to be man? Is this not something like the heresy of his manhood being swallowed up in his divinity?

But, besides, in this view, it is surely worthy of remark that, with reference to the end or design for which the Son became incarnate, he is never represented as discharging filial obligations on our behalf, or answering for breaches of filial duty. His whole work of righteousness and atonement has respect to our standing as subjects and servants under law to his father as our moral governor. If we sinned and fell as sons, I do not find anything, either in the Old Testament types or in Christ's New Testament fulfilment of them, to satisfy me that our case is met. This is an important consideration, to which, in another connection, I may have occasion afterwards to advert more fully. I mention it here by the way; yet not I think altogether irrelevantly, as regards my present point.

It is more natural, however, here to ask how, admitting the eternal distinction of persons in the Godhead, it should in the least detract from the position of the Son—how it should not rather enhance the glory of it—to believe that at the instance of the Father, and with the concurrence of the Spirit (“I speak as a man”), he should have created intelligent beings, originally subjects, as all created beings must be, and nothing more, yet capable of becoming sons,

as he is? So he truly creates them after his own image; sons of God potentially, in respect of faculties to be tried and developed; more truly than he could have done by making them sons on a lower footing and after a lower pattern.

It surely is a great and ennobling thought, that the Eternal Son of the Father should create intelligent beings, not to be sons of God originally in any inferior sense, in respect simply of their intelligence, but to be capable of becoming sons of God, in and with himself, upon their intelligent recognition of him in that character. I am more and more persuaded, the more I think of it, that the notion of the created state of angels and men being filial, not only deranges the entire economy of legal and judicial government on the part of the supreme God, but detracts from the dignity and destiny of these intelligences, as originally made by the Son in his own image, and detracts also from the glory of the Son, as making them in his own image, with a view to their being ultimately sons, as he is himself.

In particular, as regards man, I would wish this question to be considered, Whether the incarnation does not force upon us the idea of a sonship for humanity altogether new?—a sonship after the type, not of Adam, but of Christ? I am anxious to press that question. I am anxious especially to press it with reference to the notion which some seem to have, that this is arrogating too much to the creature; that it is putting the creature in fact on a level with the uncreated one, the creator.

I might raise a counter-question, What are we to say of the uncreated one, the creator, putting himself on a level with the creature? The incarnation has two sides on which it may be looked at.

But apart from that rejoinder, is it really investing the

creature with any properly divine attribute or prerogative to say that, in virtue of a divine act and work ; an act of divine sovereignty—a work of divine power ; he may come to be regarded by the Father in the same light in which his Son is regarded by him : to be the object of the same complacency, and the subject of the same reciprocal love ?

I repeat here that this is wholly incompatible with anything like a wholesale, universal, and indiscriminate elevation of the entire human family into the filial relation, or “related state,” in virtue of the incarnation. That seems to be the opinion of some Anglican divines of the school of Maurice. I contend, on the contrary, for individual personality, and individually personal dealing, in this whole matter. The Father owns the incarnate Son as the man Christ Jesus, having a distinct individual personality. And in him he owns, not manhood in the abstract, nor all men *en masse*, or in the lump, but men one by one, as one by one they are moved by his grace to consent to their being to him what his incarnate Son is.

I am anticipating, however, somewhat. I reserve for the proper place what references and authorities I may have to adduce.

NOTE B. (Page 95.)

On the subject of our Lord’s humanity, and its entire exemption, in virtue of its origin, from all taint of the guilt or the corruption inherited by all the rest of Adam’s race, the voice of the church has been always clear and unanimous. I do not, therefore, consider it necessary to cite authorities in proof ; I rather wish to indicate the reason why, in common with almost all the theologians of all ages, I attach great importance to the doctrine.

If the question regarding it is to be isolated, it may

seem to be unimportant. And, for some purposes, it may be convenient to isolate it. The isolation of it may suit the views of those who do not care to inquire too particularly into the precise nature, either of the ruin caused by the fall, or of the deliverance effected by Christ.

For, on the one hand, if the fact of Adam's fall is denied ; or if the effect of it, as entailing on all his posterity guilt and corruption, a righteous sentence of condemnation and a thoroughly depraved nature, is under-estimated ; the question vanishes altogether ; or, at least, becomes one of comparative insignificance. But then, on the other hand, in that case, the ideas of redemption, atonement, propitiation, substitution, are apt to disappear also, growing thin and hazy till they melt into the dim obscure. I do not say this of the words, for theologians of the misty school are fond of using the current orthodox and evangelical phrases. Nay, they affect a peculiar fervour in the use of them, and appropriate, as in a high sense their own, statements in Scripture and in the creeds which speak, as we have been accustomed to read them, and speak most explicitly and unequivocally, of expiation by blood. But then their high sense is very indefinite, transcendental, undefinable. Indeed, they avow their dislike of definition. They refuse to say exactly what the work of Christ for men is. That by his obedience and suffering—his life and death—he has removed, in some manner, they know not how, an obstacle of some sort, they know not what, which must otherwise have stood in the way of man's restoration to the Divine favour and his attainment of peace of conscience,—that is nearly all the length to which they are inclined to go, in explaining what is meant by such precise modes of speech as Christ's "laying down his life for the sheep," or his "giving himself a ransom for many." At the same time, they dwell rather generally on the grace and condescension

of the Son in his humanity ; and on some mysterious efficacy, as it would seem, which that holy, living, lovely humanity of Christ has to assimilate humanity in us to itself ; and so, in a sense, to redeem, and purge, and elevate the nature which he has assumed, the flesh in which he has come.

Now it is not wonderful, that to those who thus conceive of Christ's redeeming work, or who in any other similar way virtually divest it of its atoning character, the question,—whether it was human nature as it was in Adam before he fell that Christ took, or human nature as it has ever since been in Adam and all his seed,—may present the aspect merely of an unmeaning dispute, an unhappy logomachy. Nay, the view which represents him as assuming our nature, exactly as it exists in us, and having it sanctified in himself, exactly as it needs be sanctified in us, really fits into their notion of the way in which he saves us, and the way in which his saving us should influence us, better than the other.

But the case is quite reversed when we regard Christ's sufferings and death as, in the strict and proper sense, *piacular* ; when we conceive of him as redeeming sinners by actually suffering for them, the just for the unjust ; taking their place under the law which condemns them and bearing in their stead the condemnation ; submitting to the penal infliction of divine wrath in their room ;—when, in a word, we introduce the idea of substitution. Then the doctrine of our Lord's humanity being that of Adam, not as Adam made it when he sinned and fell, but as God made it in the beginning, is all important. It is vital.

If Christ is himself personally involved in the consequences of the fall, he cannot redeem, by substitution, others in the same predicament. He must be, in his birth, and in virtue of the miracle of his conception, what

no other born of woman ever was, or could be declared to be, "The Holy Child Jesus." Such an high priest became us, who is not only "holy, harmless, undefiled," in heart and character and life, but "separate from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26);—separate from sinners in his very manner of being or becoming man; separate originally; and therefore able to save them by dying in their room.

Here I may remark, in passing, we have one explanation of what is apt to perplex or scandalize an uninformed and unreflecting onlooker, when a case of heresy has to be met in the church, whether in controversy or by discipline. A very small and narrow point seems often to be chosen. The tug of war is about a minute corner of the field. Apparently, no central essential truth is touched. And this occasions trouble. The reason may be partly this—that as a tree may begin to manifest decay at its extremities, while the real seat of the decay is in its inmost principle of life, so, when he lapses into errors, the religious man cleaves strongly to what he considers to be the heart's core of the gospel; while almost unconsciously he dallies at the outskirts, with doubtful disputations. As the process goes on, he becomes more and more anxious to hold to the form of sound words in the main, although he may raise or entertain speculative questions, as he counts them, in things of subordinate and unimportant detail. And so, at last, he almost unwittingly and unawares gets more involved than he intended in deviations from the customary modes of thought and expression on what, perhaps, he regards as mere accessories; for he is slow to perceive how these react on the very fundamentals of the faith. Thus, without conscious dishonesty, dogmatic heresiarchs—who are often, indeed for the most part, earnest though partial in their dogmatism—persist in professing their unabated belief in the vital doctrines of the Gospel, as set forth in the articles

of an orthodox creed, long after they have really disembowelled these articles, and explained away these doctrines, so as either to reduce them to mere platitudes, or dissolve them in mysticism. Hence it happens that they can be detected and exposed, even to their own conviction, if that is possible, not to speak of the conviction of the church, only in an outpost, as it were ; by assailing them on what might be regarded as debatable ground, open to harmless differences of opinion, and proving, it may be indirectly, that the contest carried on there is really decisive of the whole war.

This, perhaps, is partly a digression, though it is not altogether foreign to the matter in hand. For I believe that the error on the subject of our Lord's humanity which I am adverting to, cuts deep into the doctrine of the Sonship, whether viewed as his or as ours. If, in his birth, he became man exactly as we are born men since the fall, I cannot conceive of his manhood entering, *ab origine*, into the filial relation which he sustains to the Father. There must be need of a preliminary work or process of sanctification, both legal and moral, in his case as in ours, before he can be, as man, or *quoad* his manhood, the Son of God. And even with that sanctification of his manhood, his sonship in his humanity is not after all anything different from what any sanctified man might claim—it is not really one with his sonship in his divinity. We are landed again in the monstrous anomaly of a double relation of sonship subsisting in the same person. And, moreover, we are shut up into a very sad conclusion as regards ourselves. For evidently it is only in so far as he is the Son in respect of his manhood, that we can be partakers with him in his sonship. But now it appears that he can be the Son, in respect of his manhood, only on the condition of his manhood, which is originally

such as ours, being sanctified as ours needs to be. Does not this really imply that, so far as sonship is concerned, we might dispense with him?—that we, with our manhood sanctified, might be sons in our own right, as it were, as well as he, with his manhood sanctified, is? And, what is worse, does it not imply that sonship, in the only sense in which humanity is capable of sustaining that relation, is nothing else and nothing more than human nature purged from the pollution of the fall, first in Christ, and then in us? That idea of sonship may satisfy some. I own I cannot acquiesce in it. I look to the one person of the Incarnate Word. I look to him as sustaining only one relation of sonship. This can be only in virtue of his human nature being essentially pure, as it came originally from his own hand when he made man in his own image. Looking to him thus, I rejoice to think that, through his redeeming and renovating work of grace, he admits me, so far as I am capable of being admitted, into participation with himself in the one filial relation which, as Emmanuel, he now sustains, and will ever sustain, to the everlasting Father.

LECTURE THIRD.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD, AS REVEALED AND KNOWN BEFORE THE INCARNATION.

When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son.
GAL. iv. 4.

I PROPOSE here to raise the question;—To what extent was the fatherhood of God matter of human knowledge, or matter of divine revelation, before the coming of his son Jesus Christ in the flesh? It is a question which necessarily emerges out of the view that has been given of the fatherhood of God, as manifested in the person of the incarnate Son. And it is moreover a question which, in that view, is preliminary to another inquiry, and one that goes deep into the heart of the whole subject, namely this:—Is the relation which God sustains to his son Jesus Christ come in the flesh, his only true and proper fatherhood? and is it by their being made personally partakers, in some sense and to

some extent, yet really and truly, of that relation, that angels and men become sons of God? To prepare the way for that ulterior inquiry, for the conducting of which the New Testament, of course, must furnish the principal materials, I intend now to ask—at least that is my main object—what the Old Testament—with the New as throwing light on the Old—says of the fatherhood of God; or in other words, how far, and in what way, before the incarnation of the Son of God, and apart from that event, God was revealed and known as a Father in the ancient church.

Before the Son of God appeared, in human nature, the only conception which men could form of a relation of fatherhood and sonship between God and them must have been based on the analogy of the paternal and filial relation among themselves. And there can be little doubt that the analogy is a natural, and so far, a valid one. The relation of son and father on earth is fitted,—and probably, in its original constitution, intended,—to suggest the idea of a similar relation between earth and heaven. The creation or origination of intel-

ligent beings, on the part of the great intelligent Creator, may thus be viewed as analogous to the act by which a human father produces a son like himself. And the Creator's providence over his creatures may be likened to the human father's care and tenderness towards his children. Such representations of God, accordingly, are not uncommon even among heathen writers, especially the poets; as might easily be shown by familiar quotations.

In considering such representations, however, and especially in reasoning upon them, it is necessary to keep in view an ambiguity of which the analogy admits. God may be called father, simply as having caused his creatures to exist, and not as thereafter sustaining a real personal relation to them. That, I apprehend, is actually all that is meant in not a few of the passages usually cited. But that, it will be at once perceived, is not to the purpose of my present inquiry. It is a mere figure of speech employed to denote the creative agency or act of God. In this sense, paternity, as we have seen, may be attributed to God with reference to mere material things; as when God asks Job (xxxviii. 28),—"Hath

the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?"—as if he meant to assert for himself a fatherhood having the rain and the dew for sons. Obviously, in such a case, it is a merely creative fatherhood that is with such boldness of vivid poetic personification claimed and challenged for the Supreme. With more of prosaic propriety, fatherhood in this sense is attributed to God with reference to his intelligent creatures. Even then, however, as thus restricted, it suggests no idea of any permanent personal relationship. It suggests nothing more than the idea of primeval causation or origination.

It is in this sense, I am persuaded, and only in this sense, that we are to understand the verse of old poetry which Paul so aptly introduced into his speech before the Areopagus at Athens,—“As certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”*

* The entire argument to which this quotation from a heathen poet has reference, is in these words:—“God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath de-

This pregnant saying which, though originally a merely human and heathen utterance, Paul, by quoting it, of course adopts and engrosses as his own, has been supposed to indicate a relation of sonship belonging by a common right to all men, and actually subsisting in the case of all men. But if we look at it in the light of the occasion on which Paul quoted it and the purpose to which he turned it, we may see some reason to question that interpretation or application of it. For what is the use which Paul makes of it in his argument? It is simply to expose the absurdity of rational beings ascribing their origin to what is irrational; or, which comes to the same thing, worshipping in an irrational manner him to whom they ascribe their origin, so as virtually to make him out to be irrational. That is all. That is the apostle's only object; the sole

terminated the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."—
Acts xvii. 24-29.

and single point of his reasoning. Obviously there is no question of present personal relationship raised here at all; no question as to the footing on which men as individuals are with their Maker,—what he is to them and they are to him. There is simply an assertion of a common source or origin, Are we not all his children? If this makes God a father at all, it is in the sense in which an ancestor is held to be the father of all his posterity; it is in the sense in which Abraham is called “the father of many nations.” Our being all God’s offspring, in that sense, sustains the apostle’s argument, and is indeed all that is necessary, or even relevant, to sustain it. Anything else, anything more, would be out of place. We dislike to have our lineage—our parentage in the line of direct and natural ascent—traced up to a gorilla, or a tadpole, or a monade. We think that our being possessed of intelligence affords a presumption in favour of our original progenitor, the primary author of our race, whoever he may be, being himself intelligent as we are. So thought the wisest and best men in heathendom. Paul appeals to their being of that mind. He

adopts their logic, and makes it available for his immediate object, which is simply to expose the inconsistency of idolatrous worship. That is really all. The principle asserted, the ground and medium of the argument, is simply this—that the head, or origin, or father, whether of a long line of descendants, or of a numerous race coming simultaneously into existence, cannot be wholly dissimilar to them in nature; that if they are intelligent he must be recognised as being so, much more; and that he cannot therefore be expected to be pleased with unintelligent worship.

There is no assertion here of any personal relation of fatherhood and sonship. It is merely an argument for community of nature as regards intelligence. It is, in fact, nothing more than an application of the maxim, or axiom, that “like produces like.” It appeals to the same sort of principle which Paul so powerfully brings to bear in another direction on the spiritual identity, in respect of faith, between believing Abraham and all his spiritual children (Gal. iii., Rom. iv.) As he is, so are they; he and they alike being believers. Therefore he is their father, “the father

of the faithful." And they, in respect of their joint possession with him of the common quality or attribute of faith, are his seed. The argument of Paul in his appeal to the Athenians is precisely of the same kind. As you, the offspring, are intelligent, so, it is to be presumed, must he whose offspring you are be intelligent. And he must, therefore, be intelligently worshipped. But all this has nothing whatever to do with the question of the personal relation in which the offspring,—that is, the individual persons composing the offspring,—are personally to stand to him whose offspring they all are.

In a way very similar to this, I think another text, often cited or referred to with some confidence, is to be disposed of. Adam, it is said, is declared in Scripture to be, as he came forth from the hand of his Creator, "the son of God," or "a son of God," or simply "son of God." Now, the only authority alleged for that statement is the closing climax of Luke's genealogy of our Lord; in which, after a long enumeration of an ascending series of fatherhoods, he comes at last to Adam, and says of him, using the very same formula as

in all the other cases, "which was the son of God;"—or rather, for the phrase is all throughout elliptical, "which was of God" (Luke iii. 38). This mere rounding off of the genealogy of our Lord, as traced by Luke upwards, and not, as in Matthew's gospel, downwards,—this simple intimation that in Adam the ascending line of human parentage is lost, and that his origin must be ascribed immediately to God,—is often brought forward as if it were not only an express, but even an emphatic assertion of Adam's proper personal sonship. Nay, it is made, as it would seem, the ground of an argument for "attributing Adam's creation to the Deity of Christ."* In

* See *Grinfield's Christian Cosmos*, pp. 34, 35. The writings of this author are often very suggestive. He certainly deserves credit for bringing prominently into view the place which the Son holds in creation, as the original maker of all things, in connection with the place which he holds in redemption, as making all things new. But he rides a hobby, and rides it often to the death. It is extremely difficult to find out what precise use he means to make of what he imagines to be almost exclusively his own peculiar doctrine or discovery as to Christ's agency in creation. At all events, in the present instance, he builds upon a rotten foundation, though not perhaps more than others have done before. Surely, on reflection, all must see that nothing more than origination is in Luke's genealogy. It certainly does not carry us beyond the prophetic word in Deuteronomy, "Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed

reality, there is no idea suggested in this whole pedigree or family-tree but that of descent ; son descending from father, until Adam is reached, whose descent is from no human father, but must be said to be of God. There is nothing like real fatherhood and sonship, as a permanent and personal relation, asserted here.

Setting aside, then, those passages in the Bible, as well as those passages in heathen writings, which seem to ascribe fatherhood to God, in the sense simply of origination, or causation, or ancestry,—the question remains, What traces or indications are there, before and apart from the incarnation of the Son of God, of fatherhood in God, properly so called ;—of his actually sustaining the paternal relation to his intelligent creatures and subjects, personally and individually ?

In dealing with this question, I leave out of view the secular literature of antiquity ;—for, in truth, it throws little or

thee" (Deut. xxxii. 18). This text in Deuteronomy interprets the Old Testament idea of fatherhood and sonship. And to what does it amount ? Is it anything more than the relation of mere creatorship and creatureship ? Does it go at all beyond ascribing to the Creator, simply as Creator, a right, not of paternity, but of property, in the creature ?

no light on the subject of my present inquiry. That inquiry is almost altogether a scriptural one ;—Was God revealed as a Father to the Old Testament Church? If so, in what manner and to what extent? And of what nature is his fatherhood represented as being?

I. I begin with what I hold to be a material and fundamental fact. So far as I can see, there is no trace of anything like natural or original sonship, either in angels or in men, having ever been accepted in the church as an article of belief. That either angels or men were sons of God from the beginning of their being, is nowhere taught in holy Scripture.

1. I speak first of the angels.

Those of them that fell are never spoken of or referred to as having been before their fall sons of God. Their offence is stigmatized as “pride.” “The condemnation of the devil” is his being “lifted up with pride” (1 Tim. iii. 6). It is the offence of a disloyal subject, rather than of a disaffected and undutiful son. They refuse to occupy a subordinate position; to own government by authority of law and

judgment. They aspire to the liberty of independence. It is as proud, rebellious subjects, not as ill-conditioned sons, that they disobey, and come under the condemnation of disobedience. And if that be so, then it follows that it is a trial of their obedience as subjects that their faithful brethren stand. They too are tested, not as sons, but as subjects. The trial is, whether they will proudly insist on being their own masters, or meekly consent to be ruled? At any rate, it is only after their trial and its good issue, that the angels who kept their first estate are introduced in Scripture as sons of God.

It is in the book of Job, and there only, that the holy unfallen angels are spoken of or referred to as sons of God. For I suppose it is they who are meant when it is said, twice over, that "the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord" (Job. i. 6 ; ii. 1). I doubt, however, if, according to Hebrew idiom, this title, as here given to them, can be fairly held to imply more than a mere antagonism or antithesis to the adversary of God, "Satan," who "came among them."

But be that as it may, there is certainly,

it must be admitted, another passage in the book of Job where this explanation will not apply. It occurs at the opening of that sublime address in which—after the sophistries of the three bigoted friends and the noble appeal of the generous Elihu—the Lord himself takes the matter in hand and reduces Job to silence (Job xxxviii. 1-7). There that much afflicted but as yet too self-righteous patriarch is thus abruptly challenged : “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth ?” Wast thou with me then, as a party to my counsels and my working “when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy ?” There can scarcely be a doubt that it is the elect angels who are here meant. And they are called the sons of God absolutely ; not merely in the way of contrast to any other parties, or contradiction from them ;—but simply in respect of their own gracious character and standing.

This I take to be the only unequivocal intimation of the sonship of the angels which the Old Testament Church ever got. I admit it, or rather I hold it, to be emphatic. But it is so chiefly, as it appears

to me, in a prospective point of view, and in its bearing on subsequent scriptural hints and discoveries. For, as I think, it fits in remarkably to Balaam's prophecy (Numb. xxiv. 17), "there shall come a star out of Jacob;"—and also to that announcement in the very close of the Revelation (xxii. 16), "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." Thus followed out, it suggests large and high thoughts as to the connection of the sonship of the holy angels with that of Christ. And if we take in another text, in which Christ says to "him that overcometh" at Thyatira (Rev. ii. 28) "I will give him the morning star,"—it may seem probable that some sort of joint-fellowship of angels and men in Christ's sonship is what, by thus connecting together, in so close a verbal relation, the widely separated books of Job and the Revelation, the Spirit intends to teach. For thus we find the title, "morning star," which is associated with that of "son of God" in the case of the angels, applied to the Son of God himself, and in him also to the overcoming christian.*

* See Note A.

But anything like such community of sonship could be only very imperfectly taught, if taught at all, to the Old Testament Church, by such a brief notice as that which the book of Job contains. To the men who had simply that, and nothing more than that, the juxtaposition of the titles "morning stars" and "sons of God" could convey little or no clear information. It might rather indeed occasion perplexity. Certainly, however well they might understand the words put into the mouth of God as a most conclusive rebuke to Job, they could scarcely gather from them any distinct idea of the sonship of angels. At all events, they would not be likely to gather from them any idea of the sonship of angels being, as a real personal relation, natural and original. The title must rather, I think, have appeared to them, like the other title "morning star," to be merely figurative and analogical. And in any view, it belongs to them as having stood the trial which proved fatal to their fellows.

2. As the angels are not represented in the word of God in the character of sons of God by nature and from the beginning of their being, so neither is man.

There is not a hint of sonship in all that is said of Paradise, or of man's sin and fall there. Nay, I hold that what is revealed of God's treatment of Adam, in the garden, is palpably irreconcilable with the idea of anything like the paternal and filial relation subsisting between them.

Adam is tried simply as a creature, intelligent and free ;—as a subject under authority and law. Not a hint is given of his having violated, when he transgressed, any filial obligation. Nor, in the sentence pronounced upon him, is there any trace whatever of his being subjected to fatherly discipline and correction. All about it is strictly, I should say exclusively, forensic and judicial. It is the legal condemnation of a servant ;—not the fatherly chastisement of a son.

No doubt, hope of recovery is held out. But it is held out in a way strictly and exclusively indicative of legal judgment and legal deliverance. The deliverer is to prevail over the tempter by becoming himself a victim ; a victim to outraged authority ; a substitute for those whom the devil has tried to ruin ; bearing in his own person the doom impending by a

righteous award over them ; accepting the curse which the great deceiver has brought upon them ; and doing so to the effect of destroying him and emancipating them.

Accordingly, the remedial work of Christ is always represented in Scripture,—in exact consistency with its representation of the evil to be remedied,—as purely and wholly legal, forensic, and judicial. That is its character, so far as it consists in his becoming his people's surety and ransom. He redeems them from the curse of the law. It is nowhere said that he atones for any filial offence ; any offence committed by them as sons against God as their father. If they sinned in that character and relation, their sin, so far as appears from Scripture, is up to this hour unexpiated. Surely that is a conclusion somewhat startling. And yet it seems to me to follow inevitably, and by the inexorable force of logic, from the notion of man's original relation to God being filial.*

II. The manner in which the expression "sons of God" is used in the Hebrew Scriptures is very vague and indefinite.

* See Note B.

It is not very often used. And many of the instances in which it is used are such as to indicate that it is little more than an idiomatic way of identifying the godly as distinguished from the ungodly ; or Israel as distinguished from the Gentiles. Personal relationship is not really in such instances a relevant thought.

Thus, in the narrative of the breaking down of the wall of division and demarcation between the church and the world which brought on the sweeping judgment of the flood, "the sons of God" are contrasted with "the daughters of men" (Gen. vi.) But it would be unwarrantable to found upon the phrase, as there used, anything more than that those so called were professedly of the number who, when the wickedness of Cain's race became rampant, separated themselves, and "began to call upon the name of the Lord," or "to call themselves by the name of the Lord."

In other cases also the phrase "sons of God" is evidently used in the vague analogical sense in which the Jews were wont to apply it,—and in which we too do not object to apply it,—as appropriate to any relation implying benefit on the one side and de-

pendence on the other, with corresponding feelings of endearment on both sides. Thus a master calls his loved scholar his son. So also the pupils of the prophets are called their sons. "And such an one as Paul" appeals to Timothy as "his own son in the faith."

In like manner, when the Lord promises in Hosea (i. 10), "In the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God," it seems plain that no new or peculiar relation is meant by the latter phrase, as if it were in contrast with the former. And in the same way, as I apprehend, we must interpret those appeals in Jeremiah and Malachi—the most emphatically paternal in their terms to be found in the Old Testament (Jer. xxxi. 20), "Is Ephraim my son? Is he a pleasant child?" (Mal. i. 6), "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master. If, then, I be a father, where is mine honour? And if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts unto you, O priests, which despise my name."*

III. The passages in the Old Testa-

* See Note C.

ment are thus seen to be very few, which even appear to assert a distinct personal relation of fatherhood and sonship between God and his people individually.

No doubt, in the Church or nation viewed collectively, the Lord sometimes claims a father's right of property. Thus he sends an urgent message to Pharoah (Exod. iv. 22, 23), "Israel is my son, even my first-born; let my son go that he may serve me." And he gives this as his reason for bringing the people back from captivity (Jerem. xxxi. 9), "For I am a father unto Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn." The collective Church, or nation, also occasionally appeals to the Lord on that ground: as in Isaiah (lxiii. 16), "Thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer;" and again (lxiv. 8), "But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we are all the work of thy hand." In these instances, however, though a certain paternity is ascribed to God, as choosing, constituting, redeeming, creating, his people Israel, it is a figurative paternity, having for its object simply "Israel as a spiritual or ideal person;"*

* See Note D.

not that real fatherhood of which individuals are the objects. Nor is even that most pathetic passage in Jeremiah to the point,—the passage, I mean, in which the Lord puts into the mouth of the repenting people the affecting language of filial tenderness (iii. 4), “Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?” For the context plainly shows that it is not the relation of parent and child at all that is referred to, but that of husband and wife ; the conjugal relation, not the paternal. The idea suggested—and it could be better understood and felt according to old Eastern manners than according to our modern notions—is that of the faithless young wife casting herself at the feet of her injured husband, pleading her tender years,—and making her plaintive appeal,—as to a sire rather than a spouse,—“My father, thou art the guide of my youth!” Clearly there is here no claim of sonship, properly so called.

IV. In marked contrast with these vague and indefinite modes of speech,—in which ideas of parental authority and filial tenderness are for the most part, as

it would seem, merely borrowed to illustrate other relationships,—I notice the clear, exact, and unequivocal precision with which real and proper personal sonship is ascribed to one individual, and to one only.

There is a Son of God revealed in the Old Testament. He is revealed as standing alone and apart. There is not much said of him in that character, it is true ; indeed, there is very little. And nothing at all is said of the bearing of his sonship on others besides himself. For this, before I close, I may suggest a probable reason. But a Son of God there is in the ancient Scriptures. And however rare may be the passages in which he appears, and however few the words in which he is described, his sonship is beyond all question not figurative, but true sonship. In the oracle which the second Psalm records, “Thou art my son ;”—in the prediction of the eighty-ninth Psalm, “He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, . . . I will make him my first-born ;”—and perhaps also in the song of triumph in the eighth chapter of Isaiah, “Unto us a son is given ;”—chiefly, however, in the great original oracle ;—the sonship of a person is declared.

How far the ancient Church understood the oracle ;—whether or not they held this personal and individual Son of God to be divine, or identified him with the Jehovah of their worship, or with the promised Messiah ;—I am not now concerned to inquire. There has been much ingenious speculation on all these questions ; and it has been argued with great power that, at least among the later Jews about our Lord's time, an opinion prevailed admitting the Son to be a divine person, but separating him from the Christ.* Be that as it may, my present object is simply to direct attention to the precision of the language which the Holy Spirit takes care shall be used, when the idea of true and proper personal fatherhood and sonship is to be expressed, as affording a presumption that no such relation is really meant to be asserted when the phraseology is of a looser and more indefinite kind.

V. I would only advert in a sentence to one other consideration which seems to me all but decisive in support of my idea of the teaching of the Old Testament on

* See Treffrey on the Eternal Sonship, ch. ii. sect. ii. pp. 80-102.

this subject. I mean the very remarkable absence, in the recorded religious experiences and devotional utterances of the Old Testament saints, of the filial element. I may have occasion to touch on this topic again. I notice it now as a fact which cannot well be disputed, and which surely must be allowed to be a fact of great significance, in relation to our present inquiry.

On the whole I am disposed to conclude that, so far as we can gather information or evidence from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the fatherhood of God was not revealed to the ancient Church, either as a relation common to all his intelligent creatures generally, or as a relation belonging to the obedient angels and believing men specially ; that any use made of the analogy of this relation as it exists among men, in the way of applying it to the dispositions and dealings of God, was little more than rhetorical ; and that, in fact, there was great reserve maintained on the part of the great revealer with reference to this whole subject.

But it may be asked, Does the New

Testament afford no materials for helping us in the determination of the question? I am persuaded that it does, in several places. I solicit attention to two passages in particular.

The first is in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is a passage, as I believe, fitted to have great weight with those who, in the language of the Westminster Confession of Faith, are prepared to receive as the teaching of the Spirit, not only what is "expressly set down in Scripture," but also what, "by good and necessary consequence, may be deduced from Scripture."* My argument will undoubtedly be based on a process of inferential reasoning; a mode of proof against which some very respectable men, especially in our country, seem to have a strange and unaccountable antipathy. It may be convenient sometimes, when one sees an unwelcome conclusion looming in the distance, to refuse all inferences, and to demand *ipsisissima verba*,—explicit and articulate chapter and verse,—for everything. But we are commanded to "search the Scriptures;" and we are commanded also "in understanding

* Confession, chap. i. sect. ii.

to be men." To those obeying these commands, in the spirit of them, I do not think my argument will appear very far-fetched.

At the close of the tenth chapter, Paul quotes the Old Testament saying, "The just shall live by faith;" and he proceeds immediately, in his glorious muster-roll of the worthies of the olden time, to give instances of "the just living by faith." He ends his enumeration thus: "These all"—the just living by faith—"received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (xi. 39, 40).

What is that "better thing" which they, while they "lived by faith," and when, as the apostle had previously said, they "died in faith," had not?—which God has provided for us?—which they must share with us if they are to be made perfect? For, it would seem, they cannot be made perfect without it, and they cannot have it apart from us. Is it merely the general blessing of clearer light and fuller joy consequent upon the complete revelation of the gospel plan, through the actual coming of the long-promised Saviour, and the actual accomplishment of the great salvation? Or is it some

particular benefit, precise and well defined, which really effects a change in their standing or position ?

Let us carry our view forward.

After pondering devoutly the practical appeal in the beginning of the twelfth chapter, founded upon our being "compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," let us approach the august scene presenting itself to our adoring gaze before the chapter ends.* What have we here ? A scene at Zion analogous and corresponding to the scene at Sinai of old, with which it is contrasted. It is ideal, spiritual,

* I give the entire passage (Hebrews xii. 18-24), to the close of which (ver. 22-24) I here refer. "18. For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19. And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20. (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21. And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake :) 22. But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23. To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

heavenly,—but not the less on that account revealing real truth. The redeemed of all ages are represented as brought together to meet their redeeming God. Setting aside the locality and the witnesses of which the first of the three verses (ver. 22) speaks; and the mediator and the mediation brought forward in the third; we have the real meeting in the verse which intervenes. It consists of “the general assembly or church of the first-born which are written in heaven, God the judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect.”

Sitting on a central throne is God the judge of all; his people’s saviour, but still their judge; the judge of all. On either side there stands a vast company.

Who are these on the one side? “The firstborn written” or registered “in heaven.” They are there in their character of sons and heirs. They are there in full “assembly,” yet in the capacity of a select body, “a church.” The expression “firstborn, registered in heaven,” properly denoting the possession of the filial birth-right, describes the position of those referred to elsewhere, when Christ is spoken of as destined to be “the firstborn

among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29). He alone is, strictly speaking, the first-born. To him belongs the birthright, the right of primogeniture. He is the Son; and, as the Son, the heir of all things. But he shares his birthright, or right of primogeniture, with many brethren. They all accordingly in him become in a sense firstborn;—sons and heirs. And they are registered as such in heaven. The position of believers under the dispensation of the gospel is thus characteristically marked. I can scarcely doubt that it is the entire body of New Testament believers who are mystically, as it were, and by a sublime figure, set before us, as convened, in a universal but select church-convocation, on one side of "God the judge of all."

Who then are they who are seen by the eye of faith standing on the other side? "The spirits of just men made perfect." I cannot admit that this means merely the pious dead generally. I cannot forget that a particular class of "just men" have been brought prominently out in the very passage of which this magnificent pictorial representation of the gathering together of all the saved is the close. "Just men"

have been spoken of, who in the days of old lived by faith and died in faith, who yet were not "made perfect." There was a certain incompleteness, a certain defect, in or about their spiritual state, while they lived, and when they died. And the defect could not be altogether remedied,—their state could not be thoroughly put right,—apart from Christian believers. It is they, I am satisfied, who are to be regarded as standing alongside of the firstborn registered in heaven, before Jehovah's awful throne. They are made perfect now. Perfect! in what respect? Surely one can scarcely help drawing the conclusion, in respect of their sharing with the firstborn their privilege of sonship and right of primogeniture, becoming out and out sons, as they are.*

The other passage which I mean to adduce is in the Epistle to the Galatians. The consideration of it need not detain us long. I am persuaded, however, that it strongly confirms the view which I have been suggesting of the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

In the beginning of the fourth chapter, Paul draws a contrast between believers

* See Appendix II.

under the law and believers under the gospel. Of the former, he thus writes:—
“Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all, but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of this world.” Of the latter, “But when the fulness of the time was come, 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. Wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” It is admitted, or rather strongly asserted by the apostle, that the Old Testament believer is an heir. Being a child of Abraham, in virtue of his having and exercising the same faith that Abraham had and exercised, he really has all the rights of a son and heir in the family of God. But these rights are in abeyance during the period of pupillage or nonage. He cannot avail himself of them. He is

not fully acquainted with them. His place in the family is rather that of a servant than that of a son. Such, says Paul, was the position even of the true members of the church before gospel times. But, he adds, their position is now changed. And what effects the change? God sending forth his Son, and the Spirit of his Son. It is very plainly intimated that it is through God's sending forth his Son, as his Son, that they receive the adoption of sons ; and that it is through God's sending forth into their hearts the Spirit, as the Spirit of his Son, crying Abba, Father, that they realise their receiving the adoption of sons. If sons before, they were so prospectively, and as it were potentially—*in posse*, rather than *in esse*. They are sons now really and truly, in a sense and to an effect impossible before. They saw, indeed, the day of Christ afar off, and were glad. They saw his holy person in the spotless lamb ; his atoning death in the paschal sacrifice. But they saw him not as the Son of God. And till he is so seen, even believing men cannot receive, so as to realise it, the adoption of sons ; they cannot conceive what true sonship really is. It is the

manifested sonship of Christ that alone opens up the way for his believing people becoming sons indeed, and having in them the spirit of sonship, the Spirit of God's very Son, crying Abba, Father.

Now, if such a change was thus effected in the spiritual position of living believers, and in their consciousness of it, is there any difficulty in apprehending the thought of a similar change taking place in the case of the dead? Is there anything incredible in the idea of these grand old worthies—"the just who lived by faith and died in faith"—coming to know their Redeemer as God's Son and their brother, in a way in which they never could know him, till they saw him "sent forth made of a woman, made under the law?" And what a large accession of holy joy might their new knowledge of him impart! They have never been separated from him since they left the world, for they are one with him. They have known and loved him well. But now they behold a new thing—his sonship in their nature. And beholding that glory of God, they are changed into the same image. The single drawback, the solitary element of inferiority

attached to their saved state, is gone. Not in an ideal sense only, but in real heavenly fellowship, they are now on the same footing with Stephen, and James, and the noble army of martyrs, and all the faithful who, falling asleep in Jesus, depart to be with him. The just are made perfect as sons.*

Thus, as it seems to me, the opinion which is suggested by a calm survey of the teaching of the Old Testament on the question,—How far the fatherhood of God was revealed to the Old Testament Church,—is corroborated by what we find in the intimations of the New Testament.

There are two observations which I wish before closing to make on the view which I have ventured to submit.

In the first place, I think I can see a reason for reserve, as regards the full discovery of God's fatherhood, before the coming of Christ. I can see some risk likely to arise from its being prematurely disclosed, and some benefit in its being in a great degree shaded and concealed.

I remarked at the outset that, apart

* See Appendix II.

from the incarnation,—and what is seen in the earthly and human life of the Son of the footing on which, as the Son, he is with the Father, and the manner of their mutual intercourse as Father and Son with one another,—all our conceptions of fatherhood in God, as a relation which he sustains towards any of his creatures, must have been simply analogical ; based on the analogy of the relation of father and son as it subsists among men. But that analogy is originally inadequate ; and, since the fall, it is positively unsafe.

I believe, indeed, that the existence of the paternal and filial relation among men, from the beginning, has reference to the eternal relation of fatherhood and sonship in the Godhead, and to the ultimate development of that relation, in the standing of all saved intelligences. I entirely agree with those who maintain that this forms part, and a chief part, of the image and likeness of God in which man was originally made.* The divine relation is not a mere analogical inference from the human. The human is formed upon the model of the

* See Treffrey on the Eternal Sonship, chap. II., sect. v., pages 156, 157.

divine, and expressly in order to be its analogical representative. Adam's being a father, is not the type of God's paternity. Rather, in the sense of being the mould into which it is cast, God's paternity is the type of his.

In that view, I can conceive of the angels welcoming the introduction on the stage of being of a race meant to exhibit this relation. They could form no idea of it from the manner of their own existence. They had been, so far as appears, simultaneously created ; all of them alike in full possession of mature intelligence. They had been all of them simultaneously tried and tested ; and the faithful among them had made good their position simultaneously, as the subjects and servants of the Most High. If the reward of their obedience was to be sonship ;—especially if it was to be sonship somehow after the model of the relation of the second person to the first in the ever adorable Trinity ;—they might well be at a loss to form any notion of a relation so utterly beyond the reach of their own created experience. But now, they see a race of new intelligences called into existence ; in whose con-

stitution and history a relation is to be exhibited that may at least be a faint shadow of the divine relation, to some participation in which they are taught to aspire. They rejoice in the help thus given towards their understanding the relation of fatherhood in which God is to stand to them. But alas! the dawn is soon overcast. Sin comes in; and its blight taints and blasts the earthly relation which should have been the image of the heavenly. It is better for the angels now, that the full discovery of this relation should be deferred till the Son of God himself appears as a creature;—to show what, for the creatures, it really is.

The postponement was equally expedient, or rather even more expedient, as regards men. What materials were there in these old times, what materials are there now, for the construction of a notion of fatherhood in God upon the analogy of fatherhood in man? One of the best perhaps of human fathers, since the fall, is Abraham. But was he faultless in that relation? Or shall we take Jacob? or Eli? or David? If the Old Testament Church—if Old Testament believers—had been asked to worship God as their Father, was

there no danger of their conceiving of him whom they worshipped, after such unsafe analogies as these?

There is the same danger still. It is urgent. It is the unbelief of the day. I have little hesitation in saying that the merely analogical view of the fatherhood of God lies at the root of much, if not all, of our modern current infidelity. How, indeed, can it fail, unless very carefully guarded, to breed infidelity? It must do so doubly,—in two ways. Human parents, on the one hand, are weak, fallible, selfish, capricious;—holding with unsteady hand the balance of equity;—unreasonably passionate, yet fondly placable. And, on the other hand, they who conceive of God's fatherhood as like the fatherhood of human parents, are but too ready to reconcile themselves to precisely such a view of God as that which the analogy suggests.

I believe it to be God's purpose to set aside, to a large extent, if not altogether, all analogical apprehensions of his fatherhood. I believe he means us to look exclusively, or all but exclusively, to the manner of life of his Son Jesus Christ, and to draw our notions of his father-

hood directly from thence. Here there is no analogy; or, if there is, it is all the other way. It is not analogical reasoning from the human to the divine, but from the divine to the human. There is presented before our eyes the actual working out, in human nature and human experience, of the only relation of fatherhood and sonship which God would have us to realise as possible between himself and us. He would be our father, not as we are the fathers of our children, but as he is the father of his Son Jesus Christ.

I do not urge any question as to the original purpose of God in instituting a relation of fatherhood in man;—or as to how his original purpose might have been served, if the relation had not been practically vitiated by the fall. It might, in that case, have been, within certain limits and under certain cautions and reservations, the source and ground of a pure and sound analogy. And so far as it partakes of the redeeming and renewing grace of the gospel, it may be so still;—and may be so more and more. But God has not trusted to that. He has revealed his fatherhood, not analogically but expressly, in his incar-

nate Son. And there is divine wisdom in his keeping silence, for the most part, upon the whole subject, until the fulness of the time for that revelation comes.

The other observation which I wish to make arises naturally out of this last thought. The divine wisdom in this arrangement is signally manifested in the character and spirit of Old Testament piety, as that was necessarily moulded by it.

I have already noticed the fact that there is little, or I think I may almost say nothing, of the filial element, in the recorded spiritual experiences and spiritual exercises of Old Testament believers. The Psalms entirely want it. The nearest approach to it, perhaps, is that most tenderly suggested analogy (Ps. ciii. 13): "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." The same sort of analogy is suggested elsewhere; as in Malachi (iii. 17): "I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him;" in Deut. (viii. 5): "Thou shalt consider in thine heart that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee;" and in Proverbs (iii. 12): "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth,

even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.”

In these instances, the very nearness of the approach to the assertion of God's fatherhood makes the stopping short of it all the more noticeable. The last instance in particular is, in that view, not a little significant. The verse from Proverbs is quoted in Hebrews (xii. 6). And the inspired writer, in quoting it, does not scruple to throw it into New Testament form, for the purpose of his inspired New Testament appeal :—“ Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” Fatherhood is in the text, as Paul was inspired to give it. But it is not in the text as it stands in the Old Testament. All that is there is a similitude ;— a “ like as,” or “ so as,” or “ even as.”

But apart from minute criticism, I suppose it will not be denied, that in Old Testament piety there is not anything like a full recognition—scarcely, indeed, any recognition at all—of that personal relation of fatherhood and sonship which enters so largely and so deeply into the prevailing spirit of Christian devotion. The consideration of this fact might suggest a line

of thought and investigation intensely interesting ; on which, however, I cannot now enter at any length. I can only throw out a hint or two.

It must, I think, greatly enhance our admiration of the godly men of old, and of their godliness, when we listen to their utterances of praise and prayer, or search the records of their manifold spiritual experiences and deep exercises of soul, to bear in mind how little they were permitted to know of God as a Father. Their close walk with him, their strong trust in him, their fervent desire after him, the warmth of their affection, the poignancy of their sense of sin, the liveliness of their heavenly joy—these and other features of their personal religion must appear, in the view of this condition attaching to it, more and more wonderful the more we examine and reflect upon them. It might be not unprofitable also to inquire, how far that condition may explain some of the peculiarities of their holy aspirations and contentings ; the restlessness, the impatience, the dark questionings and misgivings, the passionate outbursts even, which their writings occasionally indicate ; the sort of wailing cry for something better which

breaks from them ; and the eager, intense expectancy of their air and attitude, like that of children in a strange place, longing to be taken to some unknown home. Again, it might be well to mark, in searching these old books, and specially the psalms and prophetic songs, how marvelously the Holy Spirit has so inspired them, that this absence of what has since been so fully revealed,—which might be supposed to be a drawback,—is in truth the very quality which best fits them for universal use, in all ages of the Church till the end comes. For it is that which makes them most expressive of the groans and sighs of lost humanity ; its tossings, strivings, fightings, until it finds its God ; its strange vicissitudes of joy, fear, hope, even after it has found him. And then, finally, one might usefully inquire how, in virtue of its very imperfection, the divinity of the Old Testament prepares the way for that of the New ; how the knowledge and worship of God, as Creator, Governor, Lord, lays the best and only safe foundation for the knowledge and worship of him as Father ; how in this, as in other respects, “ the law is our school-master to bring us unto Christ.”

NOTES TO LECTURE THIRD.

NOTE A. (Page 125.)

Job xxxviii. 1-7 ; Numbers xxiv. 17 ; Revelation ii. 28,
and xxii. 16.

It is not necessary for my present argument to inquire particularly into the meaning of these remarkable texts, which seem to associate so intimately the filial rank and relation in the spiritual firmament with the ushering in of the morning dawn in the natural heaven. The image of the morning star is as suggestive in a religious point of view as it is poetically beautiful. In particular, as used in these texts taken together, it surely points to the identification of unfallen angels and redeemed men with the second person in the Godhead. Whatever it imports, as descriptive of the bright and blessed effulgence of dawn growing into glorious noon, is common to him and them.

He is the morning star. He is so, emphatically and pre-eminently—himself alone. He avows himself to be so at the very close of his Revelation (xxii. 16): "I am the bright and morning star."

But it is not a "starship" belonging to him simply in his original divine nature and condition. It belongs to him as "the root and offspring of David." It belongs to him in the character and capacity which formed the ground of the riddle that, in the days of his flesh, he propounded to the Pharisees (Matthew xxii. 45): "If David call him," the Messiah, "Lord, how is he then his Son."

In that view he shares it with all who own him as David's Lord, and therefore their Lord also ; while they

welcome him as David's son, and therefore also their brother. His "starship," in a word, is his "sonship." It is his "sonship" in the process of its development, from earliest streak of morning to fullest blaze of noon.

Hence the association of the two—"starship" and "sonship"—in the holy angels as witnessing our earth's creation. That, to them, was the dawn of a new day. The Son was then to them as "the morning star," ushering in a new manifestation of the unclouded glory of God. They are one with him—intelligently and cordially one with him—so far as their natural capacity and their information at the time admit. They are one with him as the Son. But his sonship is only then beginning to be unfolded. It is as the shining of the morning star. It is, therefore, as "morning stars" that they are "sons of God."

This original idea or image being once recognised, it is not difficult to see how, under Old Testament conditions, it could be only very imperfectly and obscurely developed—as, for instance, in Balaam's prophecy. Nor is it strange that, even under New Testament light, it should not bulk much in our view. It is a mere figure, indicating little more than the gradual and growing manifestation of the relation in question. That relation, however, is surely thus proved to be the original filial relation of the Son to the Father, now wonderfully shared with unfallen angels and redeemed men.

NOTE B. (Page 128.)

This, as it seems to me, is a sort of *experimentum crucis*, a testing trial, as regards the notion of the original relation of man to his Maker being filial. As such, it must be fully met and satisfactorily disposed of. Is there any hint

whatever in Scripture of the fall being a fall from a filial state? Is the sin which caused it represented anywhere in all the Bible as a breach of the filial relation? Is it possible, upon the supposition of its being so, to construct anything like an adequate scriptural representation of the atonement? Judgment, judicial retribution, the just award of guilt according to strict law strictly administered—these are the ideas, and the only ideas, which underlie the principle of expiatory or propitiatory sacrifice, as all history proves that the human conscience craves for it;—and, as the Bible history reveals that divine love has provided it. But it is all out of place—irrelevant, nay, offensively inconsistent and incongruous—if it is a breach of the filial relation that is to be repaired. In that case, the whole apparatus and arrangement of the Cross, considered as a real judicial transaction,—as the real and actual punishment of the guilty by the substitution of a willing and holy divine victim in their stead,—must be explained away.

I admit that there may remain, even though that meaning is blotted out, a certain power in the Cross to manifest divine love. It may be represented as simply a manifestation of divine love, and nothing more. And the love may be called fatherly love. But it is not really so. In the Cross, thus baldly and barely viewed, we see the Father putting the Son through the experience of fallen men to the utmost extremity of suffering which that experience can involve. For what end? To satisfy justice on behalf of criminals—to expiate their guilt? No. But to encourage lapsed children in their return to their Father. But is such a procedure really needed for their encouragement? Is it, in fact, any encouragement at all? Is it not rather fitted to discourage? Does it not tend to invest the fatherly and filial relation with a very awful and impenetrable gloom, when it comes out that the father cannot

receive back his erring children into his favour, otherwise than on the condition of his holy "firstborn" Son becoming a sufferer and a victim on their behalf?

All is clear and simple, if the substitutionary work of Christ is held to have reference to the purely legal and judicial relation as that originally subsisting between God and man. But the introduction of the relation of fatherhood and sonship confounds all. For the two relations cannot be conceived of as originally combined; certainly not in the instance of a race liable to fall, and now actually fallen. They must be dealt with either as guilty subjects, or as undutiful sons. The method of recovery must be adapted to one or other of these two views of their condition.

I would have evangelical thinkers to ponder this alternative well. The looser and broader school of speculators understand its meaning and its bearings very thoroughly.

NOTE C. (Page 130.)

I think these four Old Testament texts—Gen. vi. 2, Hosea i. 10, Jer. xxxi. 20, Mal. i. 6—are all that can be supposed to teach a relation of fatherhood and sonship, practically available for personal appeal.

I would not wish to weaken the force, or dilute the virtue, of any one of them, as introducing an element that aggravates man's guilt and enhances God's forbearance. That the universal corruption ushering in the deluge had its rise in the worldly conformity of those to whom the high title of children or sons of God was in any sense appropriate (Gen. vi. 2); that so high a designation should be still within the reach of apostate Israel (Hosea i. 10); that the Lord should yearn over Ephraim as "his dear son, a pleasant child" (Jer. xxxi. 20); and that he should urge his claim on his people as at least equal to that of a father and

a master in an ordinary human household (Mal. i. 6);—all that is most emphatic. By all means the emphasis must be preserved. But there is nothing in it all like the assertion or implication of real and proper fatherhood and sonship, as a relation subsisting personally between God and the individual man. I would not explain away these and similar texts. On the contrary, I would press them into my service. I would especially do so if I were elaborating proof in support of the opinion which I strongly hold, that from the beginning the relation, in the noblest sense of it, was contemplated as the perfection of created intelligence; and that accordingly all nature is cast in that mould, and all revelation points in the same line. At the same time, when alleged as evidence of the relation being known to the Old Testament church,—so as to form any part of its theology or any element of its piety,—such rare and isolated passages are altogether without point and without power. They are merely conventional or rhetorical modes of speech;—conventional, when they simply designate one set of people as distinct from another;—rhetorical, when they are made the ground of complaint, or expostulation, or entreaty.

NOTE D. (Page 131.)

The following passages extracted from Alexander on Isaiah (Dr. Eadie's edition, 1848) have an important bearing on the question now under discussion.

The first is from his note on Isaiah lxiii. 16;—“*Because thou art our father.* This does not merely mean our natural creator, but our founder, our national progenitor, as in Deut. xxxii. 6. Here, however, it appears to be employed in an emphatic and exclusive sense, as if he had said, ‘thou and thou alone art our father;’ for he immediately adds, as if to explain and justify this strange

assertion, 'for Abraham has not known us, and Israel will not recognise or acknowledge us.' . . . The true sense of the verse, as it appears to me, is that the Church, or chosen people, although once, for temporary reasons, co-extensive and coincident with a single race, is not essentially a national organization, but a spiritual body. Its father is not Abraham or Israel, but Jehovah, who is, and always has been, its redeemer, who has borne that name from everlasting. . . . The strong terms of this verse are of course to be comparatively understood, not as implying that the Church will ever have occasion to repudiate its historical relation to the patriarchs, or cease to include among its members many of their natural descendants, but simply as denying all continued or perpetual pre-eminence to Israel as a race, and exalting the common relation of believers to their great Head as paramount to all connection with particular progenitors ; the very doctrine so repeatedly and emphatically taught in the New Testament."

The second passage is from the note on Isaiah lxiv. 7 ; —"*And now, Jehovah, our Father (art) thou, we the clay and thou our potter, and the work of thy hands (are) we all.*" . . . "The Prophet here resumes the thought of chap. lxiii. 16, where, as here, the paternity ascribed to God is not that of natural creation in the case of individuals, but the creation of the Church or chosen people, and of Israel as a spiritual and ideal person. The figure of the potter and the clay, implying absolute authority and power, is used twice before (ch. xxix. 6 ; xlv. 9), and is one of the connecting links between this book and the acknowledged Isaiah." . . . "The same plea, derived from the relation of the creature to the maker, is used in Ps. cxxxviii. 8, *forsake not the work of thy hands.* (Compare Ps. lxxvi. 1 ; lxxix. 1). In either case there is a

tacit appeal to the covenant and promise in Gen. xvii. 7 ; Lev. xxvi. 42-45 ; Deut. vii. 6 ; xxvi. 17, 18."

The remarks in this last note of Alexander apply to Jer. xxxi. 9. Indeed that text in Jeremiah is conclusive, I think, in favour of the opinion that it is simply Israel, or the Church collective, as an ideal person, that is meant, in the few places where sonship or heirship seems to be implied ;—and not at all individual believers realizing personally and practically any such relation.

LECTURE IV.

THE TEACHING OF OUR LORD ON HIS OWN AND HIS BRETHREN'S SONSHIP.

The firstborn among many brethren.—ROMANS viii. 29.

THE fatherhood of God is revealed in the person of his Son Jesus Christ, and in his life on earth. If we would conceive aright of what it is for God to be our father and for us to be his sons, it is to that model that we must chiefly look.

The Old Testament church had little or no knowledge of God being a father, in the sense of his sustaining a proper personal relation of fatherhood to men individually.

When I say that, I do not of course mean that he was not the father of those who believed in his name; really and truly their father; as much so before as after the incarnation. I mean only that he did not see fit to reveal himself clearly and unreservedly in that character. And I think I have shown good reason for some

reserve being maintained until the relation in its full integrity could be manifested.

Neither do I forget that Israel collectively is spoken of by the Lord as his son, and is therefore constituted a type of Christ. Thus, to name one remarkable instance, or rather one decisive proof, Matthew quotes the message of the Lord to Pharaoh; or Hosea's reference to it; as receiving its fulfilment in Christ: "Out of Egypt have I called my son."*

Still, with a full admission of all these premonitions, I am persuaded that, as a definite personal relation subsisting between God and individual men, the fatherhood of God did not form part of the revelation given to the church under the old economies.

All this reserve is at an end when the Son himself opens his mouth. "The man Christ Jesus" called God father in a way

* I give the passages entire. First, there is that in Exodus (iv. 22, 23): "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born. And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born." Next, there is the passage in Hosea (xi. 1): "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." Then, lastly, there is the quotation in Matthew (ii. 15): "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son."

quite unprecedented. Not even his forerunner, the Baptist, used the name as he did. There is no trace of God's fatherhood in John's teaching ;—unless it be that on one occasion, upon the warrant of the voice from heaven, he says, " I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God " (John i. 34). With Jesus himself, the title " Father," as applied to God, is a familiar household word.

And yet, as I think, he uses it with careful and studied discrimination.

Thus, for example, I do not know that there is one instance recorded of his using the title of Father with reference to the world at large, or to men generally ; or, indeed, with reference to any but those whom he was pleased to regard as his disciples, and to address and treat accordingly. He speaks to them of God as their father ;—and, so far as my observation goes, to them only. I cannot call to mind a single case in which he gives God that appellation in dealing with the promiscuous crowds that resorted to him. Nay, there is at least one case—there may be more, but let one suffice—in which he makes a very marked distinction.

It occurs in the twelfth chapter of Luke's Gospel. "One of the company"—the crowd literally—asks Jesus to assume the office of judge between him and his brother in the matter of the family inheritance (ver. 13). After declining that position (ver. 14), the Lord takes the opportunity of warning the company, or crowd, against the sin of covetousness. "He said unto them,"—"he spake a parable unto them" (vers. 15-21). In thus addressing them, he uses simply the term "God" (ver. 20). But suddenly he turns from the multitude to his disciples. The incident suggests a lesson for them also;—a lesson against care, answering to his warning to the company against covetousness. Immediately his tone changes from something approaching to severity or sternness to the utmost tenderness and affection. And after appealing to God's creative power and providential bounty, as reasons for trusting him and having no anxiety, he tells them, as a stronger reason still, of "their Father knowing what they need," and of its being "their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom" (vers. 30, 32).

I believe it will be found that our Lord

observes this distinction throughout ;—restricting the term to his disciples, and avoiding the use of it when he addresses others. Nor can the obvious inference deducible from this uniform practice be turned aside by the mere allegation, that there must have been among those whom he chose to count as his disciples not a few who were not his disciples in reality, as among the apostles there was one traitor. The fact is admitted. But it does not touch the point of my present observation. For the same principle must be applied here which explains Scripture usage elsewhere ; as when the visible churches to whom the apostolic letters are written are addressed as if all their members were true believers. Men are, and must be, treated according to their calling and profession. On that principle, his disciples are regarded by our Lord as having God to be their Father ; and, so far as I can see, they alone.

There is, I think, another important distinction to be observed in our Lord's manner of calling God Father. I refer now to those almost countless instances in which he points to his own relation to God ;—saying, "my Father," or, "the Father." In so saying,

he sometimes has in view the relation of fatherhood and sonship between the Father and him as it subsisted from everlasting before his incarnation ; while at other times, what he has in view is manifestly the relation as it subsists now that he has become incarnate. Of course, I hold that it is the same relation, unchanged and unmodified. But it is now shared in by his humanity, which it was not before. And this, so far, makes a difference ;—not in the nature and character of the relation ;—but, as it were, in the manner of its outgoings or outcomings in the person sustaining it.

Let me attempt to make my meaning somewhat more plain by means of an explanatory instance.

When Jesus made that most solemn and sublime appeal from earth to heaven,—from the cold unbelief of man to the loving heart of God—“ I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes ;—even so, Father ; for so it seemed good in thy sight ” (Mat. xi. 25, 26)—none hearing the marvellous words could doubt,—at least, none reading them in faith now can doubt,

—that they point far back in the past eternity to mutual counsels and infinite endearments in which his manhood never had a share. When, on the other hand, prostrated in Gethsemane's garden, he uttered first the cry of agony, "O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me"—and then the prayer of acquiescence, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done" (Mat. xxvi. 39, 42),—the language springs out of trial of which his manhood bears the brunt, and obedience of which his manhood must have the credit.

The Father is the same to him, and he is the same to the Father, on both occasions alike. The relation of fatherhood and sonship is the same. But he who sustains the relation of sonship has undergone a change of state. From being only God he has become also man; from being alone with the Father in the Holy Ghost, in the unapproachable unity of the one only thrice holy God, he has come to be associated and identified with a race of fallen creatures, whose sorrows he is willing to share,—whose guilt and condemnation he has consented to take upon himself.

He is the same person throughout—the same in his sonship. But is it not evident that now, when he speaks as the Son occupying the last of these two positions, he may be expected, alike in what he says to his Father and in what he says of his Father, to use language proper on some occasions to his former condition, and on others again to his present condition? He cannot but speak at some times as realising, even in and all through his humiliation, what he has been to the Father and the Father to him, from everlasting. He cannot but speak at other times as realising what, in virtue of his humiliation, he is to the Father and the Father to him, now. But there is not on that account any difference in respect of the personal relation in which he stands to the Father. That is the same in both states. There is simply a distinction between what refers back to his past, and what expresses his present, consciousness and experience, in that one relation which is common to both the modes of his existence, and both the periods, if I may so speak, of his history.

This distinction, I need scarcely say,

has a very material bearing on the question as to the connection of his people's sonship with his own. Can it be a sonship of the same nature and character with his own? Can it be, in fact, their being made really and truly partners and partakers with him in his being the Son of God?

I advert to this question at this stage and in this connection, merely to the effect of considering how far such an identity is possible or conceivable;—how far it can be shown to be consistent with a due regard to the vast distance that there must ever be felt to be between an uncreated and a created being. For an opinion certainly prevails in some quarters, that to represent Christ's sonship and his people's as being of the same sort, is to confound the human and the divine. Let me say a few words on that opinion.

I begin with an illustrative or suggestive case. My father has a firstborn son; and after the lapse of, say, some quarter of a century, he has a second son, there being none between. I am that second son. As the second son, I stand to my father in the very same relation with the first. I have the same claims on him and the same place in

his heart. But I hear my elder brother continually alluding to interchanges of love and confidence between him and our common father long prior to my coming into the family. I am not surprised at these allusions, nor chagrined or vexed by them ; for my elder brother gives me the full benefit of all that they imply. Still, my real and actual communion with my brother, in our joint filial relation to our common father, dates only from my coming to an intelligent apprehension of it. All before that is matter of testimony ; it is information at second-hand. I can have no fellowship, properly so called, with him in it. But for all that, my sonship is really the same relation as his, though his is of older standing than mine. Would it make much—or indeed any—difference to me if I were told that my brother's sonship had no beginning at all? That might raise a difficulty otherwise, as regards the past,—or as regards the question how that sonship without a beginning could be possible. But it need not affect my present standing, as my brother's fellow in the relation of sonship to our common father.

Or take another parallel case. My son's

wife is to me a daughter. She stands to me, as I believe and feel, in the very same relation in which my son himself stands to me. I treat them both equally as my children. I am a father equally to both. The relation is differently originated and constituted in the two. In the one, it is natural, dating from the beginning of the party's existence ; in the other it is the result of an arrangement entered into when the party has been in existence for years. But what of that ? The law declares the relation to be the same, and my heart owns it to be so. My new child must be an entire stranger to the consciousness and experience of much in the relation between myself and my son, or in our realisation of it, which preceded the union that has given me a new child. But still, what of that ? The whole good of the relation is now common equally to both of my children. Would it make the least difference, as regards the apprehension of present joint relationship, if the child I have got by her becoming my son's spouse were to be told that he whose spouse she is was born years or ages ago ?— or even, to speak with reverence, that he was begotten from everlasting ?

These, let it be remembered, are most inadequate and imperfect analogies. Still, they are analogies. And to my mind they go far to prove that there has been some confusion of thought about this whole matter. For I cannot help suspecting that there has been from of old a tendency to suppose that there is a difference of relationship, when, in point of fact, the difference merely lies in the dates at which, and the grounds on which, the same relation has been constituted in different persons. In other words, the difference has been held to be essential; whereas it is in reality only circumstantial, and should accordingly be treated as such. When and how the relationship was constituted,—is one question. What it is, whensoever and howsoever constituted,—is quite another question. And it is still a different question;—How far two parties may partake in the same relation, though constituted, in the two, at different times and in different ways. Nor, as regards this last question, does it matter though in the one it should be from everlasting.

Let me anticipate a little my line of argument, and put a scriptural, and, as I

think, a critical and crucial test, on this particular point.

In his farewell prayer, Christ says to the Father, "Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John xvii. 24). He asserts also with reference to his disciples,—“Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me” (ver. 23). I take this last statement to be an assertion of the real and absolute identity of the love of the Father, as the Father, to the Son and to the Son’s disciples. And I ask, Is there any difference between that love and the love to which the other statement alludes—the love with which the Father loved the Son before the foundation of the world? Has the Father’s love of the Son undergone any change? Has it not always been fatherly love? And now the Son’s believing people share with him in it as such. It is the same fatherly love to them that it is to him. There is no difference as to the Father’s love ;—or as to their standing, his and theirs, in the possession of it.

It is true that they can have no consciousness or experience of it, as love in exercise “before the foundation of the world.” That is exclusively his privilege, his honour,

his joy. In the old eternal reminiscences, if we may dare to use the term, of that unfathomable immensity of the duration of this love,—they, the creatures of yesterday, can have no part or title. But does that consideration evacuate of meaning the truth announced by the lips of the Son himself,—surely at a time when oneness and not distinction is in his mind,—that from the moment of their believing in him the Father “loveth them as he loveth him?”—that the very “love wherewith the Father loveth him is thenceforth in them?”—and that ever after the Father is to them exactly what, as the Father, he is to him?

Let it be admitted then,—or rather let it always be very strongly asserted and strenuously maintained,—that our Lord does very frequently use language which cannot fairly admit of any other interpretation than that he claims to be the Son of the Father from before all worlds,—from all eternity. When he uses such language, he appeals to a mode or manner of his filial life with the Father, in which none else can participate. Down to the time of his assuming the human nature, in his pre-

existent state before that event, he enjoys, —if I may venture so to speak,—he enjoys and exercises his sonship in a way strictly and absolutely peculiar to himself, as the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father. Into that period of his filial life no man or angel dare intrude. But the case is altered when he becomes incarnate. Then he begins a new mode of filial life, of such a sort as by no means to exclude the idea of others sharing with him in it. And when his language refers to the experience of that new kind of filial life, in the new state into which he has entered, I can see no reason why he may not be understood as meaning that it is really and literally the kind of filial life of which he intends to make his disciples partakers, when he calls God their Father as he calls him his own Father ;—that they are to be on the same footing with God on which he now is ;—that the Father is to be to them what he is now to him as “having come in the flesh,” and what he will be to him in that character for ever.

Thus, I think, it may be seen that though in some of our Lord’s filial utterances and expressions we cannot go along

with him,—since they refer to his position with the Father, and his intercourse with the Father, before he came to be one with us in our nature,—there are others proper to his new state of being into the spirit of which we may enter. We may therefore have the same filial experience which they denote, and partake of the same filial relation which they imply.

I have been endeavouring to show that the nature or character of such a relation as that of fatherhood and sonship does not depend, either upon the period of its subsistence, or upon the manner of its original constitution. And therefore I infer that there need be no difficulty, *a priori*, in conceiving of two persons standing in the same relation to a third,—even though in the case of the one the relation may be dateless, and founded on a necessity of nature, while in the case of the other it may be of recent date, and formed or constituted by an act or work of grace.

There is one other remark of a general kind which it seems needful to make.

Identity of relation does not imply that if two parties share in it, the one may not

have a far greater aptitude to apprehend it, and a far larger capacity to enter into it, than the other. There may be the widest difference between them in this respect.

Perhaps no two sons in a family ever equally realise their sonship. Both of them may be dutiful, loyal, loving. But there may be in the one a knowledge of their common father, an insight into his heart, an apprehension of his counsels, a sympathy with his pursuits, to which—at least in equal measure or degree—the other does not, and cannot attain. Still, both are sons. They are sons, as having the same footing in their common father's house, and the same hold on their common father's affection. No doubt the difference between them,—in the amount of their filial insight, apprehension, sympathy,—may warrantably cause a difference in the amount of their father's affection towards the two respectively;—or rather, one would say, in the manner of its manifestation. But it is fatherly affection towards both alike. And it is so in the same sense. The footing of both in the house is alike, and to the same effect, filial.

All this is too obvious to require proof

or illustration. I would only add that the difference I speak of must be vast indeed when the one Son is the Divine Redeemer, and the other a sinner redeemed; though still it is not a difference which need at all affect the sameness of the relation.

I have thus sought to clear the way for the consideration of the main question—What does Christ mean when he represents God as being his people's Father?

There is undoubtedly one instance—I think only one—in which our Lord brings in the analogy of the human fatherhood, and founds an argument upon it, *a fortiori* (Matt. vii. 9-11; Luke xi. 11-13), "What man is there of you, whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

Of course, it is a fair and valid analogy, especially if we hold that human fatherhood is meant to be a shadow or representation of the Divine. Let it be observed, however,—first, that the analogy is em-

ployed only for a very specific and limited purpose,—and, secondly, that the employment of it is quite consistent with the very highest view of God's fatherhood. Nay, the higher the view taken of that fatherhood, so much the stronger is the *a fortiori* reasoning. And surely it is not a little remarkable that while the Lord is always, as it would seem, seeking to familiarise the minds of his disciples with the idea of God being their Father, he makes so little use of the human analogy. It looks almost as if he studiously avoided it; as if he would have them to form their conceptions of what it is to have God for their Father, not from what they might see in any human household, but from what they saw of him as a member of the divine household.

For, let it be remembered, they were continually hearing his filial utterances, and witnessing his filial walk. No doubt, the words that fell from his lips were often such as they could not as yet fully understand,—pointing to a higher condition than that which he now occupied, in which he had been as a Son with God as his Father. But yet again, on the other hand, they could not but perceive that in circum-

stances precisely similar to their own, and under the pressure of an experience which might any day be theirs, he still habitually looked up to God as his Father. Nor did he ever give them the slightest intimation of his looking up to God as his Father, on these occasions,—any otherwise than as he taught them, on the like occasions, to look up to God as their Father. They could not but observe in their Master's whole demeanour, in his everyday conduct, in all his sayings and doings, a very peculiar style of godliness—new, unprecedented ; giving evidence of a singularly close, intimate, warm, endearing sort of connection between God and him ; showing him to be on terms of most confidential fellowship with God. They could not but know—he told them—that this sprung from his knowing God to be his Father, and feeling himself to be God's Son ; that it was what this fatherhood and sonship meant and implied. But this very manner of living with God, as they were constantly instructed, it was their duty to aim at and realise. And they were instructed, with a view to it, to call God their Father. Would it naturally enter into their minds

to suppose that this language denoted a different relation in their case from what it did in his?—that, while they were expected to walk with God, in that wonderful way of holy familiarity and loving trust in which they saw him walking with God, they were to be placed in a less favourable position for doing so?—that God was not to be their Father as he was his, though they were expected to be like him, and to live like him, as sons? Surely the opposite of all this is rather the conclusion fairly to be drawn, unless some very clear intimation has been given to the contrary.

Much stress is often laid, as if it were such an intimation, on the fact, that whereas our Lord very often speaks of God with reference to himself as his Father, and with reference to his disciples as their Father, he avoids, as it would seem intentionally and of set purpose, the use of the expression "Our Father." To this remark there is only one exception, the invocation of the Lord's Prayer; and it is thought that this is one of the instances in which the exception confirms and strengthens the rule. Christ, in putting

the very words of prayer into the mouths of his disciples, must necessarily use the first personal pronoun, to denote God as the Father of the person praying ; and as he intends the prayer, even when most personal and secret, to be still most catholic and loving, he uses, because he cannot help it, the plural,—“ Our Father.” But he does not mean to include himself. For, it is said, he is giving a form of prayer to be offered by the disciples, either jointly or severally, by themselves ;—not by him and them together. I confess I have always felt a difficulty in taking in this notion. It does not seem to me to be a natural explanation. I can scarcely think that it would have occurred to one of the disciples using this prayer, say on the very day on which it was given, to associate with himself in his mind and heart his fellow-disciples, and to exclude the Master. This would seem to imply that our Lord’s prayers, even when he was among his disciples, were always exclusively intercessory—not praying with them, but only praying for them ; that this was known to be his standing rule and order ; and that the disciples were accordingly instructed—not only never to

pray for him—but never to embrace him, though they might embrace all others, in the loving fellowship of prayer. For surely otherwise, apart from these suppositions, in saying, as he taught them to say, “Our Father,” the impulse, the instinct, of affection would lead them to have him as well as one another comprehended in the communion which the “our” implies. But I cannot reconcile myself to such suppositions as I have indicated. I cannot imagine Jesus and the apostles living for years together, sitting together at meals, walking together by the way, and yet not praying together.*

But though in this one instance Jesus uses the words, “Our Father,”—be the account given of his doing so what it may,—it cannot be denied that his otherwise invariable practice, in referring to the fatherhood of God, is to speak of himself and of his disciples separately. And it is argued that this indicates a deliberate design to separate his sonship from theirs, and to represent it as being of a different sort—as being, in fact, a different relation.

I am not at all satisfied that it does. I think the practice admits of another ex-

* See Note A.

planation, and one that may bring out, in a fresh and important point of view, the bearing of our Lord's work of propitiation for us, in our state of guilt, on our being admitted into participation with him, in his state of sonship.

I must premise, however, that, even apart from that explanation which I am about to offer, I do not consider the phenomenon we are now dealing with as very unaccountable, if we keep in mind the position of our Lord and his disciples as master and scholars. It is quite natural for a master addressing his scholars, for the most part magisterially, though with all affection, so to express himself as to maintain a certain distance and distinction between him and them ; and, in alluding to a third party to whom he and they stand similarly related, still to let it appear that the relation primarily belongs to him as the master, and to them only in a secondary sense, or by a secondary and subordinate right, as his scholars. This end is secured by the manner of speaking on the subject which Christ adopts ; nor does any occasion occur calling for a deviation, except when he is giving them a form of prayer. Then, however,

as I cannot but think, he does not scruple to employ phraseology which the disciples could scarcely understand otherwise than as conveying the idea of their master and themselves being alike, and in the same sense, entitled to call God Father.

But I proceed to the other explanation. I think I can see a reason for there being still some reserve, even though the incarnation has been effected, in regard to the discovery of 'God's fatherhood and his people's sonship. Even the incarnate Son is not yet in a position to do full justice to the subject. He cannot yet unfold fully the substantial identity of the relation in which he and the disciples stand to God as Father—not at least in its highest and fullest significancy.

Let me try to bring out what I mean by referring again to the passage in the Epistle to the Galatians formerly quoted: "When the fulness of the time was come, 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" (iv. 4, 5). It is there intimated that while God sends forth his Son that we may receive the adoption of sons—

surely after the model of his sonship who is sent forth—while this is the design of its being his Son whom God sends forth, an indispensable preliminary to our receiving the adoption of sons is the Son's "redeeming us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us" (iii. 13). For so, a little before, the apostle has given in full what he expresses more elliptically now. Hence, it would seem that until his work of redemption is complete, the way for our entering into his sonship is not fully opened up. In order to his making us partakers of his relation to God as the Son, he must make himself partaker of our relation to God as under the law. And not only so. He must redeem us from the guilt and condemnation which, in that relation, we have incurred, and under which we lie helpless. That he has not done till his life on earth is ended. All the time he is on earth he is about the doing of it. But it is only on the cross that he can say—"It is finished." It is only "by his resurrection from the dead," as Paul elsewhere says (Rom. i. 4), that he is "declared to be the son of God, with power, according to the spirit of holiness." And it is only then,

—then, and not before,—that he is in a position to make the entire benefit and blessedness of his sonship available in behalf of his disciples, as admitted to be sharers with him in it. Until then, he is justified in not fully or in express terms bringing out all that is implied in his sonship being the model of theirs,—its being, in fact, up to the measure of their new capacity and his redeeming grace, truly and actually communicated to them.

This idea is confirmed when we turn to a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 11), where it is said that, upon certain grounds or considerations there stated, Christ is “not ashamed to call us brethren.” The meaning is, not that he might be ashamed of us, but that, were it not for these grounds and considerations, he might be ashamed of himself. It is the same meaning that is suggested when it is said of God (xi. 16) that he is not ashamed to be called the God of the patriarchs, “for he hath prepared for them a city.” Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren, as he might well be if his doing so were a mere lip-compliment or figure of speech, and nothing more. He has no reason to be thus

ashamed, because his calling us brethren involves, not a mere nominal title of courtesy, but a real and actual participation with him in his relation to the Father, and in its fruits, so far as the nature he shares with us allows. Passages are cited from the Old Testament Scriptures to prove that Christ has no cause to be ashamed, in the sense now explained, to call his disciples brethren. And the first and chief is from the twenty-second Psalm, which so wonderfully brings out, in its beginning, the suffering, and in its close, the triumphant, Messiah. The verse quoted is the point of transition from the one state to the other—from Christ suffering to Christ triumphant. It is then that he says—"I will declare thy name unto my brethren." Now that all my agony in redeeming them is over—and the Psalm describes the agony to the life, or rather to the death—now I may without reserve call them brethren. I need not be ashamed of doing so. For I can now worthily and effectually declare to them thy name, as magnified in my obedience unto the death for them,—and in their being admitted, on the footing of that obedience, to be my brethren;—my brethren, as

having the same standing in the Father's house that I have, and the same warm place in the Father's heart.*

It is in the light of this idea that I think we must view the message sent by the risen Lord to his disciples—"Go to my brethren" (John xx. 17). It is the first time he calls his disciples, in unequivocal terms, his brethren. He might have been ashamed to do so before; but he is not ashamed to do so now. Before, his calling them his brethren might only have implied that he made common cause with them; that he took his place among them; that he became one of them, so as to share all their liabilities and responsibilities. His incarnation was sufficient evidence of that. But it was evidence of nothing more than that. For anything that appeared, he might have thus identified himself with them, with no benefit to them, but only with damage to himself; sharing their fate, and so far sympathising with them; but not effecting their deliverance. While that state of things lasted, he might be ashamed to call them brethren. But when that is over, and it is seen that he has not merely

* See Appendix III.

partaken with them in their miserable state, but accomplished their redemption out of it, he is not ashamed—there need be no more reserve—as to his calling them his brethren. Then he is in a position to deal with them as out-and-out one with himself—his brethren—having the same position that he has in the Father's family, and the same interest in the family inheritance.

I cannot but interpret the message to the disciples after the resurrection in accordance with this view. It is, as I have said, then, the first time that he adopts unequivocally this phraseology, and calls his disciples, without qualification or explanation, his brethren. He never called them his brethren before. He did unquestionably keep up a certain distinction between himself and them. He was not able thoroughly to bring out his identifying of them with himself in his sonship, until he had proved his identifying of himself with them in their subjectship to be really, for them, their redemption from its curse. But now even this reserve is over. He can say, "My brethren," with fullest, clearest, warmest welcome—welcoming them into his own very rela-

tion of sonship and subjectship combined. —“Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.”

I own I shrink from any exposition of this message of love, sent through that loving woman to the lonely eleven, which would make it suggestive of separation or distinction. It was not an occasion for reminding the disciples that he and they stood in different relations to God—relations nominally the same, yet really different. But it was an occasion for assuring them that he and they stood in the same relation, and that he was now in a position to assure them of this;—now that he had expiated their guilt and made their peace with heaven. Why should the risen Lord seize on that opportunity for discriminating between his sonship and theirs,—and it must be added, for they go together,—between his subjectship and theirs, in a way that he never thought of before? It was a strange time to take for that,—a strange place,—a strange medium. No! It is, I am confident, not distinction but identification that he means when he says—“Tell my brethren that I ascend unto my Father

and their Father, and to my God and their God.”*

I am aware that the views which I have been submitting as to the relation of fatherhood and sonship being the same in the case of Christ's disciples that it is in that of Christ himself, may seem startling to some minds. I may appear to them to be going not only against certain modern speculations, but also against the opinions of the early fathers, which are, perhaps, on this point, entitled to more weight. I think it right to offer a very few observations to show that the difference may after all be more apparent than real.

1. The Ante-Nicene divines were in the very thick and heat of the Arian and Semi-Arian controversies. Their whole energies were directed and devoted to the object of maintaining that Christ is the Son of God, not merely in virtue of some priority or precedence belonging to him in the order of creation; nor even in virtue of his being Creator or an active agent in creation; but in virtue of his being himself uncreated, and of the same substance with the Father

* See Note B.

from everlasting. Hence, they laboured anxiously to prove that he is represented in Scripture as being the Son of God in a sense and manner in which that title is never given to any other being in all the universe. Of course, they had no difficulty in proving this. They could show that neither the sonship supposed to belong originally to angels and men by creation, nor any sonship conferred on angels or men as the reward of obedience or the fruit of faith, could be held as coming up to what Holy Scripture says of the sonship of Christ. This they did with an ability and success which none but God could give. And God has blessed what they thus did, for the peace of the Church catholic, on that article at least, down to our own time.

It need not be counted strange, however, that having their minds so intently bent upon bringing out that feature in Christ's sonship which could not be shared with any creature, or be common to him with any other intelligence ;—its being natural and necessary from everlasting, in respect of his being the only-begotten and eternal Son ;—they may have been led, perhaps, to isolate him in his sonship rather too much ;

and so to exaggerate or misapprehend the difference between his sonship and that of his believing disciples.

2. In particular, I cannot help suspecting—for I confess my imperfect knowledge and dare not speak confidently—that they may not have had sufficiently before them the distinction between the two questions which I have been attempting to keep separate ;—the first having reference to the nature or character of the relation in itself, and the second having reference to the time and manner of its being constituted. Their argument against the Arians and Semi-Arians is conclusive, if it is made out from Scripture, as it clearly can be made out, that the sonship of Christ has a different origin, and rests fundamentally on a different ground, from any relation of sonship competent to any other person ;—its origin, if we may speak of the origin of what has no beginning, being in the everlasting nature of the Godhead, and its ground being eternal generation. That is enough for their purpose. It is not necessary to hold that the relation itself, as regards all that is vital and essential in its reciprocal claims and endearments,

may not be shared by Christ with his worshippers among the angels and his believing people among men.

3. I believe that this community for which I plead is really and truly, to all practical intents and purposes, admitted by the writers to whom I am referring. I am persuaded that they did virtually hold the believer's filial relation to God to be so closely connected with Christ's that it might be reckoned substantially the same. "For this cause is the Word man, and he who is Son of God was made Son of man, that man, receiving the Word and accepting adoption, might become the Son of God."*

Before closing this lecture, I wish to advert again to the topic on which I touched at the beginning. I referred then to the discrimination which our Lord manifested in speaking of God's fatherhood with reference to men. He reveals God as sustaining this relation to his disciples, and to them alone. God is their Father, not the Father of mankind generally. I find no trace whatever, in all our Lord's teaching, of anything like a universal fatherhood.

* Irenæus apud Treffrey, page 434.

The Son reveals the Father, not as the Father of sinners of mankind generally, but as the Father exclusively of those who receive the Son, and believe on his name.

At the same time, it is to be observed that the fact of his revealing God at all as the Father, has a very gracious aspect towards sinners of mankind generally. God would be the Father of them all if they would but consent to have it so. He would have them all to be his children. His relentings, his longings, his appeals, are prompted by a love that does really partake of the paternal character. It is of a Father's pity, a Father's love, a Father's open house, a Father's open heart, that the Son has to speak, when he pleads with those whom, however guilty and degraded, he regards with an affection that is truly that of a brother.

It is this consideration that makes the matchless parable of the prodigal son so appropriate as well as so affecting.

Some, indeed, are disposed to find an argument on that parable in support of their favourite opinion that men, even in their unconverted state, may look on God as already their Father ; and that in reality

what they need, and all that they need, is not to become sons of God, but only to become alive to the fact that they are his sons already, and have always been so. But,—not to speak of the danger of drawing doctrinal conclusions from the minute and incidental details of illustrative narrations or stories,—I cannot help thinking that those who would make such a use of this most beautiful of all the parables grievously pervert its meaning, and altogether miss its spirit and scope. I hold them to be guilty of bad taste, as well as of bad criticism and bad theology.

Let it be conceded that the prodigal represents sinners generally, the sinners with whom our Lord was accused of being too familiar. The parable is his defence against that accusation, and nothing more. And what is his defence? Virtually it is this:—He is the elder brother in the Father's house. He puts it to his accusers to say whether he best sustains the character and does the part of the elder brother, by acting as he is wont to act, in the way that seems to them so objectionable, or by behaving, as they would have him behave, like the elder brother in the parable.

In doing this, the Lord, as the Son, necessarily appeals to his Father's character, and wonderfully opens up to all the human family his Father's heart.

In my Father's eyes, these sinners with whom you say I associate too freely, are not what they are in yours. You regard them as outcasts ;—He would have them to be sons. He looks upon them as lost children whom he would fain recover to himself. His purpose is that I, the Son of his love, should be "the first-born among many brethren." And it is among these sinners that I am to find my brethren. These sinners, each and all of them, my Father longs to embrace, as any father worthy of the name would embrace a long-estranged child coming back to him again. He has sent me to seek and save them ;—to reveal him to them as a Father, waiting to welcome them as sons. How think ye? Do I best carry out my Father's purpose by treating them after the manner you would have me treat them,—as the off-scouring of the earth,—or by treating them as my Father's children and my brethren?—so treating them all, including the very worst and vilest of them,—even those

who have sunk almost to the level of the hungry wallowing swine?

Surely that is the point of the parable, viewed in the light of its occasion. And that is really its only meaning. It turns wholly on the love with which God regards lost sinners, and his willingness to have them reconciled to himself. It does not turn at all on the precise nature, either of their present relation to him, or of any previous relation in which they may have stood to him. Thus viewed, the parable is very precious. It warrants the widest and most unrestricted proclamation of the fatherhood of God as now, in his Son, brought within the reach of all,—to be pressed on the acceptance of all,—with the strongest possible assurance that all are welcome, freely welcome, to have the full enjoyment of all that is implied in it, if they will,—when they will.

But what is it that is thus brought within the reach of all and pressed upon the acceptance of all? Let that be kept ever in view, for it enhances a thousandfold the grace of the whole arrangement. For it is not merely in the universality and freeness of the offer, but even still more in the value

of what is offered, that the great benevolence of the Father is seen. He would have all men to be sons as Jesus is his son. Jesus would have all men to be his brethren—to be to him what those are on whose behalf, in the view of their perfected oneness with himself in his sonship, he offers his wonderful intercessory prayer—“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” In what sense one? Let himself reply—“The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.” And for what end? “That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” Let this identification be specially noted;—“Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” Can it be explained away? I think not. For mark what follows;—“I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (John xvii. 21-26).

NOTES TO LECTURE FOURTH.

NOTE A. (Page 184.)

I DO not attach much importance, or indeed any importance, to this view of the Lord's Prayer, as bearing on my argument. But I confess I have some value for it nevertheless. I am very unwilling to believe that the Master gave to his disciples a form of prayer in which they must be dissociated from him, or in which he could not identify himself with them. I am all the more reluctant to take in this idea, because there is nothing whatever expressive of his mediation in the prayer. Apart from any question as to the closing doxology, whether its genuineness be admitted or denied, there is really no hint of the Lord's standing apart from his disciples as their mediator, and bidding them use this form of supplication in his name. There is no occasion for that, if he means to join himself with them and join them with himself in the prayer which he dictates. In that case all is clear. For mediation is really identification. Jesus prays with us when he prays for us. It is as praying with us that he prays for us. I shrink from the idea of his being my mediator with the Father, and interceding with the Father on my behalf, if it means that his intercessory prayer for me, and the prayer he teaches me, are so distinct that I cannot join with him in his, and that he cannot join with me in mine. I own I do not see how, on that supposition, we can have any other sort of media-

tion and intercession than that which heathenism and Romanism agree in holding.

Nor do I see the least force in the argument, that the closing petitions are such as a sinless person could not offer. That is true, if the sinless person has not consented to make common cause, out and out, with a sinful and guilty race. If he has consented to do that, I do not see how he can refrain from the use of language proper to their sinful and guilty state. Does he not use such language in the Psalms? Does he not use it on the cross? The objection seems to me to strike at the root of the doctrine of identification and substitution.

But it really is not with me, so far as my present purpose is concerned, a doctrinal question at all. I have no motive whatever to insist on its being settled one way or other. The "our" in the preface of the Lord's Prayer,—“our Father,”—may be inclusive or exclusive of the Lord himself. My reasoning is not touched either way. All that I would say is this:—I deprecate the line of argument sometimes employed to prove his exclusion, because it seems to me to savour of a mode of thought that would dissociate the Son from those to whom he is to be “the first-born among many brethren,” and would place him on a different platform altogether; a platform inconsistent, I think, not only with the idea of his drawing them up to his own level, but even still more with the idea of his doing so through the medium of his descending to theirs.

I think it is really, in this connection, allowable to ask a pertinent question. In his ordinary meals with his chosen disciples—not to speak of morning and evening family devotion—did our Lord say grace or ask a blessing? Surely that was common prayer, as between himself and them. Did he, on such occasions, studiously ignore or suppress his sonship? I cannot think so. I cannot but think, on

the contrary, that he must have been all along, in all his private intercourse with them, and especially in what was of a directly devotional character, accustoming them to that kind of joint supplication,—implying both mediation and identification,—of which the form of prayer “commonly called the Lord’s Prayer” gives intentionally the authoritative example.

NOTE B. (Page 193.)

I begin this brief note by giving the passage in Barrow already referred to (page 59). It does not directly bear on the present text (John xx. 17). But it is relevant nevertheless. “Christian men do become the sons of God by the intervention of our Saviour, assuming our nature, and conforming himself to the likeness of men; whereby he becomes *the first-born of many brethren: God* (saith St. Paul) *sent forth his Son, born of a woman, that we might receive the privilege of being made sons: and, children* (saith the apostle to the Hebrews) *partake of flesh and blood*; whence (as he meaneth to infer) our Lord being the Son of God, we, upon conjunction of nature with him, and as his brethren, become also such: he further intimateth, that upon this score we do surpass angels themselves; for that *he took not on him the nature of angels, but took on him the seed of Abraham*; they were not, as we, dignified with a fraternal relation to the Son of God.”—(“The Christian Faith,” etc., Sermon x.)

I might be inclined slightly to qualify this last statement. I believe that the angels are to be ultimately revealed as Christ’s brethren and ours. But the full revelation of that glorious brotherhood, even to themselves, comes through the manifestation of it in the first instance, and in action, as Christ’s brotherhood with us. This is the peculiarity of our position. In us, his brotherhood comes out

through his participation with us in our nature. It is, as I take it, true and full brotherhood; implying our participation with him in his filial relation to the Father. His resurrection unfolds and attests the truth and fulness of the brotherhood. I cannot think that he means to teach anything else,—far less can I think that he means to indicate two separate sorts of sonship,—when at the early dawn of the resurrection morn he bids Mary “go to his brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.”

I find in Dr. Barth's Bible Manual, page 936 (*Translation, Nisbet & Co.*, 1865), a very brief but suggestive remark: “By the words, ‘to your Father,’ in this connection, he means to hint that it is appointed to his disciples to follow after him. It is worth observing, however, that Jesus does not say, ‘to our God and to our Father.’ The design of the address is to instruct his disciples still farther as to the relation existing between his resurrection and ascension.”

Apparently Dr. Barth holds that the ascension was needed to bring out Christ's full identification of his people with himself, as his brethren, in his relation to God as his Father and his God; and that the peculiar form of speech which he adopted was meant to convey that meaning.

This may be a refining upon the words. But it does not make them suggestive of difference between himself and his disciples,—and that too at a crisis when I cannot but believe that their entire oneness must have been the loving Redeemer's thought. There may be a tacit and reserved reference to the ascension, as the final step in the process of this great identification. But I own I lean to the simple exposition of the message as an affectionate intimation and acknowledgment of brotherhood now complete.

Nor do I think that the early expositors are really ad-

verse to that view. I agree with Steir (*Words of the Lord Jesus, English translation*, vol. viii. pp. 82, 83), that his not saying "to *our* Father and to *our* God," is significant. "A rationalistic Christ must have said *our*, in order to give honour to truth, and to avoid exalting himself unduly in the presence of the common God and Father. But the God-man cannot possibly use such an expression." At least he has not used it, as a "rationalistic Christ" would probably have done. And in his not using it, we have a clear presumption, if not a proof, that he is not a "rationalistic Christ." His sonship and his subjectship, as "the God-man," are undoubtedly peculiar.

But, after all, is the peculiarity any more than what is indicated in the passages which Steir quotes from the Fathers?

"Thus Cyril of Jerusalem observes: 'Mine in one sense, by nature; yours in another, by privilege.' Chrysostom: 'In different senses my Father and yours. If he is the God of just men in a sense in which he is not the God of others, how much more does this hold good of the son and you?' Augustine: 'He does not say *our Father*: he is my Father by nature, and in another sense your Father by grace. And he says *my* God and your God; not our God—in one sense, therefore, mine, and in another sense, yours. My God, under whom I also am man; your God, between whom and you I am *Mediator*.' Ambrose: 'Because, although he and the Father are one, and the Father his Father by propriety of nature, *to us* God became a Father through the Son, not by right of nature, but of grace.'"

These, as I think I have ascertained, are fair enough specimens of the way in which the distinction assumed to be indicated in this gracious message has been explained by evangelical commentators, both in former and in recent times. I need scarcely say that, even admitting them all,

they do not really touch the question as to the substantial identity, in Christ and in his people, of the double relation of sonship and subjectship, however constituted, and for whatever offices and ends.

My only doubt is as to the Lord's meaning to indicate distinction at all in the message. It seems to me to be an occasion, and the first possible occasion,* for the very reverse. It is not separation, but union, that he announces. Is God "his God," since he has become man, any other-wise than he is "their God?" If so, the whole plan of redemption, as implying identification and substitution, under the righteous and legal government of God, falls to the ground. Christ, as the servant, has met the claims of "his God." But what of the claims of "their God?" Surely of set purpose the Lord has used language implying that, as he has made himself thoroughly one with them in their relation to God, as God, so he makes them thoroughly one with himself in his relation to God, as Father.

* See Appendix III.

LECTURE FIFTH.

THE MANNER OF ENTRANCE INTO THE RELATION ; ADOPTION, AS CONNECTED WITH REGENERATION AND JUSTIFICATION.

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 : which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.—JOHN i. 12, 13.

THE manner of entrance into any relation must correspond to the nature and character of the relation, and must be in harmony and in keeping with it. If it is a relation of hired service of any sort, the way into it is through a properly adjusted bargain or mutual agreement. If it is the relation of the married state, it is reached through consent on both sides, sufficiently intimated and certified. If it is right standing in the eye of law, after being charged with crime, the only proper access is through a legal and judicial sentence of

acquittal. If it is restoration to friendship and friendly intercourse, where misunderstanding and estrangement have prevailed, the healing of the breach, through explanation given and accepted, is the obvious method of reconciliation.

The same rule or principle must apply to the relation of fatherhood and sonship between God and his people. According to what the relation itself is, so must the mode of entrance into it be.

But, in the present instance, how may this condition be realised?

I have been pleading for the identity of the relation, as common to the Son and to those who are his. I have admitted, no doubt, these two qualifications:—first, that he has filial consciousnesses and experiences in the past eternity which they cannot have; and secondly, that their power of apprehending and appreciating all that the relation involves must be immeasurably less than his. This last qualification, I would say in passing, must be a continually decreasing one, as the years roll on of the eternity that is to come. For all along the line of its endless ages, they will be “growing in grace, and in the know-

ledge of the Lord Jesus Christ." They will be growing in their acquaintance with him as the Son ; and in their understanding of his manner of existence as the Son with the Father from everlasting. With these qualifications, however, I have been maintaining that the relation is the same ; that it is in their case substantially identical with what it is in his.

How, then, are we to explain their admission into this relation ? Is there not a serious difficulty here ? Assuredly there is ; and it is a twofold difficulty. It may be put both as a natural, and as a relational difficulty,—if I may be allowed to use such a phrase. It may be viewed either in the light of man's inward nature as a fallen being, or in the light of his outward legal standing as a guilty subject.

I. I begin with the consideration of the difficulty viewed as natural. How is man, as a fallen being, capable of sonship ?

Here, however, I must, by way of preliminary remark, ask attention to the original and eternal filiation of the Second Person in the Trinity. For, in connection with my present subject, I cannot help

thinking that there is something rather remarkable in the representation which Scripture gives of our Lord's sonship, and of the ground on which it originally rests. His entrance into this relation had no beginning; and, therefore, to speak of the manner of his entrance into it would be obviously unwarrantable. According to strict propriety of speech, he never entered into it at all. It has been his from everlasting. And yet this eternal relation is represented as resting from everlasting on his being begotten. Mysterious, incomprehensible, generation lies at the root of it. He is the only-begotten Son of God; "begotten, not made;" and begotten from everlasting (John i. 14, 18; iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9, etc.)

This is unquestionably analogical language;—it is speaking of God after the manner of men. It is the setting forth of the original foundation of an eternal divine relation, and an eternal distinction of related divine persons in the Godhead, under the analogy of an act or event in human history and experience, having its date, of course, in time. This is strange.

It is all the more so, if I am right in

my opinion that, as regards the nature and character of God's paternal relation to his people, there is in Scripture,—especially in our Lord's teaching,—a studied avoiding of the human analogy ; indicating a desire on his part that his disciples should learn to conceive of their sonship, not analogically at all, but by direct knowledge and insight ;—or, in other words, that they should be led to apprehend their sonship, —not merely as a relation similar to sonship in a human family,—nor even as a relation similar to his own sonship in the divine family ;—but as identically the same relation. In that view, I think the use of the human analogy to describe or indicate the original constitution of the relation in the person of the Son, must be felt to be not a little noticeable and significant. As to the question—what the relation is?—the human analogy is dispensed with, or rather studiously shunned. As to the question—how it subsists from the beginning?—the human analogy is the chosen medium of revelation.

And yet, one would say, the human analogy is in this latter case even more inadequate than in the former. The use

of it, we might suppose, must be apt to mislead, or to be a stumbling-block. Indeed it has misled and proved a stumbling-block to not a few;—the phrase, “only-begotten” or “first-begotten,” being in their view irreconcilable with the doctrine of our Lord’s supreme divinity, or his being the coequal, coeternal, consubstantial Son of the everlasting Father.

With all its imperfection, however,—when due allowance is made for the necessary defectiveness of every earthly similitude of what is heavenly,—this human analogy serves a most important purpose. It brings out, for one thing, the idea of entire sameness of nature. The begotten son of a divine father must be himself essentially divine,—just as the begotten son of a human father is himself essentially human. The Son of God must himself be as really God, as a man’s son is himself man. Thus the analogy, though it is a human analogy, does not degrade or obscure the divine and eternal sonship of our Lord. It rather illustrates and magnifies it.

Reflexly, also, this use of the term “begotten” may shed light on the sonship of our Lord’s disciples, and the manner of

its constitution. It now becomes, with reference to that subject, a divine analogy. It is, as it were, taken up into heaven. It is there appropriated, in a very wonderful way, to the relation of fatherhood and sonship subsisting from everlasting between the eternal Father and his beloved Son. From thence it may be brought to earth again. And, being thus sanctified and elevated, it may be applied, in illustration of the relation of fatherhood and sonship, as it is formed in time, between the eternal Father and the brethren of his Son.

Here, however, it might seem that the entire and utter inadequacy—not so much of the analogy to what is to be illustrated as of what is to be illustrated to the analogy—must absolutely preclude the use of the analogy, as in its very nature unsuitable and unsafe. There is, undoubtedly, in such matters, the utmost need of caution. But I do not think that I go too far when I suggest this thought. The employment of the phraseology of earth,—and of such phraseology,—to denote the original ground of the heavenly relation, may be merely an instance of gracious condescension on the part of God. But to my apprehension, it

rather looks like a plan purposely intended to familiarise the minds of our Lord's disciples with the idea of his sonship being of such a sort that they can share in it.

The soundest of the fathers, those most strenuous in maintaining the Son's supreme divinity—his being uncreated and of one substance with the Father—his absolute and unqualified equality, in respect of nature, with the Father—were accustomed at the same time to allow, or rather to assert, a certain mysterious distinction, in virtue of which the Second Person in the Godhead has from everlasting been in some sense subordinate to the First, as the Third has been to the First and the Second. And though some modern writers have demurred to the opinion, thinking it inconsistent with a full belief of the Trinity, I still incline on the whole to side with Bishops Bull, Pearson, and Horsley on this question, if it really is a question, rather than with them.

Let it be noted that it is a relational distinction exclusively that is contended for, such as fits into what is written of the Father sending and the Son being sent ; the Father giving and the Son being given ;

the Father begetting and the Son being begotten. And surely these last correlatives—begetting and begotten—are fitted—may I not say intended—to facilitate somewhat the conception of the relation which they indicate being such as we may have communicated to us. Not only is it a relation having its analogical representation in the natural human fatherhood and sonship; it is even capable of really and actually moulding into conformity with itself the spiritual fatherhood and sonship which is constituted by grace. Whatever these expressions imply,—in the line of relational priority in the Father and relational subordination in the Son,—tends to harmonise sonship with creatureship. They go far to establish a presumption *a priori* that, whether in Christ or in his disciples, the relations may not be incompatible. It may thus appear how, in virtue of the grace by which he who is the only begotten Son becomes a subject,—they who are originally subjects only may be, in a sense, “begotten,” or born again, as sons.

For it is the manner in which the two relations are combined that is here again the main question. In considering it, the

incarnation must once more be the guiding fact.

What is it that constitutes Jesus, in and from his human birth, the Son of God? Or, otherwise, and more properly shaping the inquiry,—what is it about his human birth that prevents it, if one may say so, from clashing with his sonship, and secures that on the contrary his sonship shall continue identically the same, notwithstanding his change of state? Is it not the agency of the Holy Ghost in the production of his holy human nature?

The angel's annunciation to the Virgin Mary seems certainly to imply this at all events,—that if her son had taken human nature as it is in fallen creatures;—if he had been born after the ordinary manner of men;—divine sonship could not have been ascribed to him in his original condition as man.* Any such supposition, however, carries in its bosom an intolerable, and all but inconceivable, contradiction. It would make Christ—who, though uniting

* "The angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i. 35).

in himself the two natures, continues to be one person—the Father's Son in one of the two natures, and not the Father's Son in the other. But this, as we have seen, is a plain and palpable inconsistency; sonship being not a relation of the nature or natures to God, but a relation of the person. Hence the necessity of Christ becoming man in such a way as to secure that there shall be nothing in his manhood incompatible with continued sonship; or, in other words, with his being still the Son of God, in his one undivided person, whole and entire. His being born through the operation of the Holy Ghost secures that. For it secures to him the possession of a human nature such as, from the very first moment of its existence, is capable of sharing in the filial relation with the divine nature—a body, soul, spirit, such as the Son of God may worthily take into personal union with himself, continuing still to be the Son.

Some may think at first sight—and the objection has been seriously urged—that this makes the Holy Ghost the father of our Lord's humanity, in respect of his being the agent in its production. But it is not so. There cannot be a father of a nature,

but only of a person. Our Lord's human nature never had any proper personality of its own. It was assumed by him into his personality as the Son. What the Holy Ghost had to do was to provide that it should be such as the Son could thus assume, without derogation from his sonship.

Now, if it was necessary that the Holy Ghost should thus fashion and mould the human nature of Christ,—in order to its being such as might not detract from, but rather harmonise with and even adorn, the relation of sonship in which he stands from all eternity to the Father,—much more are the good offices of the same gracious Spirit needed for human nature as it is in us, if we are to have a share in that relation.

And here the task might well seem to be more difficult,—the problem harder to be worked out. In his case it was simply a birth that the Holy Spirit had to effect ; in ours it is a new birth. For him, he had to provide a manhood such as the Son of God might wear, by what might be regarded as equivalent to an act of creative energy or the utterance of the creative fiat. In us, he finds manhood so marred and corrupted that it requires to be, in a sense,

. 34). For them, it is the act of free and gracious adoption.

I connect the two. And yet there is a vast difference. The voice from heaven recognises sonship already subsisting—having subsisted from all eternity, and continuing to subsist still unchanged, though by his assuming human nature the Son has become a creature and a subject. The act of adoption confers sonship of new, *de novo*, on those who are originally nothing more than creatures and subjects. It assumes a newborn capacity of receiving sonship. But it does not assume, it constitutes, the sonship itself. It is a pure and simple act of the free grace of God.

Notwithstanding this difference, however, there is one particular in respect of which the declared or recognised Son, and the adopted sons, are on the same footing. In the case of both alike there is required, as a preliminary to the manifestation of the relation of sonship in all its glory and blessed joy, a full and final clearing up and settlement of whatever may be doubtful, or whatever may be wrong, in the relation of subjectship.

The Son himself, after his coming in the

flesh, was not declared to be "the Son of God with power" till "his resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 4). Up till that time, he had to meet and contend with the liabilities which he had undertaken as "made under the law"—made under it when it had been broken by us, and had to be magnified and honoured at a terrible cost by him. He was "crucified through weakness." It is only thus that "he liveth by the power of God" (2 Cor. xii. 4). He must first be himself justified, through his fulfilling all the righteousness which he became bound on our account to fulfil, and expiating all the guilt which he consented on our account to answer for. His sonship, now that it has become associated with subjectship,—in the broken and disordered state to which we, in whose nature he becomes a subject, have reduced this last relationship,—cannot be set free, as it were, and made thoroughly available, as a source of power, otherwise than by this preliminary procedure of law.

When the case is that of creatures and subjects who are to be raised to the position of sons, a similar preliminary procedure of law would seem to be, *a fortiori*, indispensable.

I think it must be held to have been so, even when angels were the parties. If I am right in believing that these high and pure intelligences were not sons originally, in virtue of their creation or their innocence, but became sons, by a sovereign act of grace on the part of God,—that act, I cannot doubt, must have followed the trial of their obedience. If so, it must have been preceded by what to them would be substantially equivalent to a sentence of justification. For the trial, whatever it was, to which they were subjected was really a trial under law, and in terms of law. It turned upon their willingness to acknowledge and submit to the moral government of God, as ruling them by law and judgment. That was what was put to the test. When their companions sinned and were condemned, they through grace stood the test and were acquitted; they were accepted as righteous; in a word, they were justified. Their probation being well over, they are judicially, and, as if it were by the sentence of a court, declared to be not merely innocent and upright creatures, but obedient subjects who have kept the commandment, and

are on that account entitled to life. Then, as I conceive, and not before, they are in a condition to receive the adoption of sons. For there is no inward work of the regenerating Spirit needed in their case; nor need the Son assume their nature to redeem them, before he can have them as his brethren. All that is required is an outward act of grace, the appropriate recompense and reward of the obedience by which they have made good their title to justification. The Son is presented to them by the Father; and the Spirit by whom they have been enabled to stand as subjects, ensures their willingness to accept the position of sons.

The case is, of course, somewhat altered when it is not holy angels but fallen men who are concerned. Still, allowance being made for difference of circumstances, the principle which rules it is essentially the same. Their relation to God as subjects must first be put upon a right and satisfactory footing before they can become sons.

This necessity has already been considered in its bearing on the redeeming

work of Christ.* I now advert to it again in connection with the gracious act of God conferring, and the gracious act of the believer appropriating, the benefit flowing from his redeeming work—the benefit of justification, as opening the way to the ulterior and higher benefit of adoption.

So long as men are in a state of guilt and condemnation under the law's righteous sentence, they cannot be regarded as fit subjects for becoming the sons of God. Nor is the disqualification to be viewed as being merely of a vague and general sort ;—as if the objection raised on the part of God might be something like the repugnance which a man of pure taste and refined manners would naturally feel to admitting coarse, low-minded, ill-bred vagrants to the familiarities and sanctities of his home. If that were all, the difficulty or scruple might be got over by a little patience and forbearance, a little tact, a little judicious treatment and prudent kindness. Were the person I had to deal with merely, in some such indefinite sense as that, offensive to me,

* See remarks on Gal. iv. 1-6, in the preceding Lecture, pages 186, 187.

a little time and pains might amend the fault. But he is in the hands of justice. The law has a hold over him. He is tried, convicted, condemned. He is an imprisoned criminal, either undergoing his sentence or awaiting the execution of it. That is the precise obstacle which, in the case of fallen man, must be got out of the way. And it is removed in his justification. Faith, uniting him to Christ, and making Christ and his righteousness his, secures his being absolved from guilt and accounted righteous. He is now *rectus in curiâ*, and therefore capable of sonship.

I have been endeavouring to trace and point out the nature of the connection which I hold to subsist between our becoming sons of God and our regeneration on the one hand, and justification on the other. It seems to me to be of some consequence to have that determined as clearly as possible;—I mean not only the connection but the nature of it. I cannot help suspecting that loose and indefinite views here have led to our forming somewhat inadequate apprehensions of what the sonship of Christ's disciples really is.

Neither our regeneration nor our justification constitutes our sonship; neither of them is the formal ground or warrant of our being sons of God. That is to be found in God's free and sovereign act of grace alone;—in his “giving us the power” or privilege “to become the sons of God;” in his “calling us the sons of God;” in his having “predestinated us unto the adoption of children” (John i. 12; 1 John iii. 1; Eph. i. 5). But both regeneration and justification have a material bearing on this act of God, and it is important to know as exactly as may be what that bearing is. Perhaps the tendency has been to separate adoption somewhat too much from regeneration on the one side, and on the other side to confound it somewhat too much with justification.

I. In the writings of John—I refer especially of course to his Gospel and First Epistle—the sonship, not only of Christ but of his disciples, is more fully and affectingly brought out than in other parts of scripture. It is John who sets before us most clearly and touchingly his master's filial manner of life. If we would obtain an insight into what Jesus as the Son is to the

Father and the Father to him, we must ponder incessantly these books ; nor will one ponder them long, I am well persuaded, without coming to the conviction, based on countless minute touches of most pathetic tenderness, that Jesus meant to identify those whom the Father had given him with himself in his sonship. John does not say much of the manner of our entering into that relation ; but what he does say appears to me to make it turn very much on regeneration.

Thus, in the outset of his Gospel (i. 12, 13), he connects very emphatically the statement concerning "the Word,"—"that to as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name,"—with this explanation, as I cannot help regarding it,— "which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And immediately he goes on to say of "the Word made flesh, and dwelling among us, full of grace and truth,"—"We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

Here, in the first place, I cannot but conclude that John intends to represent the

sonship of those who receive "the Word," and believe on his name, as substantially the same relation with the sonship of "the Word" himself. It is not impossible, and not, I think, very improbable, that John may have been acquainted with what Paul had written—"We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18). Had he that scripture in his mind when, speaking evidently of sonship, he says,—we beheld the glory of the sonship of the only begotten?—beheld it so as to be changed into the same image, into the very form and fashion of that glorious relation? Of course I do not attach any argumentative importance to this conjecture, although it may serve for an illustration. Apart from that altogether, there is enough, I think, in the passage which I have quoted, taken by itself, to support my first conclusion with regard to it.

My second conclusion is more material to my present purpose. It is drawn from the fact that John connects very pointedly and emphatically our "becoming sons of God" with our "being born of God." Does

not this intimate that, while acknowledging the act of grace towards us in which God gives us the standing of sons, he would represent our sonship as largely dependent also on the work of grace in us by which God gives us the nature of sons? "Power" or right "to become sons of God," secures the filial standing; "being born of God" secures the filial nature.

This last conclusion from these words in John's Gospel will commend itself with most peculiar force to those who are most intimately acquainted with his way of writing in his First Epistle.

Turning to that book, we find one passage especially in which the manner of our entering into the relation of sonship is noticed. Our being sons is ascribed to the calling of God (iii. 1):—"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Of course there is no difficulty in understanding what is meant by our being called by the Father the sons of God. It is not a nominal but a real calling that is intended, the actual constituting of a real relation. But the statement seems to make sonship depend solely and exclu-

sively on God's calling, that is, on his adoptive act. It is not so, however. This verse should not be separated from the verse immediately preceding it (ii. 29), in which it is said that "every one that doeth righteousness is born of God." For it is plainly that thought, "being born of God," which suggests to John the burst of adoring gratitude, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we should be called the sons of God." Thus, in point of fact, John rests that sonship, which is in his eyes so wonderful, mainly on our being born of God. Nor is this all. John, repeating the assertion "we are the sons of God," continues to dwell with singular earnestness and explicitness on what being born of God means, and what it involves—perfect likeness to God hereafter (iii. 2); purity like his now (3); having the seed of God remaining in us as the germ of an impeccable life (9). It is impossible, I think, to read that whole passage in the epistle with any care and thought, without coming to the conviction that John attaches a very deep meaning indeed to our being born of God; that he looks upon it as in some real and vital sense analogous—not merely to

the relation of the human child to the human parent—but to the act in which the relation originates ; that he regards it as actually effecting a certain community of nature between God and man.

Keeping all this in view, I can scarcely doubt that John's design is to represent our being sons of God as connected very closely with our regeneration ; and connected, too, after the very same manner that a man's being the son of his earthly parent is connected with his generation in time ;—or what I apprehend was more in John's mind, after the very same manner that the Lord's being the Son of his heavenly Father is connected with his generation from eternity. If so, then that makes sonship not merely a relation of adoption, but in a real and important sense a natural relation also. There must be adoption. But he who adopts, regenerates. The regeneration is a real communication to us on his part of "his seed," of what makes our moral and spiritual nature the same in character as his ; perfectly so at last, and imperfectly yet as far as it prevails, truly so, even now. And this regeneration makes the adoption real. The adopted sons

are sons by nature, and that, too, I am persuaded, in a very literal acceptance of the term.

These views may be of use as enabling us better to understand how the sonship of Christ and that of his people are, and must be, in a very intimate sense, identical ; how it is one and the same relation for both. There are no more two sonships, one for them and another for him, than there are two sonships for him, one for his human nature and condition, and another for his divine. There is but one sonship for us both. It may well be so, if in us, as in him, it is a natural sonship.

Those who would make a distinction between the sonships, Christ's and ours, sometimes represent it as turning on the distinction between natural and adoptive sonship ;—Christ being the Father's Son by nature, we being sons by adoption only. If the reference here is to the fact that whereas Christ is God's Son from the beginning we have become God's sons only yesterday ;—his, in that view, being of the very essence of his existence, a necessity of his very being, while ours is nothing of the sort ;—the fact is of course admitted. I

have attempted, however, formerly to show that it is not to the purpose in this argument. If anything more is meant, the distinction may now be seen to be without warrant. If we are the sons of God at all, we are, in virtue of our regeneration, his sons by nature, as well as by adoption. The nature, as well as the standing, of the Son is ours.*

I would only further add, on this part of my subject, that while John is our chief authority, it is not John alone who ascribes so high a signification to the change which the Holy Spirit effects in the new birth,—making it imply the production of a certain community of nature between God and us. Peter speaks expressly of the children of God being “partakers of the divine nature”—(2 Ep. i. 4). Paul also, when he would reconcile us as sons to the chastening and corrective discipline of “the Father of spirits,”† represents this

* See Note A.

† By this expression I may remark, by the way, the apostle means, I think, nothing more than to contrast the merely carnal, earthly, bodily character of the original tie which binds us to the fathers of our flesh, with the spiritual and heavenly character of the relation in which we stand to him who is no mere “father of our flesh,” but “the Father of spirits.”

as the design of our Father's faithful dealing with us, "that we might be partakers of his holiness"—(Heb. xii. 10). And again, when he announces the high rank to which, from everlasting, God has destined "them that love him, and are the called according to his purpose," he describes them as "predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren"—(Rom. viii. 28, 29). Surely this is a strong assertion of their actual participation with the Son, in his own very sonship. And it is made to rest on their being "conformed to his image;" or, in other words, on their community of nature with him. For though the Son's relation to the Father may be partly what is meant by his image here,—and the exact assimilation of our relation to the Father to his may consequently be partly what is meant by our being conformed to his image,—yet the phrase can scarcely be taken otherwise than as inclusive of sameness of nature as well as sameness of relation. Likeness or identity of nature is what makes likeness or identity of relation possible and conceivable. And it is that also which makes it

realizable in consciousness and experience ; more and more so, as the conformity to the image of the Son of God grows more and more complete ; until, in the full and final "regeneration" of the resurrection, the full and final "adoption, to wit the redemption of the body" (23), long waited for, comes at last. Then is he indeed "the first-born among many brethren."

II. But if this relation of sonship, as shared by the Son with his disciples, has suffered from its close connection with regeneration not having been sufficiently recognised, it has suffered perhaps still more seriously from so many of our theologians having failed to recognise sufficiently its entire distinction and separation from justification. The two have, to a large extent, been confounded and mixed up together. What God does in the act of adoption has been so represented as to make it either a part of what he does in the act of justification, or a mere appendage and necessary corollary involved in that act. Turretine, for example (*Locus XVI., Quæstio vi.*), expressly and formally includes adoption in his exposition of jus-

tification. He makes adoption nothing more than another name for the positive element which all the reformed divines held to be embraced in justification. They all held that in the justification of any man there are these two things implied—the pardon of his sins and the acceptance of his person. He is on the one hand judicially, and in terms of law, absolved from guilt, from ill-desert, from just liability to punishment. And he is on the other hand,—judicially also and in terms of law,—pronounced righteous. He is acknowledged as having fulfilled all incumbent obligations, in virtue of his oneness with him who has done so in his stead; and he is received into favour accordingly. Even the former of these two things held to be implied in our justification, goes far beyond the mere idea of the remission of the threatened and deserved punishment, which is all that mankind naturally care for; all that they really include in their favourite fancy of an universal fatherhood. It carries in it the removal, not merely of the penalty, but of the desert of the penalty. It is the taking away, not only of that to which our guilt justly exposes us and makes

us liable, but of our guilt itself. It is a thorough absolution. And when the second of the two things held to be implied in our justification is taken into account—our being treated, not only as if we had never sinned, but as if we had fulfilled all righteousness—it may be seen how far God's manner of dealing with us when he justifies us goes beyond the manner of men. This will be all the more apparent when it is considered that, in virtue of our real union to Christ by faith, the whole is a real transaction. It is no mere fiction in law. The use of the phrase "as if," in describing it, though scarcely to be avoided, is unfortunate and improper. As made one with Christ personally, by the Spirit working in me appropriating and uniting faith, I am really and truly one with him in his absolution from my guilt which he took upon himself, and in his being accepted as righteous on account of his "obedience unto death" for me.

I state thus as broadly and strongly as I can the great Reformation doctrine. For I would not lower justification in order to exalt adoption. On the contrary, the higher any one raises the privilege of justification,

the better for my view ; since I hold adoption to be a privilege higher still. It is the admission of a person thoroughly justified, as being really one with the Father's righteous Servant, to fellowship with him with whom he is one, in his higher position, as the Father's only-begotten and well-beloved Son. For that reason, partly, I object to Turretine's identification of adoption with what may be described as the second or positive part of justification. And there is another objection to his view. It makes the act of God in adoption savour, as I think, too much of a legal and judicial procedure. I ask special attention to this consideration.

The more strictly we attach the character of a legal and judicial procedure to the act of God in justification so much the better. It is only I believe in that way that we can really maintain the infinite distance that there should always be felt to be between God, the Creator, Ruler, Judge of all, and ourselves, who are naturally nothing more than his created subjects. It is only in that way that we can uphold, in all its integrity, his government by law and judgment. We can scarcely, therefore, err

in the direction of viewing justification too forensically—casting it too strongly into the mould of what passes, or may be supposed to pass, in a court of law. Nor need that detract from the grace of the act, on the part of God. On the contrary, it is only when we recognise its strictly forensic character that the real grace of the act appears; and only in proportion as its strictly forensic character is practically apprehended and realised, will its real grace be felt. For in fact—strict law and judgment apart—Christ's work of redemption and God's act of justification founded upon it, so far from indicating grace, imply something like the opposite of grace. Strict law and judgment apart,—no reason can possibly be given for the interposition of the Son being required, with such sufferings as it entailed on him, and for the Father's forgiveness being based on that interposition, which does not derogate from grace—which does not, in fact, impart to the whole transaction an ungracious aspect—as if God personally needed to be conciliated and appeased. It is only by adhering strictly to the legal and judicial character of the transaction—by viewing

it as properly and literally forensic, both as regards God's treatment of Christ for us and as regards his treatment of us in Christ—that we can see and appreciate the grace that there is in our justification. Then, indeed, grace shines forth in it conspicuously—grace providing the substitute; grace accepting the substitute; grace making us one with the substitute; grace receiving us and dealing with us as one with the substitute. Thus, to conserve its gracious character, it is indispensably necessary to hold firm and fast the forensic character of justification,

All the more, however, on that very account, it seems desirable to extricate adoption out of its entanglement with justification, and to recognise it as having a place and character of its own in God's manner of dealing with us; a place and character not in any proper sense forensic at all. No doubt the term adoption may be suggestive of legal procedure;—it is a term which occurs in law-books. In countries where the practice prevails it is commonly regulated by statute. It was so of old in the Roman commonwealth and empire; and it is probably the Roman usage that

the New Testament writers have in view on the rare occasions—for they are comparatively rare—on which they thus designate the Christian sonship. Where adoption is allowed to affect civil and patrimonial rights, as it was held to do under the government of Rome, the parties must necessarily be required to appear before the judge, in order to have the transaction duly attested and recorded. I suppose that even in our own country, where this practice is not so expressly and formally recognised in law as it was at Rome, if I wished to adopt a strange child, to the effect of investing him with a legal right to maintenance and to the succession as my child, I would be obliged to go through some legal form. Let it be observed, however, that there is the widest difference between that and a purely forensic procedure. The case is not submitted to a tribunal for decision, but only for ascertainment and registration. No judicial sentence is asked for, or is competent. The adoption itself is altogether extrajudicial; as much so as is the contracting of marriage; though in both cases it may belong to the judge or magistrate to require that he shall be satisfied as to

the good order of what is done, and the good faith of the parties doing it.

I think it is of as much consequence to maintain the thoroughly unforensic character of God's act in adopting, as it is to maintain the strictly forensic character of his act in justifying. All is legal and judicial in the latter act; if it were not so, there would be no grace in it at all. Nothing is legal or judicial in the other; if there were anything of that sort in it, all its grace would be gone. I look upon God as in adoption giving full and unrestrained vent to the pure fatherly love which he has for his own dear Son; pouring it out upon him so lavishly that it overflows upon all that are his. There is nothing in his fatherhood or in his fatherly treatment of his Son that savours of the legal, the judicial, the forensic. There was once needed a very short and sharp dealing of that sort, on the Father's part, with the Son of his love, when he stood in our stead, as not only a subject but a criminal. That, however, is all over now. As criminal for our crime he has paid the penalty;—as subject on our behalf he has fulfilled the righteousness. No outstanding claim of justice can ever arrest

the flow of his Father's fatherly love. Nor does it flow by any legal rule, or under any legal restriction or condition. It is simply fatherly love. And it is that very love of which our adoption, following upon our justification and associated with our regeneration, makes us, as his brethren, partakers.

There are, I think, two practical advantages connected with our keeping clear the distinction on which I have been insisting, between the forensic character of God's act in justifying us, and the unforensic character of his act in adopting us, and his treatment of us consequent upon that act. To these I shall very briefly advert before I close the present lecture.

1. In the matter of our justification, we are accustomed to be very scrupulous in excluding everything on our part except faith alone. And it is carefully explained that faith is admitted as the means of our being justified, not because it has any merit, or virtue, or goodness in itself,—nor because it is the source of goodness, since it “worketh by love,”—but only because it is the hand that accepts the benefit;—or rather because it is the heart that embraces him in

whom the benefit resides. It unites us to Christ. In the matter of our adoption, again, it is the very circumstance of its "working by love" that fits faith for being the appropriate organ or instrument. In fact, one might almost put it thus—that love occupies somewhat of the same place with reference to adoption or sonship which faith occupies with reference to justification. It is in the exercise of mere and simple faith that we apprehend and realise our acceptance as righteous in the sight of God. It is in the exercise of faith working by love, or of the love by which faith works, that we apprehend and realise our loving fellowship with our heavenly Father as his sons.

This may be partly what the Lord means by these remarkable words, "At that day, ye shall ask in my name : and I say not that I will pray the Father for you ; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God"—(John xvi. 26, 27). The elder brother, having presented himself and those whom "he is not ashamed to call his brethren," to their common father, saying—"Behold, I and the little ones whom thou hast given me,"—steps for a moment aside.

He declines to be a mere negotiator between his Father and the younger members of the family, as if there were still some distance or reserve. He insists on their using their full privilege of sonship, and making full proof of their Father's heart ; tasting and seeing how he loves them for the love they bear to the Son ; the love which, in a sense, constitutes them sons themselves.

I am inclined to think that this view which I am attempting to explain of sonship, as not a part of justification, nor a mere corollary from it, but a distinct and separate benefit,—differently conferred, at least in some respects, and differently apprehended and realised,—will be found to be of some practical importance. There is unquestionably, in certain quarters, a feeling of distaste and dislike apt to arise when God is represented as on the one hand dealing judicially with Christ standing in the room of his people, and then, on the other hand, dealing judicially with them in virtue of their being one with him by faith. The whole transaction, in both its parts, in requiring from the surety satisfaction to law and justice and in giving us the benefit of that satisfaction, appears to some to wear

a harsh, technical, and legal aspect ; a sort of cold, business-like, court-of-justice air, which they cannot relish. It is not difficult to show that this is a prejudice, occasioned,—either by the rude and coarse way in which the doctrine is sometimes handled by unwise advocates and expounders of it,—or, which is the far more common case, by some gross caricature of it which the parties choose to draw or paint for themselves. At the same time,—if that is the only mode of God's dealing with Christ, and with those whom Christ answers for in the judgment, which is prominently brought forward and insisted upon,—there may undoubtedly be some risk of its degenerating into barren and dogmatic orthodoxy. It would be a curious and interesting speculation to inquire whether we may not thus, to some extent at least, account for the lapse of the theology of the Reformation in the schools and colleges of the continent, as well as among ourselves, first into rigid and frigid scholastic systematising, and then into rationalism. At all events, I am persuaded that we have a strong safeguard against any such danger, if we do full justice to the common sonship of Christ

and of Christ's disciples ;—erecting it into a distinct and separate article of belief, and giving it a well-defined place of its own, "with ample room and verge enough," among the truths of the Christian creed and the elements of Christian experience. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." Let that be fully taught.

2. My second observation is very much the converse of the former. The manner of treating this whole subject for which I have been pleading, seems to me well fitted to erect a barrier against all Antinomian and Neonomian tendencies. The mixing up, in any way or in any measure, of God's dealing with us as sons in our adoption and his dealing with us as subjects in our forgiveness and acceptance, is apt to open the door for the notion, either of law, old strict law, being superseded, or of its being somehow modified. The idea of some sort of compromise between the paternal and the judicial in God's treatment of us, very readily suggests itself. And believers, once justified by faith, are either held to have nothing to do with law at all, it being their privilege to act, not from a sense of legal obligation, but from the spontaneous

prompting of affection ; or else they are held to be under some mysterious new form or fashion of law, partaking too often not a little of the character of license. There will be little room for such imaginations, if the right balance and adjustment between our justification as subjects and our adoption as sons is maintained. For I need scarcely say that though they are to be distinguished, these two are not to be disjoined. We are not to conceive of them as successive states ; as if our state as justified subjects coming first, gave place to our state as adopted sons following after. They are simultaneous states, to be realised continually as such. Love reigns in both. Love delighting in the holy and good law of the Ruler reigns in the one ; in the other, love rejoicing in the endearments of the Father. It is the very love which moved the Ruler's righteous servant, the Father's beloved Son, to say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God ; yea, thy law is within my heart ;" " My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work ;" " I must be about my Father's business ;" " The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it ?"

NOTE TO LECTURE FIFTH.

NOTE A. (Page 235.)

The full exegesis of this passage in the first Epistle of John would confirm the argument which I have urged. But it is connected intimately with the exposition of the entire Epistle. And in the view of my being able, as I hope, to give to the public shortly the complete series of discourses on the Epistle which I have all but ready for the press, I abstain in the meantime from minute criticism or interpretation. I would simply explain that I follow the best recent expositors in reading the second verse of the third chapter as having reference to God the Father, and not, as it is very generally understood, to Christ the Son. The grammatical construction seems to me conclusive in favour of the verse running thus: "Beloved, now are we the Sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when that shall appear,"—namely what we are to be—"we shall be like him,"—like God the Father—"for we shall see him"—God the Father—"as he is." So construed, the verse leads on to our identification with Christ in the verse that follows, where a different pronoun is used (*ἑαυτοῦ*, not *αὐτοῦ*), "Every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he"—the Son—"is pure." The hope is, that we shall see the Father as he is;—that is, we shall see him as the Son sees him. And this hope is a motive to us to be pure as the Son is pure;—according to the word of the Son himself

on which this word of his beloved disciple is the best commentary, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" (Mat. v. 8). But is this purity attainable?—purity in us, such as can be identified with the purity of the Son? Surely. But how? By a process or work of real filiation; making us, not merely in respect of outward privilege, but in respect of inward and spiritual nature, sons of God; according to what is said in the ninth verse, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed"—the seed of God—"remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

Waiving for the present the difficulty of admitting the regenerate to be incapable of sinning—this strong statement certainly implies that the seed or germ of an impeccable nature is communicated and implanted in regeneration. And it implies, moreover, that it is the divine germ of a divine life. However incomprehensible it may be to the mere natural intellect, I cannot but think that the spiritual man must recognise, at least in some measure, in his own experience as well as in this teaching of John, a newborn principle in him which makes purity such as the Son's,—that is sinless and impeccable purity,—possible, realisable,—a thing to be aimed at and attained. If so, this constitutes a wonderful identity between his Sonship and theirs. It explains the oneness assumed throughout in the Lord's farewell prayer (John xvii). That prayer, as I conceive of it, makes us, as his disciples, thoroughly one with him. For as he joined himself with us, in the lowest depth of our subjectship, so also in that prayer he joins us with himself in the highest elevation and blessedness of his sonship.

LECTURE SIXTH.

THE PRIVILEGES AND OBLIGATIONS OF SONSHIP.

Now are we the sons of God—1 JOHN iii. 2.

THE relation of fatherhood and sonship, if it is what I have ventured to represent it as being, must involve in it privileges and obligations of a definite and distinctive character. For it is in itself a definite and distinctive relation. It is something more than the mere infusion of a certain measure of fatherly feeling, such as prevails in the homes of earth, into the ordinary moral administration of God ; to the effect of tempering the rigid and exact severity of strict justice and qualifying judgment with mercy. It is something different, also, from the kindly and fatherly sort of feeling with which God, as ruler, may be supposed to regard his once rebellious subjects when they are returning to their allegiance. If

either of these accounts is held to exhaust the idea of God's fatherhood, its practical bearing on our happiness and duty can be only very vaguely felt and described. A general notion or impression of benignant graciousness on God's part, calling for gratitude on our part, is nearly all that can be made of it, or got out of it.

It is true that, as regards its actings and manifestations, this general notion or impression of graciousness may be broken up, as it were, into details. The analogy of the human family may suggest a variety of particular instances. The subject is often treated in this way. God is represented as discharging many different offices towards his people, all of them indicative and expressive of an affection like that of a parent—such as putting upon them his name ; giving them access always to his throne ; pitying, protecting, and providing for them ; chastening and correcting them ; keeping them safe till they reach heaven at last. But to a large extent, these may be all classed as benignant offices of government,—and of government merely.

They all, however, stand out in a new light, and become far more clear, specific,

and well-defined, when they are viewed in connection with the true and proper fatherhood of God, as distinguished from what I may perhaps be allowed to call the analogical. The more the special and peculiar nature of that relation is recognised, the more will these and other similar dealings of God be seen to be special and peculiar also. And if there should turn out to be any one speciality in particular—any one peculiarity—attaching to the position of sonship in the creature, as constituted by participation in the sonship of the uncreated,—then that peculiarity may be expected to give its tone and complexion to the whole practical development and working out of the relation, both on God's part and on ours. I cannot help thinking that there is such a guiding principle to be found, if rightly sought for, in Scripture.

Here I must once more refer, in the outset of my search, to the holy angels, whom I think we ought to look upon as our brethren in our sonship.

Let us attempt to realise the situation of those who stood the test, and their state of mind, when their companions sinned and

fell. What a shock to them ! They may almost be moved to exclaim : "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do ?" (Ps. xi. 3). What a shuddering sense of insecurity, what a thrill of fear, may pass along the ranks and agitate the bosoms of the faithful, in the view of infidelity on the part of their comrades, so utterly unaccountable.

They are indeed themselves still standing, through grace, in their integrity. But how many who seemed as steadfast and strong as they have miserably fallen ! And they have fallen, too, without a cause ; there has been no temptation from without, nor any previous corrupt tendency within. And there is nothing in the order issued from the throne that should have awakened in reasonable minds and loving hearts suspicion or resentment. If it was a demand upon them for homage to the Son, surely that was a most honourable service. But, as it would seem, they insist on having liberty, in the sense of absolute independence. In the mere relation itself of subjectship, necessarily implied in their state as creatures, they find a certain element or source of irksomeness. And when

the sense of their being necessarily, simply as creatures, subjects and "servants under the yoke," is powerfully and pointedly borne in upon their consciousness, by the assertion of sovereign authority, in the form of an express, positive, and peremptory commandment, no matter how righteous and even gracious the commandment may be;—how righteous in its ground or root of equity, how gracious in its loving tendency towards a better state;—they cannot endure the idea of being thus ruled. In the absence alike of outward sollicitation and of inward covetousness or desire, it is not easy to conceive of the trial or temptation which proved fatal to the lost angels, as having been different in its principle, working, and effect, from the line of thought and feeling which I venture hypothetically to trace.

But if so, what a discovery breaks upon the unfallen! Is it not, in fact, the discovery of an element of instability inherent in the very constitution and essential nature of the relation of subjectship itself? It is not an incidental fault or failure in the working out of that relation;—such as might be remedied for the present by proper

appliances, and prevented for the future by proper precautions. Does it not rather indicate a radical vice, or source of weakness, in the relation itself?*

For what guarantee, let us ask,—putting ourselves in their place,—could the obedient angels have,—after witnessing the fall of so many of their companions,—what guarantee could they feel themselves to have,—against their own fall, as at least a possible, and even not very unlikely contingency? No doubt they have stood one trial. They have obeyed, by God's gracious help, as they freely own, in the instance of this one commandment. But who can tell? Other commandments may be issued from the throne; commandments that may be felt to be more grievous. The very necessity now imposed upon them of disowning,—perhaps judging,—so many of their race whom till now they had counted brothers,—may well be supposed to awaken apprehension. May not the sternest loyalty give way? May not the infection, if not of insubordination, yet at least of pity for the victims of insubordination, grow and

* See Appendix I.

spread? Thus these pure spirits may well, in these circumstances, begin to apprehend that it is only too natural for the creature, as such, to feel the subjection to authority and the obligation of obedience to law, implied in his being a creature, to be irksome and vexatious; that the yoke of mere subjectship is, from its very nature, apt to become galling; that, apart altogether from the character and condition of those who are under it, if that is their only standing, it has in itself a tendency to call forth in them, be their character ever so pure and their condition ever so good, a disposition to cast it off and to aspire to the liberty of independence. The holy angels have seen all this only too clearly and too terribly proved and exemplified before their eyes. How, after this, can they reckon their own footing, as subjects, to be quite safe?

For my part, I cannot imagine any way in which the standing or position of a creature—considered simply as a subject under the government of God—when God is viewed simply as Creator, Lawgiver, and Judge—ever can become absolutely and infallibly safe. Of course God is able to keep any one occupying that standing or

position, and no other, in perfect and inviolable security for ever. He can so keep any one anywhere and always. But the standing or position itself may be precarious nevertheless. It is, as I think, a necessity of its very nature to be so. Evidently it was so originally. The fall of the untempted angels, as well as that of tempted man, proves it to have been so. Nor, as regards the unfallen, is there anything in the mere fact of their having on one occasion stood some test of their obedience, and received some gracious acknowledgment for doing so, that can of itself suffice to make it different, in this respect, from what it was before.

But it is impossible to reconcile ourselves to the idea of these holy intelligences being left,—after the issue of that trial which had proved so disastrous to their fellows, and out of which they might well feel that they had made a narrow escape themselves,—on the same footing merely on which they had previously been. “God is not unrighteous to forget their work and labour of love,” in that they have heard his voice, and at his command “worshipped,” shall I say? “the first begotten.”

In the sin of their former associates they have now come, in a sense, to know evil as well as good. And this very knowledge, marring the unconscious confidence of innocent and blissful ignorance, must tend to awaken misgivings in their minds, and make them feel their footing insecure. In short, it would seem that they cannot be allowed to stand where they were. If they are to be protected from the risk and the fear of falling, they must be raised. And so, according to my view, they are. They receive the adoption of sons; and that ensures their safety. They are no longer servants only, but also sons. Having been tried, they are now trusted. Having disowned the servile spirit of insubordination, they receive the Spirit of the Son. Having refused to aspire to a lawless liberty of independence, they are—and it is a meet “recompense of reward”—put in possession “of the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. viii. 21).

This, as it seems to me, is the peculiar benefit of sonship; this is its great radical, distinctive, characteristic property. It puts an end conclusively to probation, in every

sense and in every form. It secures permanence of position in the household or family of God.

But it is only when it is held to be of the same sort with that of Christ that sonship can be shown to involve this consequence. If we take the merely analogical view of the relation of fatherhood and sonship between God and his children,—conceiving of it simply according to the similitude of fatherhood and sonship among ourselves,—we cannot see in it any element of absolute and inviolable security. A son's standing in his earthly parent's house is not absolutely and inviolably secure. He may go out, or he may be thrust out. It is true he is not, strictly speaking, upon trial; the right to be at home with his father is not, in the ordinary sense of the term, conditional. Still it may be forfeited, or it may be despised and practically renounced. He may be tempted and may fall, and that too even irrecoverably. If our standing as sons in the divine household is imagined to be at the very best simply like my son's standing in mine, it is not divested of the condition of precariousness. There may be

more safeguards in the one case than in the other. God is able to take more care of his children than I can take of mine. That, however, is only a difference of degree. Some insecurity, be it more or less, still attaches to the relation. And if those called to be sons, in the sense now supposed to be put upon sonship, have seen others as good and strong as themselves fall,—or if they have themselves fallen and been with difficulty recovered,—I can see no reason why, even in the bosom of the holy, heavenly home, they may not be occasionally, or rather constantly, haunted by the apprehension that possibly after all they may be cast away.

I do not forget here the bearing upon the point now under consideration of the doctrine of free justification. I am quite aware that, apart from sonship altogether, God's act of free grace in justifying those who believe is held to carry with it, as a consequence, involved in its very nature, the inviolable security of the justified. I fully allow, or rather decidedly assert, that by the purpose of God, expressed in his promises, it does so. Nay more, it must be admitted, that in the justified state itself

there is that which puts the servant of God in highly favourable circumstances for maintaining his integrity. Holding justification to be perfectly unconditional, so far as we are concerned,—all of grace and not of works,—I can see how it does place us, in some respects, in a far better position than that which Adam occupied before he fell. We are not merely put again upon trial and probation ; permitted as it were to have another chance,—to venture on a second experiment,—to make a new attempt to establish a righteousness of our own. We have always the righteousness of Christ on which we may stand as giving us a title, not inchoate merely, but complete, to acceptance in the sight of God. Unquestionably, therefore, we start upon our new course of obedience, as his subjects and servants, at a great advantage. We have not, like Adam, to make good for ourselves our standing as God's righteous subjects and servants, but only to preserve it as freely given to us by God. We have not to work our way to that standing, but only to hold it fast.

Still we have to preserve it and hold it fast. And there is nothing in it or about

it, considered simply in itself, to secure infallibly that we shall preserve it and hold it fast. No doubt, as I have already said, God is able to secure this, and is graciously pledged to secure it. But for anything that appears to the contrary, his way of securing it may be just through our receiving the very adoption of sons for which I plead. For let the relation in which we stand to God as subjects and servants be taken at its very best, as it subsists in the case of justified believers;—and that is its very best;—I still desiderate in it the element or condition of absolute inviolability.

I consider that our Lord has really settled this whole matter in one remarkable passage which, as I take it, is the divine key to unlock the mystery of God's fatherhood and his people's sonship. It is this; "The servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the son abideth ever. If the son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John viii. 35, 36).

The Lord is here arguing with "those Jews which believed on him," about liberty. He has given them the promise that "if they continue in his word," and so prove

themselves to be his genuine disciples, they shall "know the truth, and the truth shall make them free" (ver. 31, 32). Then they are not now free. They feel that the Lord's promise implies as much. He regards them as now in bondage; an imputation which they somewhat indignantly disclaim. They disclaim it as being inconsistent with their being "Abraham's seed" (ver. 33). For they quite well understand that Christ is not speaking of civil or political liberty, or even of what is commonly called religious liberty. The question raised, as they clearly enough perceive, respects, not their position with reference to men at all, but their standing before God, in his house or family,—which of course they counted their own church and nation to be. In our relation to God, as being members of his household, are we not already free? Is not our footing in that relation a footing not of bondage but of freedom?

Our Lord meets them first with an appeal to their own consciences: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (ver. 34). You can scarcely deny that you commit sin; that you do more or less consent and

yield yourselves to sin. So far, you serve sin. It has dominion over you. You said you never were in bondage ; never had a master. But has not sin some mastery over you ? Then you are not free ; free, as you boast, to serve God only ; free to dwell in his house for ever. You may be in God's house. But if so, it is not as being free in your relation to him. For that you cannot be, while, committing sin, you are the servants of sin. Your position in the house can be only that of a servant ; whose position at the very best is precarious and insecure ;—“ for the servant abideth not in the house for ever.” As a servant, he has no right to such a privilege ; nor indeed has he any capacity for realising it. He is distracted between the claim upon him for undivided allegiance on the one hand, and his inclination towards compromise on the other. He can only be God's servant partially ; having still a hankering after independence and self-will, which is the service of sin. Therefore “ the servant abideth not in the house for ever.” He cannot be sure of thus abiding, so long as he is a servant merely. “ But the son abideth ever” (ver. 35). I as the Son am free ;—so they must have

understood his words, for they could not doubt that he was speaking of himself;— I as the Son am free, and as the Son “I abide in the house for ever.” Would you have true freedom? Enter into the freedom which I have as the Son. “For if the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed” (ver. 36).

Clearly, as I apprehend his words, the Lord intends, in this divine reasoning, to represent his own sonship, and that alone, as absolutely ensuring permanence of position in the house or family of his Father. And just as clearly, to my mind, he indicates his willingness to share that sonship, and that feature or quality of it, with us.

In this view, the connection is not a little remarkable which he virtually establishes between our participation in his sonship on the one hand, and on the other hand, our freedom from the risk or hazard of “committing sin,” so as to forfeit the certainty of our abiding in the house for ever. For I cannot help thinking that the Lord has here in his mind that servile tendency which, as I have already said, I hold to be inherent in mere subjectship, if it be not joined to sonship such as his;—the

tendency, I mean, which must ever make the committing of sin, even to the extent of the subject and servant losing his place in the house, conceivable as at least a possible contingency. He seems to say first, that "committing sin" is incompatible with our being free in the house—free, in the sense of being sure of abiding in it for ever. And then he seems to say also secondly, that if we are "servants" only in the house, and nothing more, we are not, as servants, inviolably safe from "committing sin." Accordingly he assigns this as the reason why we cannot, as servants merely, be absolutely sure of abiding in the house for ever. In order to that, we must become partakers with him in his sonship, and in the freedom which as the Son he has. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

If I am right in this last idea, it may suggest a close harmony between our Lord's teaching in this passage and what, as we have seen, John says in his First Epistle about those who, "being born of God," are "called sons of God," having "his seed remaining in them," as the germ of an

absolutely impeccable nature or life—a nature or life incapable of sin (1 John iii. 6-9).^{*} For now we may see how,—both in respect of its implying community of nature, and in respect of its implying community of relation, with Christ the Son,—our sonship, securing our indefectibility by excluding the very possibility of sinning, thereby makes our abiding ever in the house absolutely certain. Of course, as regards our sense, or assurance, or apprehension of this certainty,—that can be realised only in so far as the sonship on which it depends is, in all its fulness of holiness and grace, itself realised. But in so far as it is, the assurance which it warrants is entirely trustworthy. In fact, it is the only assurance any one need desire. “The Son abideth ever.”

An attentive study of those two wonderful chapters in Paul’s Epistle to the Romans—the seventh and eighth—would, I am persuaded, not a little confirm the representation which I have been giving of John’s doctrine, and of the Lord’s.

^{*} See this text discussed in preceding Lecture, and relative Note.

If we trace the progress of that experimental exposition; in which, emerging out of the depths of an apparently hopeless struggle between his renewed will and the power of indwelling corruption—a struggle in which he feels himself all but overmastered by evil, as if in spite of himself he could not help “committing sin” and so being “the servant of sin”—Paul rises by successive steps to the highest climax of assured triumph and holy joy; it is worthy of remark that it is mainly through the apprehension of sonship that he reaches that elevation.

Deliverance from condemnation, of course, comes first (viii. 1-11). That is fully brought out, so as to do ample justice to the free grace of God in justifying “him which believeth in Jesus.” But the apostle passes on and up to the position or platform of sonship. And, I think it especially deserving of notice that he very emphatically connects the realisation of our sonship, —or our receiving the Spirit of adoption to enable us to realise it,—with our mortifying the deeds of the body;—“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after

the flesh, ye shall die : but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 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."

"If ye mortify the deeds of the body."—It is the very body of which he had so sadly complained a little before, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—it is that body of which he now speaks hopefully;—"If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." And why? "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

What can this mean but that it is the fact of our becoming "the sons of God,"—and as such "receiving, not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father"—that turns, as it were, the tide of battle in the strife between us and the evil that is in us? "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God;" and so gives us, in virtue of God being

our Father and "his seed" remaining in us, the capacity, in a sense and measure, of being sinless,—or of feeling that "we cannot sin because we are born of God." Continuing servants merely, we could never be quite sure of our standing firm and being successful in striving with the flesh. But now that we are sons, so far as we realise our sonship, we "mortify the deeds of the body;"—for, as John puts the same thought in other words, "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."

Is not Paul's practical appeal in this passage to the sonship, as the secret of the believer's victory over indwelling sin, proved thus to be in harmony with the Lord's representation, as I have been trying to explain it? And is it not very much equivalent to what John says in his Epistle: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (iv. 5). He so believes as to partake with the Son of God in his sonship.

But Paul has not done with the son-

ship when he represents our realising it, by receiving the Spirit of adoption, as that grace or experience by which we “mortify the deeds of the body,” and “overcome the world.” He fills his own mind, and ours, with large expectations of future blessedness and joy, connected with the sense of this sonship, attested by our own conscience and the Spirit’s powerful co-operation. He brings in all creation as waiting anxiously for these expectations to be fulfilled (ver. 19-22). And having reconciled himself and us to this attitude of waiting, amid creation’s groanings and our own, by reminding us of the Spirit of the Son ever “helping our infirmities” (ver. 23-27), he carries us far back into the depths of the past eternity, that we may see there the original and everlasting ground of our security as sons of God by adoption,—which is really nothing short of the security of that only begotten and well-beloved Son with whom our adoption makes us one;—“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose;—for 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 ;—moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Finally, he crowns the whole with the bright view of God’s eternal purpose at last accomplished, and his Son rejoicing as “ the first-born among many brethren,” all “ conformed to his image as the Son” and so glorified with him. Thus, the apostle fixes, on the side, as it were, of both eternities, “ the sacred chain that binds the earth to heaven above.” Called as sinners,—justified as subjects,—glorified as sons ;—so runs the climax. Whereupon there breaks forth the greatest perhaps of all the songs of inspiration ;—beginning with “ What shall we then say to these things ? if God be for us, who can be against us ?”—and ending with the glorious challenge—“ For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (ver. 31-39).

This element of inviolability—"the Son abideth ever"—is what determines the whole character of the relation of fatherhood and sonship, as subsisting between God and any of his subjects and servants. Christ was in the position of a subject and servant when he uttered the words. And I can almost fancy that I see him as he utters them. I think it must be with intense self-consciousness that he utters them. There is a falling back upon himself, and his own unchanging fellowship with the Father, in his utterance of them. Let what may happen, "the Son abideth ever." He instantly, indeed, dismisses all exclusive thought of self, as if he stood alone. What I am, I would have you to be; but what I am chiefly thinking of when I say that, is that "the Son abideth ever." It is the sense of my abiding ever, as the Son, in the Father's house, that sustains me, whether you continue in my words or not. And it is that abiding ever in the Father's house, and the sense of it, that I long to share with you; making you free, as I am free: "For if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.'

All through his service of humiliation this thought was ever present to his heart —“ the Son abideth ever.” It was his consolation, his strength, his joy. It gives singular weight and force to very many of his expressions with reference to what the Father is to him and he is to the Father ; investing them, as it does, with a certain strange complexion or character of conscious, confident unchangeableness. Hence the intense repose which, amid all its strange and often terrible vicissitudes, marked the life of Christ. Hence his sleeping in the storm, and his quiet demeanour before Caiaphas and Pilate. He was always self-possessed, because he was always conscious of his sonship, and of his abiding ever in it. There was no need of haste ; no room for feverish or fitful agitation. Let him be working ever so busily, let him be suffering ever so acutely, Jesus is always resting. “The Son abideth ever.”*

Is not this the explanation of the calm, serene, quiet peace which underlies the whole troubled experience of Christ? “The Son abideth ever.” He abideth ever as the Son. Let him be tried, buffeted, tormented

* See Appendix IV.

to the utmost; let him even have to be made sin and made a curse for us; still "the Son abideth ever." And he can say in the worst extremity, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit;" having said just before, in the same spirit of unruffled composure, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

"The Son abideth ever." I believe that if we study the human and earthly life of Christ with that as the motto or key to it, we may come to a better understanding of what the relation of fatherhood and sonship between God and us, if we are in his Son, really is,—and ought to be apprehended by us to be,—than we could do by means of the most minute and articulate enumeration of fatherly acts and offices on the part of God, and filial duties and responsibilities on our part. I own, therefore, that I have a feeling of relief in being warrantably compelled to say, that I have no time or space left for what I might call relational details. The relation itself is manifested and acted out in the history of the man Christ Jesus. Let an insight into the relation be got, by deep thought exercised

upon the history. Let it be thought, however, based upon this one condition—that there is in the relation a very peculiar element of inviolability.

All other conceivable relations, so far as I can see, may be violated. Husband and wife may part. Rulers and subjects may be arrayed in arms against one another. Friends may disagree, and brothers may fight. Parent and child on earth may be mortal foes. All other conceivable relations admit of fluctuation and variety, according to change of circumstances. They are all liable to breaks and interruptions; to fitful and capricious movements on one side or other; to strange alternations of pathos and of passion. This relation alone; the relation between the Eternal Father and his Incarnate Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,—and in Him, so far as they can realise it, between “his Father and their Father” and “the little ones whom he is not ashamed to call his brethren;” this relation alone is always and for ever the same. From whatever may be turbulent, uncertain, or uneasy, in any other relation, we may take refuge at any time in this one. Be the temptation that assails

us ever so strong ; be the affliction that tries us ever so severe ; be the work we have to do ever so hard, or the death we have to die ever so cruel ;—in the unchanging fatherhood of God we, like his Son, may have evermore quiet peace.

Is it not in this view worthy of remark that it is in immediate connection with one of his most intensely filial appeals to the Father—that which opens with such a burst of grateful love, “I thank thee, O Father,” and closes with so sublime an assertion of mutual intimacy and insight, “No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him,”—that Jesus issues the gracious invitation to the weary, and gives them his gracious assurance of rest (Mat. xi. 25, 30)? It is his own rest which he promises to share with them ; the rest which his “meek and lowly heart” always possessed, under a yoke such as never any other had to take upon him, and a burden such as never any other had to bear ; the rest which made him feel even that yoke easy and that burden light. “I will give you

rest." Surely, I repeat, it is his own rest he means to say that he will give. It is that rest in the Father's knowledge of the Son and the Son's knowledge of the Father of which he has just been speaking. His own knowledge of the Father he shares with them, revealing to them the Father. And it is by sharing with them his own knowledge of fatherly and filial love that he shares with them his own rest;—the rest which that knowledge must always have imparted to his own soul, even when it was most troubled.

Have we not here the essence of what is implied, whether in the way of privilege or in the way of duty, in the relation of fatherhood and sonship between God and us?—First, there is rest, the Son's own rest, in the ever-present consciousness of his filial fellowship with the Father. And then, secondly, there is the Son's own "meekness and lowliness of heart," as he takes upon him whatever yoke the Father is pleased to lay upon his neck, and bears whatever burden the Father is pleased to lay upon his shoulders. For so he sustains the joint character of the Father's servant and the Father's son, in

which he "glorifies the Father on the earth, and finishes the work which the Father giveth him to do" (John xvii. 4).

I now bring these Lectures to a close. I do so with the feeling that, however inadequately I have handled my great theme, I have at least thrown out some suggestive thoughts. I do not pretend to have established any peculiar views of my own. Very possibly not a few of the opinions I have advanced, and the criticisms by which I have supported them, may be shown to be crude conjectures and unwarrantable interpretations. Be it so. I shall still cherish the hope that more competent workmen may enter into my demolished labour, and may rear a better structure. For I cannot divest myself of the impression that, whether I am right or wrong in my notions of the Divine Fatherhood, the subject has not hitherto been adequately treated in the Church.

In particular, I venture on a critical observation touching the theology of the Reformation. The subject of Adoption, or the sonship of Christ's disciples, did not, in that theology, as it seems to me, occupy

the place and receive the prominency to which it is, on scriptural grounds and warrants, entitled. It may be thought at first sight presumptuous to hazard this remark ; but let the explanation which I am disposed to give of the fact be duly considered. The Reformers had enough to do to vindicate "the article of a standing or falling Church,"—justification by faith alone ; to recover it out of the chaos of Popish error and superstition ; and to reassert it in its right connection with the doctrine of the absolute Divine Sovereignty, which Augustine had so well established. Their hands were full. It need not be matter of surprise that in their case, as well as in that of their predecessors, the early fathers, there should have been lines of theological inquiry on which they scarcely at all entered.

One might almost say that it has fared somewhat ill with the truth, as regards God's fatherhood and his people's sonship, at both eras—both in the primitive Church and in the Church of the Reformation. It may, perhaps, in some respects, have had more justice done to it at the former era than at the latter ; although the patristic

literature shows too plainly how the controversies about the supreme divinity of the Son tended to draw men's minds away from the sonship of his disciples. The divines of the Protestant Reformation and their successors gave their main strength to the questions at issue between them and Rome ; of which questions this could scarcely be said to be one. The creeds and confessions of the Protestant and Reformed Churches, as well as the theological systems of their colleges, are for the most part extremely meagre and defective in what they say on the subject. In some it is not even noticed ; in others, it is made a part of justification, or a mere appendix to it ; in none, I believe, does it receive sufficiently full and distinct treatment. Hence perhaps it is that the doctrine of the fatherhood has been so little understood and so much abused in recent days.

I have long had the impression, that in the region of that great truth there lies a rich field of precious ore, yet to be surveyed and explored ; and that somewhere in that direction, theology has fresh work to do, and fresh treasures to bring out of the storehouse of the Divine Word. For I am

not one of those who would lay an arrest on progress in the science of divinity, and compel it to be stationary.* I would not, indeed, be disposed to reopen discussions which, after ample investigation, under the useful and, perhaps, necessary pressure of controversy, have been satisfactorily closed; or to unsettle the conclusions to which the Churches have harmoniously come on the vital and cardinal articles of the faith. I do not call for any revision of our creeds, confessions, and catechisms. By all means let them stand untouched; as monuments of the vast erudition and mental power of other days, and as safeguards of truth and bulwarks against error for ages yet to come. But it is no disparagement to these symbols to say of them that they do not exhaust the whole volume of revelation. For that is simply saying that the compilers were uninspired men, and that "the riches of Christ are unsearchable."

Take our own books, for instance, our Confession and Catechisms. I never have had any scruple to affirm that their statements on the subject of adoption are by no means satisfactory. No doubt all that they say is true; but it amounts to very little.

* See Note A.

The answer in the Shorter Catechism is really, in substance, scarcely anything more than that adoption is adoption.* In the other documents, the matter is handled more fully, and some of the privileges of the children of God are enumerated. Still even in them the whole matter is left in the last degree vague and indefinite. And no information whatever is given, nor is any opinion expressed, as to how the relation of Sonship is constituted, or as to what its precise nature is.

The contrast is very remarkable, in this respect, between their treatment of the subject of adoption, and their treatment of all the other topics connected with the purchase and application of redemption; plainly showing, as I cannot but conclude, that while they had fully matured their views and made up their minds upon these last,—and were, in fact, quite at home in them,—they were very much at sea as to the former.

I hold them, therefore, to have virtually left the whole of that department of theology which bears on God's paternal relation

* *Q.* What is adoption? *A.* Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.

to his people, and their filial relation to him, an entirely open question,—a perfect *tabula rasa*,—so far as any verdict or deliverance of theirs is concerned. I consider that we have the fullest liberty to sink new shafts in this mine, which they evidently had not explored, if only we take care that our diggings shall do no damage to any of the far more important mines which they did explore,—and explored so thoroughly and so well.

I have endeavoured to lend some help in the way of, as it were, breaking ground. I have sought to observe the caution which I have now given, and I trust I have not violated it. Some of the thoughts I have ventured to throw out may seem to some critics to be nothing better than speculations. But I hope it will be admitted that none of them touch the foundations of the sacred temple of truth, or displace any of its stones. What I have advanced may, perhaps, in the long run and in other hands, add some features of symmetry and beauty to the structure, and even strengthen some of its buttresses. But all the old glory remains untarnished ; all the old refuges for the weary and the lost are as open and as secure as ever.

I thoroughly believe that the line of inquiry which I have been tracing is as safe as I think it will prove to be interesting for any one who will prosecute it with due reverence, docility, and humility of spirit. I commend the subject to the study of younger and fresher minds. And in doing so, I can scarcely suggest a better text from which to start than that wonderful answer, as it has always appeared to me, in the Larger Catechism, to the question (65), "What special benefits do the members of the invisible Church enjoy by Christ?" They "enjoy union and communion with him in grace and glory." This covers and comprehends all; union inferring communion. It explains their justification, as being community of righteousness with him. It explains their regeneration and sanctification, as being community of nature with him. It explains their adoption, as being community of sonship with him. To which last I assign the highest place. For whereas in the others we have communion with him principally in grace, it is pre-eminently in the sonship that we have communion with him in glory.

NOTES TO LECTURE SIXTH.

NOTE A. (Page 285.)

I GIVE the explanation of my meaning which I embodied in a closing address to the students of the New College a few weeks after the delivery of the lectures. This will explain the form and character of the present Note.

I yield to no man in my admiration of the Westminster Assembly and its symbolical books. I doubt if ever synod or council sat to which the Church catholic will ultimately acknowledge herself to be more, if so much, indebted. I believe that its doctrinal decisions, on all the questions fairly before it, will stand the test of time, and ultimately command the assent of universal Christendom. That is my firm conviction. And it is just because that is my firm conviction, that I assert the right of respectful comment on the Westminster Standards, as on all human compositions; believing, on the one hand, that a man's reverence for these noble documents may be not the less sincere for its being intelligent and discriminating; and, on the other hand, that the more they are subjected to the light of growing and advancing theological science, the more will their excellency and value appear; and the more also will the importance, or rather the necessity, be felt, of holding by the "whole doctrine contained in them," as the only safe anchorage in any and in every storm.

Into the general question of the use and abuse of creeds

and confessions it would be quite unseasonable here to enter. I would only say that, if they are pleaded as a bar in arrest of progress by means of biblical study and free theological inquiry, it will be difficult to defend them in consistency, either with the rights of human reason, or with the paramount authority of the Divine Word.

One chief value of such documents, as it has always seemed to me, is this :—that they mark off, as ascertained and finally settled, doctrines upon which, after thorough investigation, the Evangelical Church may be held to have made up her mind. On that very account, they render the work of the farther search after truth both easier and safer than otherwise it might be. They define, by well-placed landmarks, the territory which has been fully won and accurately surveyed ; thereby at once facilitating on the one hand, and guiding and guarding on the other hand, the traveller who, with due caution, would venture to explore what may be beyond.

Hence they have been themselves progressive. There has been an advance, step by step, according as, in the march of controversy and discussion, the Church has been led to clear up her views on successive points or topics of theology, and to embody them for preservation in articulate and exact propositions. It was in this way that, in primitive times, the Church matured and fixed, one after another, her authoritative decisions on the Trinity, on the Incarnation, on the union of the two natures in Christ, on the personality of the Holy Spirit. Thus, by stages, the system grew. One article was adjusted satisfactorily ; and the adjustment of it opened and prepared the way for the handling of a new subject. That in its turn being rightly formularised, if I may so say, became the point of departure for a fresh start. And so things went on ; until what I may perhaps be allowed to call the Patristic scheme of Christianity,

as handed down in the three Creeds and in the Decrees of the orthodox Councils, was complete; so complete, as far as it goes, that in its substance it still stands as the Fathers left it, and has never since been touched.

But it has received additions. The Augustinian doctrine of grace, and the Lutheran article of justification, were movements in advance;—movements which had their consummation, as it were, in the exact science of Calvin, and the harmony of the Reformed Confessions.

Such, I think, is the manner, and such the spirit, in which the church hitherto has acted on the principle of “proving all things, and holding fast that which is good.” Thus, she may be said, in a sense, to have gone “from strength to strength,” like her great Head, “conquering and to conquer.” She consolidates her successive conquests as she proceeds. “Whereto she has already attained,” she stands firm; yet not as if she had “attained” all.

Such is the manner, and such the spirit, in which alone I consider that progress in theology either ought to be aimed at, or can be looked for. In that spirit and manner, however, I can see no reason why we should not press forward;—“following on to know the Lord” more fully.

This, as all must admit, is a very different thing from that removing of old landmarks,—that disposition to tamper with received standards and unsettle men’s minds on vital points of the “faith once delivered to the saints,”—which many in our day, not without reason, dread. Against all that I protest strongly.

I regard with extreme alarm every indication of a tendency, or a wish, to lower by a hair’s-breadth the flag of ascertained truth from the position in which the Church catholic has displayed it in past generations. I would not throw loose again questions upon which wiser and better

men than we are came to an agreement ages ago. I deprecate the introduction of new modes of thought and forms of speech about God's law and gospel, about Christ's work and the Spirit's, in accommodation to the speculations of the day.

The dislike of system, of definition, of logic in theology ; the embracing of what is vague, shadowy, dreamy ; the turning away from whatever has the aspect of distinct assertion or assurance ; the refusal to be obliged to form any precise opinion, or adopt any categorical statement, with reference to such matters as man's original state, the temptation, the fall and its effects ; or such as the atonement, substitution, imputation ; or such as conversion, regeneration, justification ; or such as the resurrection, the last judgment, and the future state of the saved and lost ;—the shrinking from a full and explicit recognition of what the Church has long taught regarding these matters ;—the disposition to take refuge in ambiguous or uncertain generalities, under the guise perhaps of respect for the letter and language of Scripture ;—these and other similar leanings, but too manifestly showing themselves, not abroad or in England only, but nearer home, I cannot view in any other light than as the fitful symptoms of a feverish age ;—an age of small men, tossing restlessly on a bed of doubt. There is nothing of manliness in them, and nothing of progress. They all savour of imbecility. And they are all in the direction of a retrograde movement ;—a retreat or flight, not an onward march. They do not help forward, they simply retard, any such advancement of theological study as might give good hope of real increase, either of light or of life.

All this I feel strongly. And it is because I feel it so strongly as I do, that I am anxious to show you a more excellent way ; and to make it plain that the creeds and

confessions, the systems and standards, which record the views of the orthodox Fathers and the divines of the Reformation,—even when accepted with that full, explicit, articulate acknowledgment of “the whole doctrine contained in them” about which some are so sensitive,—far from being mere obstructives, as many think they are, standing in the way of fresh thought and free inquiry,—are really the best helps to both.

It is on this account that I have sought to indicate lines of thought and inquiry still open to the students of God’s Word ;—on which they can best enter, or rather can only enter, under the impulse and guidance of truths already received, and from the stand-point of attainments already made. To cast these truths and attainments away, is as if the Israelites at the Red Sea had thought to obey the Lord’s command “Go forward,” by abandoning the firm position they had already gained, and simply mingling again, as on common ground, with the Egyptians.

I fear I may be too tediously elaborating this explanation of my views on the subject of theological progress. But I own, it seems to me to be a matter of some consequence that the subject should be thoroughly cleared up. I do not deny, rather I assert, the need of regard being always had to the wants and tastes of the existing race of men, in the manner of setting before them the truth of God. Their predilections, and even their prejudices, must be considered. For as there is a right as well as a wrong development, so there is a right as well as a wrong accommodation to the spirit of the age.

If there is a demand for something less stiff and confined, less starched and formal, more genial, flowing, varied, and expansive than the old way of systematising and sermonising is accounted to be,—something with less

of monotone and more of the wide compass of orchestral melody and harmony,—it is idle to ignore it or set it at defiance, even though we may think the criticism on the old way severe, and the likelihood of improving upon it but slight. It may be wise to aim at being like the “householder who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.” We may thus practically convince men that the old are good—better possibly than the new.

For the staple is unquestionably “the old.” The old theology of the seventeenth century; the theology of Geneva, of the Dutch professors, of the Scotch Church, of the English Puritans; the theology of the covenants, of the law and the gospel, of absolute divine sovereignty in providence and grace, of free and full salvation in Christ and nothing but utter and everlasting ruin out of Christ;—that is the theology which must be mastered;—or rather which must obtain the mastery.

But it must be imbibed also. It must come to be at once the ruling principle and the sustaining food of the life of the soul; and that too as well in professional study as in personal devotion. It must mould the entire inner man of the Christian, as a teacher of others as well as a disciple on his own account. The more it does so,—in proportion as it does so,—will the disciple and teacher feel himself able and free to throw his mind and heart, with all confidence, into the tide of advancing knowledge and inquiry. He will thus be able to avail himself of all the fresh currents of thought that may be moving the world. And he will do so for the very purpose of urging forward the vessel of the Church on her voyage of divine discovery, always through the same time-honoured channel, until the long-desiderated haven is reached at last.

Therefore, I repeat, in the interest of present adaptation as well as of future progress, let us hold fast by past attain-

ments. There were giants in the days of the Reformation and in the century which succeeded it, who did their work well, laying deep and building high the entire structure of Evangelical Christianity. So thoroughly well did they do their work, that we never can be safe in dealing with the building otherwise than by first of all entering ourselves, heart and soul, into their labours. I rejoice, accordingly, in the opportunities and facilities afforded to students now for doing so—opportunities and facilities far beyond what I can recollect as being within reach in the days of my student life. I congratulate you on this advantage, and exhort you to avail yourselves of it; reminding you, at the same time, of the increased responsibility connected with increase of privilege.

In particular, I cannot help congratulating you very warmly on your being put in possession of so trustworthy a chart to lead you, through the mazes of controversy, to what may be held to be ascertained truth, on almost all the successive questions which have been raised in the Church from the beginning until now, as that which Dr. Cunningham's works supply.*

Certainly I can imagine scarcely any better manual, in these uneasy times, than Dr. Cunningham's four volumes. Their excellency, in my view, is chiefly seen, first, in the singular clearness and fairness with which every question is stated; and secondly, in the equally singular caution and moderation with which every question is settled. There is no one-sided exaggeration or misrepresentation. In every case, full justice is done to all opinions; they are all brought clearly out, and thoroughly dealt with and disposed of. As a calm and temperate

* This refers to a most liberal arrangement, on the part of a generous friend, through Professor Bannerman, for putting all the students in possession of Dr. Cunningham's works.

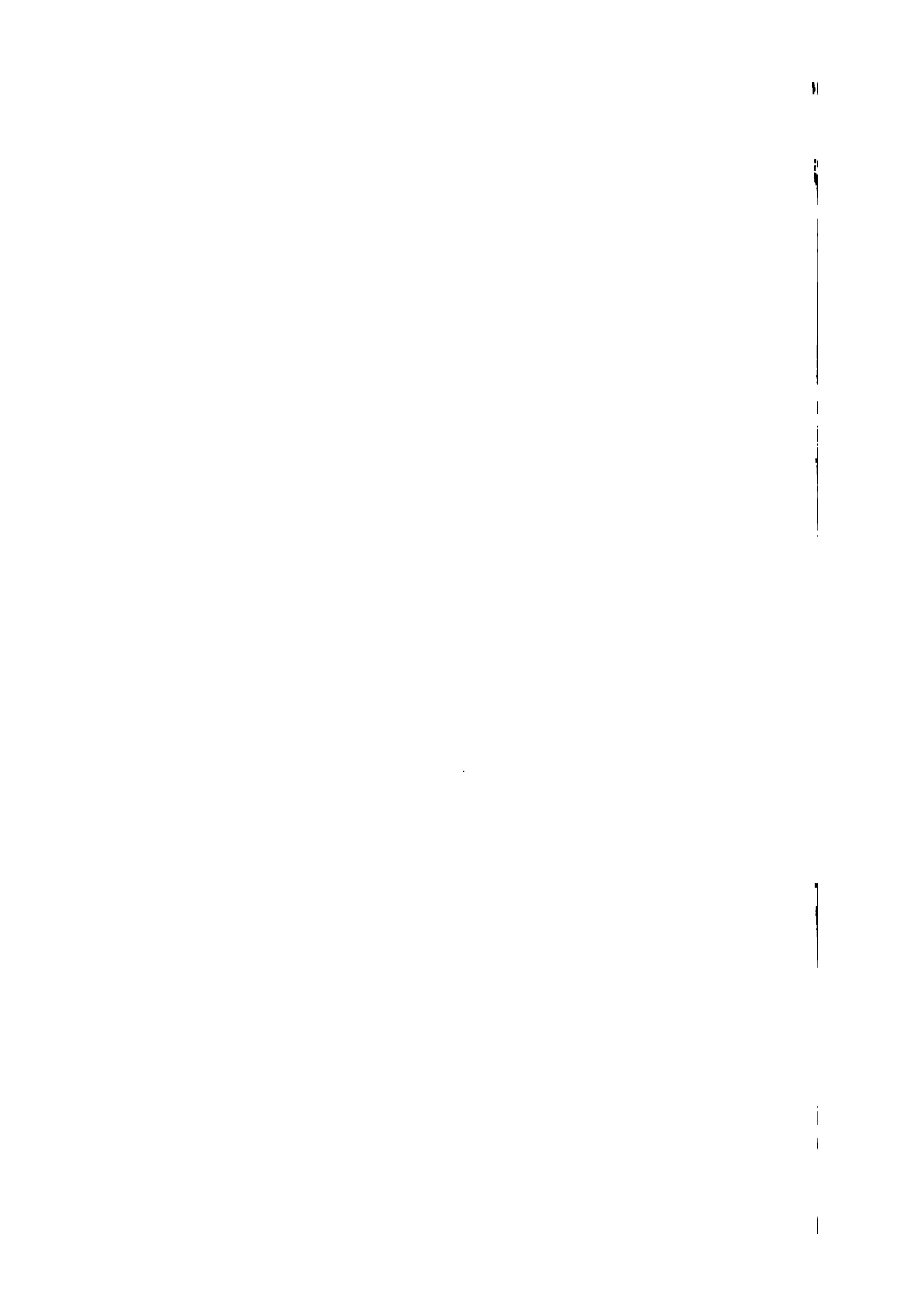
representation of the Reformation theology generally, and of Calvinism as received in Scotland in particular, Dr. Cunningham's lectures are invaluable. Avoiding extremes, and carefully balancing opposite tendencies, he places the system on the very footing which, as it seems to me, is best fitted, on the one hand, to make the platform or position reached impregnable as a fortress, and, on the other hand, to admit of safe advances from it as a centre into the surrounding territory. And that is the very combination for which I have been pleading.

But it is not merely in the Reformation theology that Dr. Cunningham is thus remarkable for wisdom and caution, as well as for profound and accurate learning. The same features characterise his discussions of the points raised in the early history of the Church respecting its doctrine, discipline, and government. Indeed, if I were asked to select the passage in the volumes which most fully manifests these features, I know not that I could fix upon a better specimen than his treatment of the subject of the government of the primitive Church. I cannot imagine any advocate of the divine right of Prelatic Episcopacy fairly grappling with Dr. Cunningham's statements. And as regards the Scriptural authority for Presbyterian Episcopacy,—for the parity of presbyters or bishops, and their equal title to rule,—it will be difficult indeed to shake the safe position which he takes up between the opposite extremes ;—that of finding everything in our system, down to its minutest details, regulated in the New Testament in express terms ;—and that of finding nothing, in the form of general principles, sanctioned by Apostolic example, that can be held to enjoin any order or impose any obligation at all.

I intended to advert to one or two practical matters in this address ; but I forbear. I must hasten to a close.

I exhort you to earnest prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit. That is what we really require, in our colleges, in our congregations, over all our Church. Ministers, professors, students, we all alike need a fresh anointing of the Holy Ghost. I say this emphatically, and with special reference to the times, and the signs of the times. I am not uttering words of course, to wind up and round off properly a formal discourse. I am no alarmist. But I cannot shut my eyes to what seem to me to be tokens, if not of declension, at least of certain things which are apt to indicate or occasion declension ;—such as suspicion, fear, sensitiveness and irritability, in not a few quarters ;—and a kind of dissatisfaction with existing means and agencies, and craving for novel experiments. The sure remedy for all this is to be found in the revival of vital godliness through the abundant outpouring of the Spirit from on high. That will heal all sores and cause brotherly love to abound ; as of old ;—“ When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together ; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness ; and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul” (Acts iv. 31, 32).

Let such a flood of grace come as shall carry all along in its rushing tide. Then the Church will indeed be abreast of the age, and powerful as a present force in the world. And it will be seen that the same gospel which was preached from the beginning is still, through the mighty working of the Holy Ghost, all-powerful for the pulling down of strongholds and the building of that “ holy temple in the Lord” which is to be “ for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephes. ii. 21, 22).



APPENDIX.



SCRIPTURAL EXPOSITIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

I.

The ultimate Glory of Filial Service.

“ And his servants shall serve him.”—Rev. xxii. 3.

THIS is an important element in the blessedness of heaven. For surely, it is the blessedness of heaven that is here described. The locality may be this earth ; but it is this earth renovated and delivered from the curse of the fall. It is the “ new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.” The moral and spiritual aspect of the whole scene shows that it represents the Church’s eternal state. Of that perfect and happy state this is one chief characteristic, “ His servants shall serve him.”

It is a notable feature, and it is put in a notable way. It is put almost as if it were God’s satisfaction and not ours that it was intended to express. At last he has gained his end. At the close of that wondrous march of his providence over angels and men of which the Bible traces the footsteps, as the consummation of all his manifold dealings with his intelligent creatures,—by much pains, as it were, and after long waiting,—he succeeds in his object. He finds himself presiding over such a household as pleases him. “ His servants shall serve him.”

But if this is the object on which the heart of God is set, why may it not be at once and from the beginning

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realised? Why may not the creative act or word surround the Creator at once with circle upon circle of obsequious subjects, as pliant and plastic in his hand as wind or fire?

Servants to serve him according to his mind he may surely have, in any number, and of any variety of structure and capacity,—from the inert and shapeless mass of matter, upwards through all gradations of life, sense and mind, to the highest faculty of thought and will, inferior only to his own. May he not thus find the sort of agents needed to perfect his ideal of the universe which he would have to unfold his glory?

No. The end is not to be thus summarily attained. The attainment of it is not the triumph of creation, but the result of an entirely different process;—a long providential and administrative system, to which angels and men have been subjected, and out of which this glorious issue comes, “His servants shall serve him.”

This service of God, in its origin, progress, and perfection, may be traced in these successive stages:—I. The service of the angels before any of their number rebelled; II. The service of the elect and faithful after that event; III. The service of Christ, the Lord of angels and Redeemer of mankind; IV. The bearing of his service now on the inhabitants of hell, of heaven, and of earth; V. The final service of the future state.

I. God made the angels to serve him;—endowing them with suitable capacities, and placing them in circumstances favourable to the exercise and expansion of these capacities. All things were propitious. Moral evil was unknown. There could be no temptation. One would think that perfect service was thus secured.

The recorded fact, however, of a rebellion in that angelic world, proves that there must have been some-

thing in or about the service not altogether and absolutely good; not, at all events, what may be called in reference to such a matter, the highest good. It could be nothing amiss in what God required, or in the moral nature of those of whom it was required. But that somehow the position was such as might become the occasion of feelings of insubordination springing up,—even in pure minds and innocent hearts,—the actual result proves.

Our Lord identifies the offence of the apostate spirit; he “abode not in the truth” (John viii. 44). If he had, “the truth would have made him free” (32) in serving; and he would have coveted no other freedom. Paul speaks of pride, or being “lifted up with pride,” as “the condemnation of the devil” (1 Tim. iii. 6). And Jude (verse 6) describes the sad company as “the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation.” They “kept not their first estate;” or rather their “principality.” They were not content with the princely rank originally belonging to them. They “left their own habitation,”—the place assigned to them as their own,—their proper sphere for serving God.

It would thus appear that the evil originated in a desire on their part to be upon some other footing with God than that on which, as at first created, they stood.

The desire may, or rather must, have sprung up in connection with some particular command. I conceive it to have been the command which the Psalmist, according to the interpretation of the apostle Paul, indicates: “When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world,” or on the stage as it were, and in the view of creation, “he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him” (Hebrews i. 6). Exception is taken, if not to the thing commanded, at least to its being commanded. These “princes” will not “abide in the truth”—in their true

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position of dependence, duty, and responsibility. They "are lifted up with pride:" they become impatient of subjection and obligation. To worship "the first-begotten" may be all well; but to worship him upon compulsion and command is not so. They would have it left to their own free discretion. They are not content to be princes under the Most High. They would be "as gods" themselves; they would be their own masters.

The possibility of this dark spirit of jealousy insinuating itself into the thoughts of these servants of God, so as to cause rankling dissatisfaction with the state in which they were created, shews how, even before their sin and fall, there was some element of imperfection—some latent root of possible bitterness—in that state itself. It was not a state with reference to which it could be said with full assurance, "His servants shall serve him." The original angelic state is not the highest good.

II. May we venture to look into the abode of the angels after their ranks have been so disastrously thinned? He whom, at the Father's command, they have consented to worship—"the first begotten"—is among them. But for that, blank consternation may well be on every face, and a painful misgiving in every heart. True, they have stood the test; and their obedience, doubtless, is rewarded by some decisive token of the divine regard. But it is a terrible proof of the peccability of their nature and the precariousness of their position, that is ever before their eyes. The poet says—"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." But ignorance is now out of the question. They know the possibility of transgression; and though they know its penalty too, that does not allay their anxiety. The mere dread of incurring the doom of disobedience will go but a little way to reconcile them, or to keep them

reconciled, to a state of things which so many of their number felt to be irksome and intolerable. It may prevent the outward and overt act of rebellion. But it does not tell upon the inner man ; or, if it does, it is at least as apt to irritate as to subdue. So far then as the influence of the sad catastrophe itself goes, it makes no change for the better in the standing of those elect ones who, through grace, survive it. On the contrary, they may seem to be even in worse circumstances than before for serving God.

That, however, cannot be. He whom the Father has been introducing to them for their worship, will see to it that it shall not be. He will at all events prevent any injury coming upon them through the knowledge of evil which they have unwillingly got. By his divine presence with them, and by the power of his Spirit in them, he will so confirm them in their loyalty to his Father's throne that no sense of present insecurity, and no fear of future danger, shall mar their serene and settled peace.

But more than that he does. From henceforth he has their regards fixed upon himself. In obedience to the Father's command they have worshipped the Son. Already, as their recompense, they see his glory, as the glory of one altogether worthy of their worship. But the Father's voice to them is, Ye shall see greater things than this. Worship him still, wait, and watch. Keep your eyes fixed on him. For in him, as you are soon to see, a higher and better platform is to be reached, on which God's "servants shall serve him."

III. For what is the next important step in this development of service? I pass over the probation and the fall of man ; events but too well fitted to awaken new alarm, as if another experiment had been tried and failed.

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I come at once to the incarnation ; that great era in the universal providence of God, to which, without knowing beforehand what its precise nature was to be, not only believing men were accustomed to look forward, but the unfallen spirits also. For they clung in faith and hope to him whom the Father would have them to worship ; being taught to expect some still more signal " bringing in of the first-begotten into the world " than that which had been the occasion of the trial of their obedience, and its reward. As the fulness of the time drew near, the angels,—having accompanied this divine person in all his previous intercourse with the patriarchs and with the ancient church,—had their eyes rivetted on Bethlehem-Ephratah,—whence he was to " come forth unto God, who was to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth had been from of old, from everlasting " (Micah v. 2). They took part in the divine arrangements about the births of the Baptist and the Christ. And when the holy child Jesus, of whom they spoke to the shepherds, lay before them in the manger, we can imagine a voice coming to them " from the excellent glory,"—" Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth " (Is. xlii. 1).

Service is now to be ennobled indeed. In every view it is to be so ; in the person of the servant ; in the actual work of the service ; and in the spirit pervading it all.

1. Who is this servant ? A man—the man Christ Jesus ; a volunteer—his manhood voluntarily assumed, his service voluntarily undertaken ; a Son—the Eternal Son of God the Father whose servant he becomes—himself " God over all, blessed for evermore ; " Son of God and Son of Man ; uniting in his own person the highest prerogative of rule and the humblest obligation to service ; entitled to command the whole universe, as its Creator-God, and bound, in his created manhood, to be under the yoke in

this narrow corner of his own vast dominions. What a servant has the Father found to serve him now !

2. And then, what is the service ? its nature ? its conditions ? its work ? It is service undertaken in the room and stead of others ; and these others, the fallen children of men. The terms of it are his fulfilling all their obligations, and meeting all their liabilities. He consents to be their substitute, under the law which they have failed to obey, whose penalty of death they have incurred. And he consents to this, in the full knowledge that the obedience required of them must be rendered by him, and the penalty incurred by them must be visited on him,—to the very uttermost of the law's righteous demands.

3. And what of the spirit pervading the whole service ? Meek, gentle, uncomplaining submission ; the entire surrender of his subject will to the will of him whose subject he is ; unshaken loyalty to the God and Father whom he serves, even when the cup given him to drink wrings from his body the bloody sweat and from his soul the cry of agony ; disinterested, self-sacrificing affection ; these features, and such as these, marked the spirit in which this wondrous servant served his wondrous service. In one word, the spirit of that service was sympathy ; sympathy with him whose servant he was ; sympathy with the service itself ;—“ I and my father are one ; ”—“ the works which the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son ; ”—“ my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”

It is real and actual service all along ; entailing upon him privation, toil, obloquy, pain ; exposing him to cold, hunger, thirst ; the temptations of evil spirits ; the reproach and violence of evil men. Throughout it all he simply served ; not acting for himself, in self-support, self-vindication, or self-defence ; but acting wholly for God

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and leaving all to God. It was service growing dark and dreadful as its close drew near. In prospect, it appalled his human spirit with its unutterable woe ; and when the hour came at last, full fraught with the venom of sin's sting and curse, and the blood-red wine of the righteous vengeance of the Most High, he sank under the burden as well nigh more than even he could bear. But still he simply served. He saved others ; himself he did not save. As a servant under the yoke, he bowed his head and gave up the ghost ;—with these words upon his lips,—expressive of a servant's resignation as well as of a Son's trust, —“ Father into thy hands I commend my spirit.” Well may the Father say, “ Behold my servant !”

IV. What a voice to echo through all worlds—in hell ; in heaven ; and on earth !—“ Behold my servant !”

1. Is it heard in hell ? Does it ring in the ears of lost angels, and lost men ?

For lost angels—See what that service of God is which you resented as a galling burden and spurned as a humiliating bondage ! The place which was not high enough, or free enough, for you, the very Son of the Highest himself does not disdain to occupy. You, indeed, would not be servants ; it seemed drudgery and restraint to you. What worship you are to render, what work you are to do, must be matter of spontaneous choice, not of prescribed command. To worship and work to order,—to be obedient merely, nothing more, and nothing else,—you felt to be an unworthy sort of homage from you to God ; unworthy of your angelic nature and your princely rank. So you felt once. But what have you to say now ? What plea have you now,—when God points to the birth, the life, the death of his own Son, and says,—“ Behold my servant !” What ! Was my service a degradation, my commandment

grievous, my law severe, and myself too austere and hard a master to be obeyed in love? You dare not think so now, when you behold my servant!

For lost men—How will they feel when at last, too late, the full meaning of that service of the Son of God flashes upon them? It was a bloody service to him, but he did not deem it either unreasonable or unrighteous. To him “the law,” even while he was enduring its condemnation, was “holy; and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” If we lift up our eyes in hell, being in torment,—sharing the punishment prepared for the devil and his angels,—compelled by God to “behold his servant,” and as we behold him, to justify God and condemn ourselves,—how must we recall, with unavailing groans of self-reproach, the day, the hour, when he invited us to share with him in that service of his;—in its infinite worth and efficacy, its gracious fruit and issue, its blessed filial spirit, addressing to us the call;—the Servant inviting us to be his fellow-servants;—“Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls: for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

It must be a terrible voice for hell's inhabitants to be hearing always—“Behold my servant!”

2. It must have been a blessed voice when heard in heaven. When the obedient angels saw him whom they worshipped “taking upon him the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of man;” when they saw him “being found in fashion as a man, humbling himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;” they were well prepared to worship him anew, even in his humiliation. When “God highly exalted him, and gave him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus

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every knee should bow," all their tongues were ready to "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 7-11). For now to these bright "morning-stars," the mystery of that service of God which is perfect freedom is unveiled, in the person of this Son and Servant, and in his gracious work.

Nor is it as mere onlookers that they get an insight into this mystery. As he has carried them along with him in all his ministry towards our fallen race,—and very specially in his taking our nature and serving, even to suffering, in our stead,—so now, he carries them along with him and associates them with himself in his subjection to the Father, as at once his Servant and his Son. They partake with him in the full grace and glory of that double relationship. Service is to them what they perceive it to have been to him. It is divested of every element of precariousness, and therefore of every element of grievousness. It is their joy and crown. Their footing is identical with that of him whom they worship. It is as sons of God, "in the first begotten," that these servants of God in heaven now serve him; hearing always the voice that points out the great exemplar—"Behold my servant!"

3. To the followers of Christ on earth this voice should come home with peculiar power—"Behold my servant!" See how the Son, as servant, served God! And learn how God would have you, as sons, to serve him, in the Son!

First, however, let us make sure that we enter into that service of the Son, as undertaken and accomplished for us. It stands for us instead of any service that might be required of us as the condition of our peace with God. Let us look ever first at the servant and the service in that light. As the bankrupt and beggared servants of a righteous God, laden with the burden of long accumulated

guilt, utterly unable either to cancel the past or to satisfy the claims of the present and the future, let us accept as our substitute this servant whom our Father has chosen for us. What fault have we to find with him? Personally, is not he every way qualified to represent us, to consult and act for us, to serve on our behalf? To serve! And what service? Does it not fulfil all righteousness and atone for all sin? Is it not, as a service of penal endurance, adequate to the utmost rigour of punishment that we have deserved? Is it not, as a service of merit, enough to purchase the choicest blessings that God's favour can bestow? Let us thankfully accept this servant, and his service, as ours. Let us suffer him to place us where his service entitles all for whom it avails to be placed. And where is that? Where, but where he is himself? It is his position that we are to occupy; it is his relation to God that we share. And whatever service is now imposed upon us,—it is as occupying his position and sharing his relation that we meet it.

Then may it not be expected that the spirit which pervaded all his service shall pervade ours also? If our standing is thus identical with his,—if we receive the adoption of sons, in and with the Son of God, and have his Spirit in us, crying, "Abba, Father,"—should not the service of God be to us precisely what it was to him? It may extort from us groans; it extorted them from him. Its toil may weary us; it wearied him. Its pain may make our soul, as it made his, exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Our fellow-servants—the angels—know well what our sufferings may be in the service which they see us share with him whose sufferings they never can forget. They delight to stand by us, as they stood by him, when, as "ministering spirits," they are "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of

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salvation." But the loyalty to God his Father, and the sympathy with God his Father, which they saw in him throughout all his service, they may, in a measure, see also in his brethren. Not only in the fervid apostle whom the zeal of God's house is eating up and the love of souls is urging to an untimely tomb; not only in the martyr whose service is to praise God amid the flames; but in this hewer of wood or drawer of water making conscience of serving God in his lowly calling; in yonder poor, bed-ridden, widowed, childless soul, content that her service should be solitary suffering and waiting for the Lord—the same mind may be found which was in Christ. Angels, as they look on, rejoice to perceive how, even in this sin-burdened earth, God has servants who really serve him. And when the earthly service with all its trials is over, they rejoice to carry them to Abraham's bosom.

V. But it is not in this present state of things that the object on which the heart of God is set is altogether attained. Even for the angels, and still more for the saints, a change for the better is in reserve. There are things in God's majestic plan which the angels desire to look into, and which they cannot so look into as to be satisfied, until they see what the end is. Even they must be taking much on trust, and living by faith, as to not a few particulars in the great volume of providence now unrolling itself before them—the sealed book which the Lion of the tribe of Judah is only gradually opening. Saints on earth, at any rate, are compassed about with many infirmities; exposed to manifold assaults of the devil; and so tempted and wounded in the war they have to wage with evil that they find it no easy matter always to feel that "God's commandments are not grievous." And even saints gone to their rest are waiting for the resurrec-

tion of the body. "The family in heaven and earth that is named of our Lord Jesus Christ"—is broken, divided, tossed and tried; great part of it still journeying through the wilderness; none of it having, at the very best, anything more than a sort of Mount Pisgah view, as yet, of the full blessedness of the land of promise.

But it is otherwise when "the Lord cometh again." A fresh song of praise bursts from the hosts of heaven, as they accompany the "first-begotten," once more coming forth,—the Father "bringing him in,"—into the world, on the final occasion of his re-union with his redeemed. The great reconciliation is complete. The mystery of God is finished—the mystery of his will, which he hath purposed—"that he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth." (Eph. i. 9, 10.) All are gathered together, all are one in Christ. His service of obedience and atonement has effected the full reconciliation; accomplished the eternal purpose; consummated the universal union. And now, what remains? What but this eternal glory and joy,—
"His servants shall serve him?"

The service of God, thus reached and realised, who may venture to describe? Some of its conditions, however, are indicated in this passage (verses 3-5).

1. (Ver. 3.) "There shall be no more curse." Not only are we to be ourselves personally delivered from the curse; but nowhere all around is there to be any trace of its malign influence; and never again is there to be any risk of its return. The personal justification, the removal of the curse, which is all matter of faith now in the hidden life of the soul—and, alas! too often but dimly and doubtfully apprehended—will then be matter of open discovery and proclamation. Our own hearts are assured, and all the universe is advertised, that no curse

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can ever henceforth be our portion. Our bodies as well as our souls are perfectly delivered. And then to us creation's groans are over. No blight of sin is on the soil we tread; no taint of sin is in the air we breathe; no evil element is in the paths we have to tread,—the works we have to do,—the pleasures we have to enjoy,—the company we have to keep. All is holiness and peace. Service may well be different from what is now, when "there shall be no more curse."

2. (Ver. 3.) "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in the city." No anarchy, or lawless liberty, or proud self-government is there. Subordination, discipline, and order prevail. God manifestly reigns. And he reigns in a character that must charm away all jealousy, even in the most sensitive of his subjects. "The Lamb is in the midst of the throne." Subjection to that throne never can be felt to be irksome. Never can any feeling of impatience of such a yoke intrude; nor the faintest shadow of a suspicion of its being grievous; nor the remotest desire to shake it off and be more free. One look at "the throne of God and of the Lamb" must ever suffice to satisfy.

3. (Ver. 4.) "They shall see his face." It is a blessed thing to see God's face even now. The sight of it, by faith, makes duty pleasant, and even trial sweet. Alas! however, that face is often hidden. Dark clouds of unbelief roll in upon the soul. Or there is a frown, a shade, upon my Father's loving countenance. My waywardness and wilfulness have dimmed, as it were, his loving eye with grief. What heart have I then for his work? What courage to fight his battles? What strength to face temptation? What enlargement of heart or opening of lip to show forth his praise, and teach transgressors his ways? How wearisome is the whole business of obeying him and

doing his will felt to be! What a drudgery does it become! what a lifeless and joyless form! "Hear! O Lord, when I cry with my voice; have mercy also upon me and answer me. When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek; hide not thy face far from me, put not thy servant away in anger" (Psalm xxvii. 7-9). What must it be for me, as God's servant, to serve him, when no such cry can ever any more be heard—when I shall see his face always!

4. (Ver. 4.) "And his name shall be in their foreheads." When we stand "with the Lamb on the Mount Zion" (xiv. 1),—with the "hundred, forty and four thousand,"—we are sealed as his servants for preservation from the winds of judgment. We have even now "his Father's name written in our foreheads." It is a hidden name: legible enough to the Lamb, and to the angels executing his pleasure; but not legible to an unbelieving world; and, alas! not always legible to ourselves. In mingling with the multitude who, instead of that name, receive the mark of the beast in their right hand or in their foreheads (chap. xiii. 16),—it is not always easy for us to maintain our integrity as the Lord's servants and not his,—"to keep ourselves unspotted from the world." But in that city, all have the same character; all are impressed with the same seal! From every brow there flashes in glowing brightness the same new name—the name that is above every name. There is no promiscuous fellowship with the ungodly to disturb or deaden pious feeling; to disconcert or embarrass a pious walk. Nor in fellowship with one another, is there any of that hesitancy which too often casts a damp over pious meetings here. There, all alike mutually know and are known. They never can be hinderers,—they never can be other than helpers,—of one another's joy in serving the Lord.

5. (Ver. 5.) "There shall be no night there, and they need

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no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light." All is open, beatific vision. "They that fear the Lord and obey the voice of his servant" may sometimes "walk in darkness" here. It may be darkness that dims, not only their comfortable assurance, but their clear and certain perception of the path of duty. They see no light; or the light they see comes fitfully, in gleams and glimpses; sharing the imperfection of the instruments and channels through which it reaches them. It is midnight with them, and they have only a little flickering candle to shed its unsteady flame into the thick gloom in which they are groping. Even if it is midday with them, and the bright meridian orb is over their head, its scorching rays may smite or blind them; or yonder cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, may in a moment clothe the sky in sackcloth. Oh! to be where there is no night, to make the twinkling taper welcome; nor even any day, dependent for its clearness on the glorious sun! To know God and his will, not circuitously, through means, ordinances, and providences; but directly, by immediate insight into himself and immediate communication from himself. Even here, what the Spirit shows us of the Father and the Son,—though it may not hinder the night being often dreary and the day cloudy,—suffices, if the eye is single, to guide us in the right way. What must it be to have the same Spirit opening our eye evermore to the light which the Lord God himself gives,—in which he dwells,—which is his very nature! No more distraction, no more despondency, when—seeing light in that light—"his servants shall serve him."

6. (Ver. 5.) "They shall reign for ever and ever." It is as reigning with him that they "see light in his light." It is from his point of view, as seated on his throne, that they survey and contemplate all things. They have a common concern with him in the government of the universe, which

in a measure he shares with them. Their reigning with him is partly the effect of their having learned to serve him; otherwise, he could not so far trust them as to admit them to any participation in his authority and rule. Hence the welcome, "Well done good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many." But their promotion for faithful service is chiefly valuable in their eyes because it enables them to render service more faithful still. The position which they occupy raises them above the questionings and heart-burnings, the jealousies and misgivings, that are apt to rankle in the minds of mere subjects. The confidence reposed in them honourably binds them. Because "they shall reign" with him, therefore his "servants shall serve him."

Let us see, then, what sort of service God desires.

"Bring no more vain oblations. Incense is an abomination unto me. The new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; they are a trouble unto me: I am weary to bear them" (Is. i. 13, 14). So the Father speaks from heaven. And so also the Son speaks on earth. "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." "The Father seeketh such to worship him;" he is weary of all other worship. And I am come to tell you so. Nay, I am come to see to it, that what the Father seeks he shall surely find. Yes! though it is to cost me the shedding of my blood, to expiate guilt and win the gift of the Holy Ghost,—that men, reconciled and renewed, may give my Father what he wants—their hearts. Let all formalists—all whose religion, such as it is, and it is not much, is a mere weariness of the flesh; a painful perfunctory work of necessity; a routine which they dare not dispense with but cannot take delight in—

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hear this solemn warning. His servants,—the only servants he cares to have,—are such as make his service a reality. “His servants shall serve him.”

2. And what is the first and indispensable condition of our thus serving him? Is it not to shake ourselves free from the legal covenant which gendereth to bondage, and close with the covenant of free grace and perfect peace? Otherwise, what Joshua said to the people when they so stoutly declared “We will serve the Lord, for he is our God,” may be said to us;—“Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions, nor your sins” (xxiv. 19). He cannot accept of any service rendered in self-righteousness. He cannot overlook the radical vice of a heart not right with him. We must renounce our own service, as placing us on a right footing with God, and accept as our substitute him whom the Father commends to us as “his Servant;”—laying hold on “the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life” (Luke i. 73-75).

3. That we may “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,” we must beware, above all things, of a servile spirit; the spirit that is ever grudging what is asked, and stretching to the utmost any license supposed to be allowed; the spirit that tries to steer very close along the shore by the exact letter of the law; the spirit that is for drawing the line very sharply between the lawful and the unlawful—between what may perhaps be tolerated and what is expressly forbidden. It is the spirit of bondage that is always prompting the questions,—must I? may I? may I not? The “Spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father,” speaks otherwise;—“O Lord, truly I

am thy servant. I am thy servant and the son of thine handmaid. Thou hast loosed my bonds" (Psalm cxvi. 16).

4. The same Spirit of adoption enables us also to enter, with enlarged hearts, with clear intelligence and full sympathy, into the vast and comprehensive plan of God, for "gathering together into one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are in earth." Thus we keep out the spirit of bondage. The imagination and the heart are filled with sublime views of God's magnificent purpose in his Son Jesus Christ our Lord ;—so as to be ever anticipating that bright day when we shall join the assembled throng, whose highest glory is,—that "reigning with God," they, as "his servants, serve him."

Satan's proud defiance is, "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." Alas, it is as vain as it is proud! In the place of torment, God, in his terrible justice, reigns alone. Satan, and his angels, and his victims, serve in penal chains and penal fire for ever. But the saints who have "overcome are set down with Christ on his throne, even as he overcame and is set down with the Father on his throne." All in the Father's confidence, all in the Father's interest, all sharing the glory of the Father's reign,—they "are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple. And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them" (Rev. vii. 15).

II.

The Great Gospel Convocation.

“Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”—Heb. xii. 22-24.

THE warning (25), “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh,” refers to the judgment of God on the generation of Israel which he brought out of Egypt. That indeed is the warning which all through this epistle is held up before the eyes of the believing Hebrews. Let them beware of the sin of their forefathers. In their case, it must be a sin peculiarly aggravated, in proportion as their privilege is peculiarly high. Their forefathers stood before God at Sinai, and heard him speak, as it were, “on earth” (25), “his voice then shook the earth” (26). But they themselves have heard him, as it were, “from heaven” (25), his voice “shaking not the earth only but also heaven” (26), effecting a far more complete renovation, introducing not a temporary but a permanent economy. It is in this connection that a scene is here described having the same relation to the new economy that the Sinai scene had to the old. “Ye are come” to this, as your fathers came

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to that ; and you are to realise your position and its responsibility accordingly.*

Of the three verses descriptive of the scene (22-24), the first gives the place of meeting and the audience ; the second, the actual convocation, or the parties convened ; and the third, the business on hand, and the manner of its transaction.

The first verse, giving the place of meeting and the audience,—“ But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,”—needs little remark. The place of meeting is “ mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.” It is evidently a place that is meant, not a society or church, as when it is said, “ Praise the Lord O Jerusalem ; praise thy God O Sion.” And it is evidently no earthly place. The earthly Jerusalem was doomed ; Sion was to be a desolation. It is a heavenly locality, ideal to us now, but yet real, and soon to be realised. The audience or spectators are the angels. They were witnesses from above of the scene at Sinai (Deut. xxxiii. 2 ; Acts vii. 35 ; Gal. iii. 19 ; Heb. ii. 2). They are also witnesses of this scene. They are not mere witnesses ; they are deeply interested par-

* Thus the contrast runs:—“ Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words ; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more : (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart : And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake :) But ye are come unto Mount Sion,” &c.

ties. But it is as witnesses or onlookers that they are here brought before us.

In this place and in this presence a meeting of a solemn, and, as it would seem, judicial character, is convened,—“To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.” There is in the centre the President, and on either side a company awaiting his award.

The president is “God, the judge of all.” Some would read, “the Judge, the God of all.” They prefer such a rendering, because it seems to divest the scene of its terror. The Judge is presiding; but he is to all who are before him “their God.” I think this view proceeds upon a very inadequate, if not erroneous theory of the Spirit’s design,—which is not really to abate fear, but to quicken it. God is here enthroned; “the Judge of all;” of all now before him; their lawgiver, ruler, lord, and king. It is in that character that he presides over the assembly. It is for legislative and governmental purposes that he sits upon the throne.*

Two separate and distinct bodies are marshalled on opposite sides of the throne.

I. On one side, there are “the first-born, which are written in heaven.” They are the first-born; distinguished from among men, as the first-born among the Israelites were from among their fellows; or rather as Israel was from all the world (Ex. iv. 22). They are in possession of the birthright. They are partakers with Christ in all the privileges of that right of primogeniture which pro-

* I believe the best scholars hold the ordinary rendering to be the natural and legitimate construction of the clause. The other is forced and ungrammatical. See Alford *in loco*.

perly and essentially belongs to him alone. He is "God's Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things" (Heb. i. 2). But in his inheritance he is not to be alone, as he is not to be alone in what is the ground of it—namely, his filial relation to the Father. It is the Father's purpose that the Son shall have partners in that relation, and in its fruit. Believers are said to be "predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son," for this express end, "that he may be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29).

These then are "the first-born." And, as the first-born, they are "written in heaven." The peculiar privileges belonging to the first-born in Israel, as well as the peculiar right of property which the Lord claimed in them, made it necessary that an accurate register of them should be kept (Numbers iii. 40). And so also there is a complete register kept of the first-born in Christ. They are written or enrolled in heaven. They are not lost sight of while they are exposed to earth's trials. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." He "callesh his own sheep by name;" and he has their names recorded in heaven. This is their joy; "In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke x. 20). This is their security also against the devouring enemy on earth; "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship" the beast, "whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8). And it is their warrant and passport of admission at last into the New Jerusalem; "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. xxi. 27).

Such is the company here convened, at the foot of the heavenly Sion, and in the presence of the holy

angels, on one side of the President, who is God the Judge of all.

They are convened as a company at once comprehensive and select;—comprehensive, for it is a “general assembly” (*συνήλυσαι*); select, for it is a church (*ἐκκλησία*). Both of these expressions are here used in their primary meaning. They denote, not a permanent association, but a particular gathering; a meeting called for a purpose, and on an occasion. In this view, the one expression—“general assembly”—brings out the wide and universal character of the meeting; it is the assembling together of the entire body referred to. The other expression—“church”—implies selection. The meeting is exclusive as well as comprehensive. It is not a promiscuous or miscellaneous crowd. It is a meeting of the whole body, but of none else. It embraces all “the first-born who are written in heaven,” but it shuts out others. All friends are here; but only friends. The whole family is admitted; but strangers must withdraw.

II. On the other side of the presiding Judge stands another company, designated as “the spirits of just men made perfect.” Who are they? Not, as I apprehend, the pious dead generally, but a particular class of the departed people of God. I take them to be the collective body of the Old Testament saints, as I take “the first-born which are written in heaven” to be the entire household of New Testament believers. And I ground this opinion on two expressions which occur in the previous part of the passage, beginning at the end of the tenth chapter, of which the last verses of this twelfth chapter are the close.

The first is the intimation at the outset, “The just shall live by faith” (x. 38). Starting from that great principle, the writer goes on to define the faith by which the just live, and to give historical instances in illustration. So he

ushers in his noble catalogue, in the eleventh chapter, of the grand old worthies of the olden time. For that eleventh chapter, which should not be separated from the last two verses of the tenth, is simply an appeal to the example of the just who lived by faith before gospel times ; and virtually, under chosen specimens, it includes them all.

Now let the summing up of the glorious list be noted, "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise : God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (xi. 39, 40). Plainly the writer points to some drawback or disadvantage connected with their Old Testament state ; and just as plainly he points to its complete removal through their becoming in some way partakers of some New Testament privilege. "They without us," or apart from us, were "not made perfect." This may mean merely in general that,—as "our eyes see and our ears hear what many prophets and righteous men of old desired to see and to hear but were not permitted,"—so they also now see and hear it, and rejoice therefore with us in the actual accomplishment of the great redemption, which was only imperfectly revealed to them in prophecy, type, and figure. I am persuaded, however, that the meaning is more pointed and precise. Especially taking into account the remarkable phraseology of the verse now under consideration,—distinguishing between "the first-born written in heaven" and "the spirits of just men made perfect,"—I conceive the imperfection attaching to the condition of Old Testament saints to have been just this, that till Christ came, they were not and could not be put in possession of the full blessedness which the sonship and heirship of "the first-born written in heaven" imply.

It is to me a strong confirmation of this view, that it harmonises so thoroughly with the representation given in the Epistle to the Galatians (iv. 1-7) of the state of pupilage in which Old Testament believers were, as contrasted with the higher and freer filial standing of Christians. The difference is made to turn mainly on the mission and manifestation of the Son, as the Son, and on the coming of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of the Son. In virtue of the Son being "made of a woman, made under the law," "the redemption from the curse of the law," which the just who lived by faith of old saw and embraced afar off, is now complete. And in virtue of its having been "his Son" whom "God sent forth when the fulness of the time was come," and of its being "the Spirit of his Son" whom he has been "sending forth into our hearts" since, we "receive the adoption of Sons," and the Spirit in us "cries Abba, Father." Is not this that "better thing which God hath prepared for us, that they without us should not be made perfect?" And is not the description—"the spirits of just men made perfect"—simply an intimation that they have come to share with us in that better thing now?

Thus, then, it appears that the perfection of the state of believers under the gospel, as contrasted with the imperfection of the state of believers under the law, consists in their adoption as the sons of God, their participation with Christ in his filial relation to the Father, being more fully developed and realised; more distinctly indicated on the part of God, and more thoroughly apprehended, felt, and acted out by themselves. The difference, in fact, turns upon the sense and recognition of the sonship and the birthright. New Testament believers are "the first-born written in heaven," in all the extent and fulness of significance that can belong to these expressions. It is as possessing fully this privilege that they are convened in this

great assize. And of this very privilege their predecessors, the Old Testament saints, are now partakers. Whatever imperfection, in respect of the development and realisation of their sonship, might mark their spiritual state on earth, before the actual manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh, is all now at an end. The wall of partition is broken down. And when the souls of these righteous ones who lived by faith are summoned to attend the wondrous meeting at which all the first-born are assembled before their God and Judge, it is not now any inferior or imperfect position that they occupy. They come forth as "the spirits of just men made perfect." They are "complete in Christ."

In so august an audience, in such near contact with God the judge of all, the assembled company need and welcome a Mediator and his mediation;—"And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

First, there is a Mediator. There was a Mediator at Sinai: Moses; who said,—“so terrible was the sight,”—“I exceedingly fear and quake.” There is a mediator here: one who, “in the days of his flesh,” cried, “Now is my soul troubled,”—“Now is my soul sorrowful even unto death.” The terror of Sinai fell chiefly on Moses, as the mediator then between Israel and Israel’s God and Judge. A terror still more overwhelming falls upon Jesus, the mediator now, not on Sinai but on Zion, between those to whom he is “the first-born among many brethren,” and that “God, the judge of all, before whom they stand.” And through this greater terror, he is the mediator of a new and better covenant. From Sinai, through the mediation of Moses, the law was given; uncompromising in its claims and unrelenting in its penalties. From Zion, through the mediation of Jesus, the law is given; satisfied in its highest

claims, and exhausted in its sternest penalties, by his own work of love. From Sinai, at the hands of Moses, the law is given by a thundering voice, as a rule of life authoritatively enforced from without. From Zion, at the hands of Jesus, the law is given also by the power of the living Spirit, as a principle of life energetically working within.

Secondly, there is mediation. It is the sprinkling of blood, or "the blood of sprinkling." And of that blood it is said that "it speaketh;" that it speaketh good things; that it "speaketh better things than that of Abel," or than Abel.

Is there here any reference to what the Lord says in emphatic reply to Cain's impious defiance, "Am I my brother's keeper?"—"The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Genesis iv. 10)? That cry is assumed to be a cry for vengeance, like the cry of the souls under the altar, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Is it with this cry for vengeance, supposed to be uttered by Abel's blood, that Christ's peace-speaking "blood of sprinkling" is contrasted?

I think not. For one thing, I would ask, is it quite clear that God on that occasion speaks of Abel's blood as crying for vengeance? That is not expressly said, nor is it at all necessarily implied. All that is meant may be, and probably is, not that it is a cry for vengeance against Cain's life, but that it is a cry of witness against his lie. God makes inquisition for blood. He asks Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And the audacious falsehood of Cain's reply, "I know not,"—is refuted by the "poor dumb voice" of his brother's "wounds" speaking for him. Besides, even if we take the cry of Abel's blood to be a cry for vengeance, the introduction of it on the occasion of this great convention is unseasonable. To say of the atoning blood of

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Christ, that it speaketh better things than blood that cries for vengeance, is to pay it a poor compliment at the best.

It is far more to the purpose, as it seems to me, to understand the writer as referring,—either to the blood which Abel shed, when “by faith he offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain” (xi. 4),—or to the testimony which Abel bears concerning the efficacy of that sacrifice which by faith he offered. This last is probably the real meaning. It is in accordance with the exact words of the passage: “the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than Abel.” And it fits in, by a natural allusion, to what has previously been said concerning Abel (xi. 4), that, with special reference to the sacrifice which by faith he offered, “he being dead, yet speaketh.”

Abel is the first of the Old Testament worthies celebrated in the muster-roll of the eleventh chapter, and introduced into the scene now before us as “the spirits of just men made perfect.” He leads the van of that noble army of martyrs—“the cloud of witnesses compassing us about.” And he does so, because he is the first on record to seal his faith in the necessity and efficacy of an atoning sacrifice for sin. He acted on that faith when he offered as his sacrifice, not “the first fruits of the ground” as a mere expression of gratitude, but “the firstlings” of his flock as a propitiation for guilt. He suffered for that faith when he fell under his brother’s envious hand. He died a martyr to the great truth, that “without shedding of blood there is no remission” (ix. 22); and of this precise truth, “he being dead yet speaketh.”

But, after all, how inadequately can he speak of it! How vague and indistinct is any voice his offering or his martyrdom can utter, in comparison with that “blood of sprinkling” which “speaks” now! Abel’s testimony then,

embodied in the act he performed and confirmed by the death he died, speaks of guilt expiated and the guilty soul cleansed, only in a figure, through the slaying of a lamb, a mere senseless animal, that could never be a worthy substitute for the criminal at God's bar; "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." But the blood of sprinkling now, the precious "blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God which cleanseth from all sin," speaks better things. It speaks not of redemption typically represented, but of redemption actually accomplished—not of a figurative, but of a real atonement—not of "sanctifying" or cleansing "to the purifying of the flesh," but of the "purging of the conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. ix. 13, 14).

Thus understood, the introduction of this "blood of sprinkling, speaking better things than Abel," is entirely to the purpose of the matter here on hand, the ratifying of a great covenant of righteousness and peace. It is suitable and seasonable as regards the comparison or contrast between Sinai and Zion. In the scene at Sinai there was indeed blood of sprinkling; for only by the use of blood could the people be sanctified according to the Lord's command. (Exod. xix. 10, 14). The blood of sprinkling, however, then employed could speak only as Abel speaks. It was of the same nature with Abel's sacrifice, and could speak no better things. But the blood of sprinkling that is available here, at the foot and within the precincts of Mount Zion—the blood that is to fit and qualify for an approach, not to a tangible burning mountain, but to a glorious spiritual city—that blood speaks assuredly better things by far. It speaks of a sufficient ransom for condemned and depraved men found and provided by the living God himself. It speaks of the ratification of a better covenant, founded upon better promises. It speaks of the removal of the

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whole burden of guilt from the conscience, and the whole pollution of sin from the heart. And it so speaks these better things as to unite in one the two companies on the right and on the left of God, their common judge,—the first-born registered in heaven and the spirits of just men made perfect. All now are one, invested with the same sonship, sprinkled with the same blood.

Now, having examined the several particulars of the scene, let us combine them in one whole. Let us take a general view of the picture. The veil of sense is withdrawn, and what does the eye of faith see?

Not "the mount that might be touched," but one that can be only spiritually discerned—on which no hand can as yet be laid, and no foot may tread. It is Mount Zion. But it is Mount Zion more "beautiful for situation" than ever Israelite's fond gaze beheld her—"the joy," not "of the whole earth" merely, but of the whole heaven—"the city of the great King" (Psalm xlviii. 2). For the mountain is not like Sinai, lifting its dark and lonely head over the dreary wilderness. The heavenly Jerusalem crowns its summit and sweeps along its skirts. And instead of burning fire she has "the glory of God. And her light is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (Rev. xxi. 11).

At the base of this glorious mount,—not yet entering the heavenly city but assembled near it,—what a group meets our view! On one side, there is the whole vast multitude of those who, under the dispensation of the gospel, receive the adoption of sons. They are brought together in holy convocation to meet their God—to meet him as their Lawgiver, King, and Judge. On the other side we see,—associated with them in fullest sympathy and on a footing of entire equality,—the glorious company

of those who walked by faith under an imperfect dispensation, but to whose estate imperfection attaches now no more. Myriads of angels are assembled as deeply interested spectators, and something more,—occupying the surrounding heights, and intently watching the procedure.

The real transaction, however, is between the people met below the Mount beside the City, and the Being before whom they stand. The transaction is through a mediator ; who on the one hand has a covenant to promulgate on the part of God, and on the other hand has blood to sprinkle on the people. He comes from God to the people with tables in his grasp on which are inscribed the exact terms of the law. But it is the law satisfied, magnified, and honoured, by his own infinitely meritorious righteousness ; the law, moreover, now to be transferred, in that new form of it, into the sinner's heart, and made part and parcel of his very nature as renewed by the Holy Ghost. Thus the Mediator comes from God to the people, proposing to them, not a legal covenant which must condemn, but a gracious covenant which saves. And then, to bring the people near to God, he has blood to sprinkle on them—atonement blood. For this end “he has received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost.” And this sprinkling of such blood by such an agency,—this application of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit,—speaks of what no other service or sacrifice could promise. It speaks of peace with God, peace of conscience, “peace in believing and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

This, then, is the scene. Clearly enough it is for the present ideal and spiritual. It is to be apprehended by faith. But it concerns us deeply to apprehend the scene as real. It must be matter of personal experience with us ;

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spiritual, but not the less on that account real. For it is said, "Ye are come to it."

There are three applications of which, as it seems to me, these words admit.

1. The first is that which is more immediately suggested by the language "Ye have come." Your coming to Mount Zion bears the same relation to your exodus, on the one hand, and your march through the wilderness to Canaan, on the other hand, that the coming of the Israelites to Sinai did to theirs. The transaction at Sinai, let it be remembered, is the intermediate link between the exodus and Canaan. Instantly on their being brought out of Egypt, God summoned the Israelites to meet him at Sinai. He had a solemn business to transact with them. Their first step out of Egypt was to the foot of the Mount. God brought his ransomed people before him that he might declare to them his covenant. It was a gracious covenant, if they had been able so to understand it. It was ordained in the hands of a mediator—Moses. And it was not without blood of sprinkling for the sins of the people; blood typical, indeed, merely of the real atonement for sin, but yet significant and satisfying so far to all spiritually awakened souls. A transaction of this sort was a fitting sequel to the exodus. And it was also a fitting preliminary to the command, "Go up and possess the land." The redeemed stood before their redeeming God as their law-giver, deliverer, king, and judge,—to know the terms on which they were to be with him. It was meet that there should be this understanding before they set out on their brief march, for it should have been brief, to Canaan.

Now, if the New Testament Church were to be saved by some such wholesale deliverance as this, its members might be led out thus to meet their God;—to be dealt with collectively by him and to receive his instructions. That,

however, is not the Gospel method. Individually, by a separate process in each mind, a distinct spiritual change in every soul, God effects the rescue of his people. There cannot, therefore, be any general gathering together, in a literal sense, such as there was at Sinai.

But practically, in a real though spiritual sense, every converted soul has to pass through an analogous spiritual crisis. It is a momentous crisis, as regards both the exodus and the pilgrimage; the escape he has made and the way he has to go. It is, in fact, the settlement, once for all, of the terms upon which he is henceforth to be with his God, as his Sovereign Lord. It is his being confronted and brought face to face with God, in a new state and character, as redeemed by his grace and ready for his work.

Let the believer place himself in this position on his first closing with Christ. Let him know and feel what it means. Have you been rescued from the city of destruction? Then, your first step is to come to this Mount Zion. You "are come" to it. There is the holy hill of God, the city of the Lord, the heavenly Jerusalem. And there are angels in countless throng, rejoicing over one sinner that repenteth, ready to minister to the heirs of salvation. And the holy men of old, "of whom the world was not worthy." And all the faithful in Christ Jesus, from the dying thief, and the martyr Stephen, down to the last saint that is to be translated to glory. That is an august enough assemblage, fitted to strike you down to the ground with deepest awe. But that is not all. For, looking up, what do you see? Or rather, whom? The God with whom you have to do. Yes! it is God the judge of all whom you meet, eye to eye, face to face. Do you tremble—you, a man of unclean lips, seeing the King, the Lord of Hosts? Do you fall down as one dead? Let

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the Mediator minister to you the promises of the covenant of grace. Let him sprinkle you afresh with atoning blood. You stand erect among the first-born.

But hark! a voice! Before you leave the presence, God speaks these words: "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; thou shalt have none other gods before me." Thus, "out of Zion goes forth the law." And other words he speaks, words of greater love and of more quickening power. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews viii. 10, 12).

Speak on, Lord, will you not now say, for thy servant heareth. Let him speak to you his whole mind. And see that you refuse not him that speaketh. Stand in awe, O believer, and sin not. Let God the judge of all, to whom in circumstances so solemn you are brought so very near, deal with you and instruct you in all the way you have to go. Let him deal with you thoroughly according to all his good pleasure. Let there be here, and now, in this dread audience, an entire adjustment of his claims and your obligations. And leave not the holy mountain until, a thorough understanding being established between you and the living God, the righteous judge, you are ready for going up to take possession of the inheritance in face of all enemies, with the light of his countenance shining upon you, and his love shed abroad in your hearts through the Holy Ghost being given unto you.

2. Another application of this phrase, "ye are come"

may be allowed. You are come to this scene, and here you remain. This is your rest. You are ever coming to it. You draw near ; you live near.

To what ? and to whom ? You are near the holy Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem ; your conversation is in heaven. You are near to holy angels and perfected saints. I do not speak of conscious fellowship between them and you. No actual intercourse may be enjoyed with them as yet. But you are near ; and faith ever realises the nearness. You "are come to them." There they stand ; angels receiving charge over you to keep you ; and the saints of old, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,—all the martyrs and all the prophets testifying to you how, even in a state far less perfect than yours, they found it no vain thing to serve the Lord, and never once regretted that they had walked as strangers and pilgrims on the earth. And you are near to God ; to "God the judge of all ;" a reconciled God ; but your ruler still, your king and Lord ;—all the more entitled to rule over you and judge you, because he has made you his "firstborn," and as such, partakers of the very love he bears to his own Son, and the very inheritance of all things to which he has appointed him. And you are near to Christ Jesus, ever discharging as Mediator his double office, ministering to you the new covenant, and sprinkling you with atoning blood.

Is this indeed our spiritual standing ? Is this really our spiritual life ? Then, what reason is there for fear and trembling ; for surely the place where we stand is holy, and we are called to be holy as He before whom we stand is holy. Is the Holy Ghost bringing us and keeping us ever near to a scene like this ? Do we see it, though it be invisible ? Do we feel it, though it be intangible ? Then let us not refuse "him that speaketh." Let us not be of them that draw back unto perdition. It is in solemn

circumstances that God is ever speaking to us when he brings us in such a way so near to himself. "If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven" (verse 25).

3. There is still one other application of the scene which is surely not inadmissible. It is all matter of faith with us now. But is it not one day to become matter of sense? It is spiritually apprehended now. Is it not to be literally and actually realised at last? "I John saw the holy city new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Revelation xxi. 2, 3). Is not this the actual accomplishment of what is represented here in figure?

The shaking of the earth at Sinai indicated the introduction of a new economy. The shaking, not of the earth only, but also of the heaven, which the apostle connects with the scene on Zion, indicated a revolution more complete. All temporal and typical ordinances were superseded. Things capable of being shaken passed away. Room was made for the bringing in of "things that remain,"—the kingdom that cannot be moved" (verses 27, 28). This kingdom "we now receive." But we receive it only spiritually and by faith. Our capital, our fellow-subjects, our king, are all unseen. All, however, are to be visible at last. The God of glory appears. Angels, the church of the first-born, the worthies of the olden time—all severally indebted to Christ, as their Saviour, cease not to celebrate his praise day and night. Let us hopefully anticipate this blessed gathering. Let us believingly taste, even

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now, its blessedness, as well as its solemnity. Receiving now by "faith," as we are to receive actually at last, the "kingdom which cannot be moved," "let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For even our God is a consuming fire" (verses 28, 29).

III.

The Son calling his People Brethren.

“For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.”—
Heb. ii 11-13.

THERE is probably an allusion in this passage to the condition which the Jewish law annexed to the right of redemption. The redeemer must be a kinsman of the party whose person or whose property was to be redeemed (Lev. xxv. 25, 48, 49). This condition was doubtless designed to guard against fraud, and to secure that the interference with the ordinary course of law which the right of redemption implied was really, in good faith, an act of grace. When, therefore, the Son undertakes the office of redeemer on our behalf, he must be in a position to claim kindred with us. That is not his original position. As the Son, he is the Father's “fellow;” not ours. But he becomes our fellow, our kinsman. And he does so even though it involves his taking our place under the law which we have broken; answering for us in the judgment; sanctifying or cleansing us by his blood. “For which cause,” in respect of his so thoroughly identifying himself with us, and making common cause with us, “he is not ashamed to call us brethren.” It is a strong expression.

He is not ashamed, because his calling us brethren is more than a bare verbal acknowledgment or formal salutation : it involves the conferring of real and substantial brotherly benefits.*

It is to confirm this view that the three texts from the Old Testament are here introduced. It is to show not only that the Messiah does call his people brethren, but that there is no reason why he should be ashamed to do so. It is to prove,—not only generally that this relation of brotherhood between Christ and his people is asserted in Scripture,—but in particular that it is asserted in such a way as to make it not nominal merely, but substantial and real.

I. The first passage quoted here (verse 12), "I will declare thy name unto my brethren : in the midst of the church will I praise thee,"—is from the twenty-second Psalm (verse 22).

That psalm is strictly Messianic. It is literally fulfilled in the sufferings of Christ and the glory which followed. No doubt the inspired author uttered his own sentiments when he composed the psalm. The spiritual man also, using the psalm now, does the same. The oneness with Christ which the Spirit works, through faith, implies as much. But it is Christ himself ; not of course Christ standing alone and apart from his Church ; but Christ

* The same thought is suggested elsewhere in this Epistle. "But now they"—the patriarchs—"desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city" (xi. 16). The meaning evidently is, that God would have been ashamed,—he would have counted it unworthy of himself,—to assume or accept, with reference to his people, a merely nominal and empty title, that did not secure to them a substantial benefit. The meaning is the same here.

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representing his people, and taking them all to be his body;—it is he who speaks; first in his agony (verses 1-21), and then in his triumph (verses 22-31).

The beginning of his triumph is the verse here cited. The first fruit of his victory is, that it places him in the best and most favourable position for declaring his Father's name unto his brethren, so that in the midst of the church or congregation composed of them he may praise the Father. This is no new purpose on his part. He has been all along, in all his earthly ministry, keeping it in view. So he appeals to his Father before his death,—“I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it” (John xvii. 26). But at this crisis, after his death, when he is passing from his finished work to its reward,—he can say, as he could not fully say before, “I will declare thy name unto my brethren.”

Yes! “Unto my brethren!” The emphasis lies there. And accordingly, as a simple historical fact, it is worthy of notice that it is after his resurrection that Jesus for the first time uses this expression concerning his disciples,—“my brethren.”* To the women the risen Saviour says,

* I do not consider the Lord's reply to those who told him of his mother and his brethren standing outside of the crowd, desiring to speak with him, as at all a parallel or equivalent instance;—“Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? . . . Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Matt. xii. 48-50). Evidently the Lord means nothing more than that the moral and spiritual tie which binds him to all his Father's obedient subjects, is stronger and more sacred than any mere family bond, however close and tender. There is nothing special in the expression “my brethren” or “my brother,”—any more than there is in the expressions “my sister” or “my mother.”

“Go, tell my brethren.” To Mary he says, “Go to my brethren and say.” How is this to be explained?

In the first place, Jesus now enters upon that state in which he can fully declare the Father's name. He can now unfold the character of God his Father in a light in which it could never before be adequately seen; and he can thus raise in the church a new song of praise. Never before, never otherwise, could the name of God—his nature, his character, his mind and heart, as the Righteous Father—be so declared as the Son is now in a position to declare it. He can declare it fully and effectually. He can declare it fully. He can declare it as it shines forth, in all its light and love, in himself personally, and in his work now finished and accepted. He can declare it effectually. He has received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost to teach his people all things. Hence the propriety of the profession coming from his lips now. Passing from his cross to his crown, the Lord is now most thoroughly able, both by revelation to his disciples and by inspiration in them, to declare the Father's name, and lead among them the Father's praise. By revelation to them;—for he has his own wondrous person, as the God-man, and his own gracious work, as the mediator, the ransom, the bleeding victim, dying in their stead, and owned in his resurrection as not having died in vain;—he has himself, in short, and his cross, to be the means or medium for declaring the name of the righteous Father. By inspiration also in them; for, ascending up on high and receiving gifts for them, he gives the Holy Ghost, by whom they are taught to know the name of the righteous Father, as the Son declares it, and to praise him as the Son praises him.

But, secondly, this is not all. There is a still closer connection to be traced between the Lord's calling his

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people his brethren and his declaring to them the Father's name. It is not simply said,—they are my brethren, because I declare unto them thy name; but I declare thy name unto them as my brethren. They are my brethren when I declare unto them thy name. It is as to my brethren that I declare unto them thy name. Their becoming my brethren is the condition of my declaring unto them thy name, and the means of my doing so. Not otherwise could I do so. For the discoveries which I have to make to them concerning thee, O righteous Father, are such as I could not make to any but my brethren. They must occupy the same position that I occupy, and be one with me, as my brethren, in my relation to thee and my acquaintance with thee. They must see thee from the same point of view from which I see thee. They must come to know thee by the very same sort of experience of thy love by which I know thee. I must have them to be my brethren, if I am to declare unto them thy name.

For this name of God the righteous Father,—this essential nature of his, as the righteous Father,—the holy love that is in his heart, as the righteous Father,—never can be known at second hand. Even the Son cannot make us know it, except by making us one with himself—one with him in his personal, experimental, loving knowledge of the Father, in whose bosom he dwells. He says this, I think, very clearly on three different occasions.

1. (John i. 18), "No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." But how has he declared him? Not merely through his "dwelling among us, full of grace and truth" (14); but through our "receiving of his fulness, even grace for grace" (16); grace answering and corresponding to his grace; the very grace of which he is full, as "the only begotten Son dwelling in the bosom of the

Father." It is as dwelling himself in the bosom of the Father that he sees the Father ; so sees him as to be able to declare him to us. And it is by making us partakers of his own grace,—by causing us to dwell, as he himself dwells, in the bosom of the Father,—by embracing us in his own filial oneness with the Father and filial fellowship with the Father,—it is thus that he declares to us the Father.

2. (Mat. xi. 27), "No man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." And to whom is it the Son's pleasure to reveal the Father? To whom but to "the babes" to whom the Father himself reveals "the things which he has hid from the wise and prudent?" And these babes! Are they not the new-born babes, the little children, who alone can see the kingdom of God? They are those whom, as born again,—born like himself of the Spirit,—Jesus may call his brethren. As such, they are placed by him in the very same position of advantage for knowing the Father which properly belongs to himself alone. None can know the Father but the Son, and those to whom, by making them his brethren in his sonship, the Son reveals the Father.

3. (John xvii. 25, 26), "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee." Sad, but not strange. How should the world, lying in the wicked one and estranged from the Father, know him, so as to enter into his mind and heart, understand his real character, and do him justice in judging of his ways. Is there no one then to whom the Father can look? none to know, to understand, to sympathise with him? "I have known thee," says the Son of his love. And not only have I known thee. There are others who have "known that thou hast sent me." To them "I have declared thy name," and will yet more fully "declare it." "The love wherewith thou hast loved me," and whereby I have known thee, shall "be in them, and I in them."

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Thus the Son undertakes to declare the Father's name to those whom in virtue of his incarnation, his obedience, his sufferings, his death, and his resurrection,—all on their behalf,—he is not ashamed to call his brethren.

And it is "in the midst of the church or congregation" composed of them, that he now praises the Father. "I will praise thee," he says to the Father. But not alone and apart will I praise thee ; as if I only, rightly knowing thee, could worthily praise thee. I have now got a church or congregation of brethren with whom I can associate myself, and in the midst of whom I can praise thee.

The praise is on account of prayer answered and signal deliverance experienced. "I will praise thee," I who but yesterday "made supplication, with strong crying and tears." The sharp cry of agony is changed into the triumphant language of praise ; praise, however, not as for myself alone. "In the midst of the congregation I will praise thee." For these, the congregation of my brethren, are interested in the deliverance on account of which I have to praise thee ;—in what way, and with what depth and intensity, they will begin to understand and feel when I fully "declare unto them thy name." But for that they would be incapable of any sympathy with me; either in my song of praise, or in the terrible experience that preceded and evoked it ; and I must go apart and be alone in my joy, as much as I once was in my grief. In the garden they all slept ;—on the cross, they all forsook me and fled. They could not go with me into my sufferings ; they could not enter into the meaning of my shame and sorrow. To call them, in these circumstances, brethren,—to expect them as brethren to sympathise with me,—would scarcely have been reasonable or fair. I might have been ashamed then to call them brethren. And in point of fact, I had to make allowance for them, as for a feeble flock, in whom the spirit

was willing but the flesh weak ; the scattered sheep of a smitten shepherd ; to be pitied rather than to be blamed. But it is not so now. I have declared and will more fully declare unto them thy name. I give them such a discovery of thy character, such an insight into thy heart, O righteous Father, as casts a flood of light on all that I have had to do and to suffer on the earth. The evil of earth's sin—the awful justice of heaven—the dread reality of an atoning sacrifice—the shedding of blood for the expiation of guilt—the substitution of the holy one in the room of the guilty, and the laying of their iniquities upon him ;—all this they can now enter into and sympathise with, whatever might be their inability before. And therefore, also, in the joy and triumph which follow upon the anguish ended and the victory achieved, they can now with heart and soul participate. I need not now be solitary in the utterance of my thankful acknowledgments, O righteous Father. I have brethren who now at last can go along with me and be one with me, first in my agony and then in my triumph ; who know “the power of my resurrection” because they know “the fellowship of my sufferings.” There is a congregation now gathered around me ; the congregation of those to whom as my brethren I declare thy name. In the midst of that congregation, and carrying their full sympathy along with me, I now, O righteous Father, will praise thee.

Surely, on such terms, he need not be ashamed to call them brethren.

II. The propriety of the second reason why Christ is not ashamed to call his disciples brethren, is not at first sight very apparent. The saying quoted in the first clause of verse 13, “I will put my trust in him,” may be found in more than one Messianic passage, and I am not disposed to fix very dogmatically on any one. I am inclined to regard it as a sort of general reference ;—though I do

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not at all object to its being held to be a version of that word of Isaiah, in the passage to which the next quotation refers, "I will wait upon the Lord" (viii. 17). That certainly is equivalent to "I will put my trust in him."

But the more material question is; how does our Lord's use of either of these forms of speech, or of any similar language, prove that he is not, and need not be, ashamed to call his disciples brethren?

Plainly such language as this—"I will wait upon the Lord,"—or "I will put my trust in him,"—is not, and cannot be, the expression of any sentiment or feeling proper to the original and everlasting relation subsisting between the Father and the Son. Never, at any time, could the coequal and coeternal Son, with reference to his own divine nature, as one of the Persons in the ever-blessed Trinity, thus speak of the Father. That he should be found in a position to use such language is an instance of wonderful condescension. And that he should use it in a position of oneness with us,—as regards our state of dependence upon God and the necessity of our continually exercising faith or trust in God,—is indeed a proof of his conferring upon us so great and substantial a benefit as may well make him not ashamed to call us brethren.

"I will put my trust in him." Is not this the motto and grand heading of the entire human life of the Saviour? Is not this the spirit and embodiment of his whole conduct here below? He did not live by the exercise of his own prerogative or power, but as other men, by bread, or whatever God might be pleased to ordain. His miracles were not done to support or relieve himself. As to all that was personal to himself,—what he was to eat and drink—where-withal he was to be clothed—where he was to lay his head;—as to all his personal experience, and especially as

to all he had to suffer from first to last ;—he had the very same occasion for the exercise of trust or faith that we have amid the anxieties and perplexities of our utmost helplessness and want. And was not this faith on his part sufficiently put to the test? Was not the extent to which he could go in saying,—“I will put my trust in him,”—thoroughly tried and proved? And is he not therefore well entitled to call us his brethren, and to ask us as his brethren to learn of him? Can we ever be in circumstances in which it can be more hard for us to say, I will put my trust in God, than it was for him, in the wilderness, in the garden, on the cross?

And let us remember that the very fact of his having power to deliver himself must be regarded as enhancing the severity of such trial of his faith, and so enabling him all the more to sympathise with us in the trial of our faith. The consciousness of his being able, by a mere word, to extricate himself out of all his troubles, must be taken into account as an element of aggravation, when we see him willing to face them all—naked as we are—dependent as we are—submissive as he would have us to be—in the spirit of implicit resignation and reliance,—“I will put my trust in God.”

Surely He is one who need not be ashamed to call us brethren! He is indeed a brother—a brother born for adversity! He is our brother, being our companion in tribulation!

Hast thou a struggle, O poor soul, in saying “I will put my trust in him?” So had he. Thou hast brotherhood in thy struggle with him. Hear his loud cry; “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name” (John xii. 27, 28).

Ah! this language of acquiescent and submissive reli-

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ance,—“ I will put my trust in him,”—has a peculiar pathos and emphasis imparted to it, when it is used as language in the use of which we have brotherhood with Jesus. For it is because he has been in a position to use that language himself,—and knows how hard it often is to use it,—that he is not ashamed to call us brethren. We imagine sometimes that this trust in God—this willingness to leave all that concerns us to God—ought to be always an easy and almost spontaneous exercise of soul with one who really knows the Father’s name, and has got such cause to praise him as we have got. But who knows the Father as the Son? Who praises the Father as the Son? And yet he, in the days of his flesh, found it difficult enough to say, “ I will put my trust in him.” It cost him “ prayers and supplications, strong crying and tears.” Why should we count it strange if it cost us the like? Rather let us be thankful that on this very account he is not ashamed to call us brethren, because at the very worst, in our utmost extremity,—when we find it the hardest of all tasks to say “ Thy will be done,” “ I will trust in thee,”—he can, as a brother, understand our case; he can enter into it. He can bring his own personal experience forward for our encouragement. He can meet us as a brother in every trial; and ever as he meets us, and has fellowship with us as a brother, he can give us courage, with whatever effort, to murmur,—“ I will trust and not be afraid,” “ Though he slay me I will trust in him.”

III. The third reason given for Christ’s not being ashamed to call us brethren is founded on a passage in Isaiah (viii. 18), which is apt to be misunderstood, both as it stands there, and as it is quoted here. It is given substantially in the same words by the Prophet and the Apostle; “ Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me.”

This text, as recited in Hebrews, is sometimes held to

be an instance of our Lord's calling us his children. But he is never represented as sustaining that relation to his people ;—not at least in any other sense than that in which Abraham is said to have a seed. And at any rate his being so represented here would be quite foreign to the writer's argument, and, indeed, inconsistent with it. Even as used by the prophet originally, the saying has no reference to his own children, though some have so applied it. It has a far higher import, as will be seen if its connection is considered.*

The prophet is describing the times in which he lives. There is a general confederacy for evil among the people. They associate themselves in defiance of the Lord. Are there none found faithful among the faithless? Yes, replies this man of God. "I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him" (verse 1). Nor am I alone. I have brethren willing to be fellow-witnesses, and, if need be, fellow-victims with me. "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given

* For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me, that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy ; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself : and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary : but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel ; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion (Is. viii. 11-18).

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me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion."

Such obviously is the meaning of the words, as originally uttered by Isaiah. And such also is their meaning when put into the mouth of the Messiah. "Behold I and the children,"—the little ones,—"whom thou hast given me;"—given me to be my brethren. Thus viewed they are expressive of intense filial and brotherly affection.

Observe, in the first place, how lovingly he speaks of them to the Father. They are "the children"—the little ones. It is the language of endearment. The elder brother presents to his Father and their Father the little ones, mere babes, infants who can but lisp thy praise, O Father; of whom I said, Suffer them to come unto me. They are the little ones—the children. As such I love them, and delight to have them as my brethren. I have revealed to them things hidden from the wise and prudent; I have declared to them thy name. They are the congregation in the midst of which I rejoice to praise thee; for "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings I have perfected praise." I teach them to put their trust in thee, as I have done, O righteous Father. Then how dear are these little ones to their elder brother, as given to him by his Father;—given to him in covenant from everlasting;—given to him in right, as bought with his blood;—given to him in reality, being born of the Spirit, in some sort as he was himself! With what overflowing fulness of love,—the love of a true son and a true brother,—does he present them to the Father! They are mine—these children—these little ones; mine, by thine own gift, O Father. "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me," that I might be "the first-born among many brethren." Be to them what thou art to me; not indeed as thou hast been to me from everlasting, but as thou art to me now;—now that I have become one with

“the children whom thou hast given me;” now that they have become one with me. “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one” (John xvii. 11).

And now, secondly, observe for what end He presents the little ones as his brethren to the Father.

Certainly, in the first instance, it is for present work and warfare on the earth. So the original setting of this gem indicates. He presents them to the Father to be jointly with himself “for signs and for wonders in Jerusalem from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.” Thou art not to be without signs, O righteous Father;—without witnesses of thy character and purposes and plans, in the world which knoweth not thee. Here am I for one. And here also are these, the little ones, whom thou hast given me; whom I scruple not to associate with myself in this office of being signs. I am not ashamed to call them, in that view, my brethren, and to offer them to thee, O righteous Father, as my brethren, to be witnesses for thee, as I have been. I have fitted and qualified them, as my brethren, for that mission. I have given them the very knowledge which I have myself of thy glorious name. I have put my own song of praise into their lips. I have made them partakers with myself in that grace of simple trust which carried me safely through the pains and perils of my witness-bearing. They are willing to be “for signs.” And “for wonders” too. They are willing and able, by the help of the blessed Spirit, to be a very world’s wonder; to bear reproach, obloquy, persecution; to seal, as I have done, their testimony with their blood. So I present them along with myself to thee, O righteous Father, to be “for signs and wonders” in the church and in the world.

But we need not limit this gracious presentation to the present scene of trial. We may carry forward our view to

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the day when the Lord Jesus shall appear, "to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe."

At that day it will be seen that he has indeed no cause to be ashamed to call us brethren;—that he has well sustained a brother's character, and well performed a brother's duty; that he has kept back nothing of his Father's light or his Father's love from us, for all things that he has heard of his Father he has made known to us; that he has upheld us by his sympathy in the same faith which upheld himself; that he has made us bearers of the same testimony that he bore for his Father, and signs of the same grace that he manifested, in the midst of a world of "despisers that can only behold, and wonder, and perish."

Surely it is no vain thing to have the Son of the Highest calling us brethren. He comes forth from the Father to us as his brethren, and carries us back with him as his brethren to the Father, that we may know the Father as he knows him, and praise the Father as he praises him. He is with us as our brother in all that calls for meek patience, for quiet and simple trust, throughout our whole pilgrimage and warfare here on earth. He presents us to the Father as his brethren,—to be fellow-witnesses with him of the Father's grace now, and fellow-heirs with him of the Father's glory hereafter.

Such an elder brother is Christ to thee, O child of God; truly one who need not be ashamed to call thee brother. Such an elder brother thou wilt find him to be, thou poor prodigal, whosoever thou art, if thou wilt but suffer him to act towards thee now a brother's part. Far unlike that elder brother in the parable, this elder brother comes to thee in the far country of thine estrangement from God; deals with thee, pleads with thee, expostulates with thee;

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seizes thee, lays hold of thee, will not willingly let thee go, until thou lettest him take thee home with himself to his Father, waiting to be thine. Come, he cries, I will declare to thee our Father's name ; it is love. I will show thee his nature ; it is love. I will open to thee his heart ; it is love ;—love to thee. Thou hast not known him. Thou hast misunderstood him. Thou hast not done him justice. Thou hast suspected, dreaded, disliked him. But see, here am I to tell thee what he is, and how he feels toward thee. Behold, in me, his gift to thee—to be the propitiation for thy sins—how my Father loveth thee. Yes, O my poor brother sinner, chief of sinners as thou art, believe me. Believe, and join me, and join all my redeemed, in the grateful song of praise. Let me have thee, as my brother, to be one of the congregation in the midst of which I am to praise our Father evermore.

IV.

The Son learning Obedience by Suffering.

“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered ; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”—
Heb. v. 7-9.

THE Lord Jesus is here set before us, first, as passing through a painful experience ; secondly, as by means of that experience learning a necessary lesson ; and thirdly, as becoming in this way qualified to bestow on his obedient people all saving benefits. The experience through which he passes is described not so much in its nature as in its effects. We see the meek and holy sufferer offering up “prayers and supplications.” And these are of no ordinary kind ; they are accompanied by “strong crying and tears” (verse 7). And if the question is asked,—Why is that sinless one subjected to such an afflictive discipline?—is there anything he needs to acquire at such a cost?—there is a key to the mystery. Son as he is, he has to learn obedience by the things which he suffers ; and so to be made perfect. Nor is this all. The gracious end for which he is to learn that lesson and to acquire that perfection is not left to be conjectured. It is that he may become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.

The learner, the lesson, the result or issue,—all demand our serious and attentive study.

Who and what is the learner ? A son ; the Son. Can he be a learner simply as the Son ? Consider his original

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nature, dignity, and rank ; his co-equality with the Father, as the Eternal Son ; of the same substance, equal in power and glory ; one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the undivided essence of the Godhead, in the mysterious fellowship and mutual relationship of the Trinity, and in all the purpose of the divine mind,—specially with reference to the ordering of the everlasting covenant. Thus essentially one with the Father in nature, and thus intimately related to the Father in person, the Eternal Son can learn no lesson of obedience. But his incarnation renders him capable of doing so ;—“ Being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient ” (Phil. ii. 6-8). In his state of humiliation he learned obedience. And he learned it by becoming obedient even “ unto death ;” and that death no ordinary one, but “ the death of the cross ;” death, with the sting of sin, and the curse of the broken law. He learned it, in a word, “ by the things which he suffered.”

For, even when incarnate, how could he without suffering have learned it ?

Imagine the Eternal Son, taking upon him the form of a servant ; uniting in his own person the two distinct natures, the divine and the human ; and the two distinct relationships, that of a son, co-equal with the Father, and that of a servant, under authority to the Father. Conceive thus of the Lord from heaven, placed as Adam was in a sinless and sorrowless garden, under no other obligation than that of conformity to the law, which is his own as well as the Father's. How would he then and in these circumstances have learned obedience at all ? He would have been holy, no doubt. Holiness immaculate and inviolable, stainless and serene, would have characterised his whole moral being. But it could scarcely have been holiness having in it anything of the element of obedience.

But introduce now the circumstance of suffering, and of

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such suffering. Bring this holy one into contact with the results of sin realised on earth, and place him under the responsibilities of sin registered in heaven. Let his life be a life of suffering—of suffering, too, judicial and penal—having in it the bitter ingredients of imputed guiltiness and inflicted wrath. Then truly that God-man is in a position to learn obedience. And the more intense his sense of his filial relationship is, and the more inviolable his holiness, so much the more complete must be the lesson ; so much the more thoroughly must we regard him as “though he were a son, yet learning obedience by the things which he suffered.”

The meaning of this wonderful economy—this “great mystery of godliness”—“God manifest in the flesh,” and in the flesh “learning obedience by suffering,”—will be better understood when we consider the process, as it were, or the manner, of the lesson ; the actual learning of obedience in the school of affliction and pain.

But at the very outset, let the character which the Son bore and the position in which he stood, when he was learning obedience by the things which he suffered, be carefully noted. He bore a representative character ; he stood in the position of the head and surety of redeemed men. He was the second Adam. It was as the second Adam that he learned obedience. That was the lesson which the first Adam ought to have learned, and failed to learn. And it was his failure that rendered it needful that there should be a second Adam raised up to learn it.

There is here, I think, a great truth—a broad general principle—to be announced. The learning of obedience is an indispensable condition of the creature-state itself, or of the creature-relationship to the Supreme. Any one, whoever he may be, whatever his rank and character

among the intelligences of the universe—any one placed, whether by his own choice or not, in the state of a creature, or in the relation in which a creature stands to God—must necessarily learn obedience; he has it to learn. And he can learn it only by being tried.

It would seem, indeed, to be of the essence of that most marvellous and awful gift which God has associated with intelligence,—the gift or endowment of free will,—the power of spontaneous choice and action which makes intelligence to the creature so high and yet so hazardous a boon,—that obedience, even to the most rightful and reasonable authority, needs to be learned as a lesson or acquired as a habit. Hence, whoever is constituted the head or representative of mankind must learn that lesson and acquire that habit of obedience. That, therefore, was the appointed task of the first Adam as well as of the second. And it may help us to a right understanding of this whole matter if we consider the principle which I have indicated as applicable, in the first instance, to the original state of man, or to the first Adam.

I. Thus applied, the principle may be found to cast some little light on the economy of probation in paradise, on the occasion of man's temptation and fall.

1. Let us note what man, as originally made, had not to acquire. Personally and perfectly innocent and holy, Adam had nothing to learn in the way of pure tastes or a benign temper. All within being serenity and peace, and all without harmony and repose—had he been left untutored and untaught—his simple, guiltless, guileless, naked character would have expanded—not by any effort, but spontaneously and naturally—into something like that lovely virgin bloom which romantic dreamers have sought to paint as the perfection of uncontaminated humanity. But Adam was not

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merely an intellectual plant,—or, as it were, mere organised matter, growing or grown into mind. He was a living person, made expressly for personal converse with the living personal God ;—made therefore in the image of his Creator ;—made after that likeness in respect of high intelligence and holy affections—and above all, in respect of the wondrous faculty of free will.

2. Being so made, what has he to acquire ? He has to learn obedience. Many things, I repeat, he has not to learn. All good dispositions are native to him, and not acquired. But obedience is a habit, and he has to learn it. For the learning of it he must be put to school ; and to such a school as shall teach obedience alone, and nothing else ; not the things he has already by nature, but the thing he needs to learn ; not other good qualities or faculties, but obedience merely.

3. In this view, the barer the school the better. The less furniture it has of any sort beyond the mere materials of the single lesson to be learned, the more thoroughly is it fitted to serve the purpose of teaching it. The less there is in it of what appeals to anything the scholar already possesses, the more perfectly may it teach the one thing he has to learn,—namely obedience.

4. Now the school to which man was put was the forbidden tree. It was through that tree that he was to learn obedience. All over the garden otherwise, he roamed of his own free will ;—giving forth the fragrance and shining forth in the beauty of his own holy innocency of soul ;—very much as the plants beneath his feet bloomed into fresh verdure and blossomed into ripe fruit,—or as the animals around, in their harmless gambols, gave ever new exhibitions of beauty, gentleness, and love. But beside the forbidden tree, he was at school ; and as a scholar, he had to learn obedience. This indeed was his dignity, as

well as his danger. For to be the scholar of God, is more than to be the child of nature. And fascinating as is the charm of virgin innocency—yet, had man used the office of scholar well, he would have purchased for himself a still better degree.

5. And it was the best school he could have had for learning obedience. For it was a school in which he could learn nothing else. It was not a school in which he could learn intelligence ;—or exercise and quicken his faculties of thought. That benefit he might have in walking with God, and among the works of God, everywhere, over all the garden. But in the school of the forbidden tree, there was no dealing with his intelligence at all ; no appeal to his reason ; no attempt to stimulate or satisfy his judgment. Nor was it a school in which he could learn, if he had needed to learn, any good affection of any sort. In God, in one another, in the creatures,—our first parents had ample scope for the indulgence and expansion of all their affections. But in the school of the forbidden tree, the matter upon which the lesson turned had nothing in it with which the affections could deal at all. It was a prohibition and a threat ; neither, on the one hand, justified to man's understanding, as founded on any reason ; nor, on the other, coming home in any way to his heart. For it could appeal to no natural sense of propriety, no natural perception of morality, no natural feeling of the sublime, the pathetic, or the honest and good. All the more on that account was it fitted for teaching the single lesson man had to learn, the sole and simple lesson of obedience.

The very circumstance, therefore, which some have made an objection to this procedure, is in fact its highest recommendation. That the trial turned on what might seem so insignificant and arbitrary a matter as the mere eating or not eating of the fruit of a particular tree, is the

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very thing that fits it for being the school in which man is to learn obedience. For, in fact, what else can he learn? He cannot learn, for he is not taught, to understand; he cannot learn, for he is not asked, to approve; he can only learn to obey.

And had he learned his lesson right, he would have passed in due time from that school under the discipline of God here below, to some higher home of study in the bosom of God above. He would have been raised from his precarious position of probation, which could not last for ever, to his meet reward in a state of confirmed security and holiness and joy;—having acquired the only thing originally wanting to his perfection; having learned,—not to be good and pure and holy, which he needed not to learn,—but simply to obey.

6. And this, let it be farther noted, he would have learned in a sense through suffering,—not indeed through the suffering of pain, but through the suffering of patience,—through passive submission, not voluntary action. Nor could he otherwise have learned it. All goodness in him being natural or spontaneous, its exercise, even throughout eternity, never could have taught him this lesson of mere obedience. There must be positive restriction,—the formal and express imposing of constraint,—implying, so far, something of the nature of suffering.

But by what he suffers, if he will but suffer it, he may learn obedience, and so through suffering be made perfect. To the tasteful and graceful, yet perhaps the somewhat insipid charm of mere natural innocency, there may be added the sterner and riper virtue of tried and tested discipleship. The whole character thus assumes a firmer texture. The gentle influence of good affections meets and coalesces with the more robust staple of habitual obedience to authority. And he comes out of the school in which

mere submission has been the only lesson,—instructed, improved, accomplished, as a finished scholar, and not merely a self-unfolding and growing child,—a man in the full development of proved and perfected manhood.

Such might have been the schooling of man, and such its issue, had he kept his first estate.

II. Returning now to the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, we may be the better able, from the illustrations that have been given, to follow him through some of the actual lessons of that school in which he learned obedience by the things which he suffered.

But how shall I venture farther? What instances shall I select of this amazing schooling of such a scholar? I can do nothing more than offer a few general, and generally characteristic, observations.

1. There is this peculiarity running through the whole, that it is still as a Son, or as the Son, that he learneth obedience. There is a vivid apprehension, a blessed realising, of his filial relationship to the Father that never leaves him. The external manifestation of his original and eternal Godhead he laid aside; he made himself of no reputation; he veiled the glory of his divine sonship in a tabernacle of humanity, when he was made flesh and dwelt among us. But his sonship itself he never laid aside. The unspeakable thought, of all that from everlasting to everlasting the Father is to him and he to the Father, was never absent from his mind. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business," is his prompt reply when called in question for sitting with the Doctors at the age of twelve. It is "his Father's business" he must be about. So he begins, and so he goes on. Throughout all his work, and amid all his sufferings, he is about "his Father's business." He learneth obedience as the Son.

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Is he charged as a Sabbath breaker—enduring on that account the contradiction of sinners against himself?—“My Father worketh hitherto and I work” (John v. 17), is the reply with which he sustains himself in his obedience to the spirit of the law, against those who could not look beyond the letter. Is he met, when most graciously proclaiming himself as the good Shepherd, with that discouraging question of unbelief, “How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly”?—What a sense of his filial oneness with the Father pervades his answer! It is evidently, under that trial, the stay of his own soul;—“I and my Father are one” (John x. 30). Or again, is he forced to upbraid the cities wherein his mighty works were done? See how he learns obedience, even here, as to this most dark and trying sorrow,—the seeming failure of his ministry; and how he learns it still as the Son,—“I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight” (Matt. xi. 25, 26). “I thank thee, O Father”—“Even so, Father.”

And not to multiply examples, let us come to the crisis of his sufferings. Behold him in the garden. Was it otherwise than as a Son that he learned obedience when, having appealed so affectingly to his Father's pity, he yet uttered so meekly the words of filial resignation, “Father, thy will be done?” Or finally, as he hangs upon the cross, is it not still as a Son that he learns obedience, when he commends in filial faith, as the Son to his Father, first, the souls of them that slew him, and then his own;—“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do;”—“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.”

2. But though he was the Son, it was a real obedience that he learned by the things which he suffered. His

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being the Son did not divest the obedience he had to learn of its true and proper character of obedience. Still less did it exempt him, in the learning of it, from its accompanying pain and grief. The very contrary was the effect of his intimate relation of sonship to the Father, and his intimate sense of that relation. It made such obedience as he had to learn all the more painful, and the learning of it all the more trying.

For we must remember that as he never, in all his sufferings, lost his apprehension of his filial oneness with the Father, so he never, in any of them, made a stand upon it, as giving him any privilege of exemption, or any power of endurance or escape.

This, indeed, was the very temptation of the adversary—to lead him into such a use of his sonship. It was thus that he assailed him when,—immediately after the heavens had been opened at his baptism, and the Holy Ghost had descended upon him like a dove, and a voice from heaven had proclaimed, “This is my beloved Son,”—Jesus was “led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil” (Matt. iv. 1-10). For what is the devil’s plea? “If thou be the Son of God.” That is his plea, all through the three acts of the temptation.

(1.) Why should the Son of God suffer hunger, when by the word of his power, as the Son, he has but to speak, and the very stones will become bread? (2.) Why should the Son of God come in lowly guise, disguised as a poor Nazarene, when, as the Son, he may make the summit of his own temple his glorious throne, and summoning his angels, to whom the Father giveth charge over him, cast himself from its pinnacle, as on the wings of the winds and in the chariot of the clouds, making his approach to Israel? (3.) Why, finally, must the Son of God receive his kingdom only after much tribulation, when he may,

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at once and immediately, as the Son, recover and reclaim it from the hands of the reigning Prince, on the terms of a single act of courtesy—surely a very simple compromise?

And how did the Lord meet this threefold temptation;—all throughout based upon an appeal to his sonship? Was it not by declining to take advantage of any privilege or prerogative belonging to him as the Son,—either for lightening the pain,—or for covering the shame,—or for abridging the term, of the obedience he had to learn? He is to live, like any other man, by bread, or in any way that God may be pleased to appoint. He is to depend on his Father's promised help, only in the lowly path of duty as a servant, and not, presuming on his sonship, to tempt the Lord his God. He is not, as the Son, to act as if he were free to make his own terms with the adversary; he is to worship the Lord alone, and him only is he to serve.

Thus, from the beginning, Son though he was, he yet learned to obey. And so it was to the end. He might have stood, as he tells us, upon his sonship, and claimed deliverance from his final sufferings. What! he says to the over-zealous disciple, who in the garden drew his sword in his defence, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be? The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?" (Matt. xxvi. 53-54; John xviii. 11). It was the very cup respecting which he had just been praying in an agony that, if it were possible, it might pass from him. As the Son, he might have prevailed to have it pass from him. But still to the last he persevered in learning obedience. "Father, thy will be done!"

3. It was obedience alone that he learned by the things which he suffered. It was all he had to learn; it

was all he could learn. No lesson of holiness was to be taught him by suffering save only the lesson of obedience. There was no lust in him for pain or penance to chastise ; no imperfect and unstable virtue for discipline to strengthen and mature. Suffering could not add one gracious feature to the consummate moral beauty of his soul ; nor could it be meant to eradicate any root of bitterness, or to quench any hidden flame of desire. Obedience alone was "the peaceable fruit of righteousness" it could yield to him.

Hence, through all his sufferings, we find no trace whatever of suffering for mere suffering's sake ; or suffering self-imposed or self-inflicted ; or suffering to please men or devils ; or suffering, finally, in wanton bravery and defiance of pain. All that he suffered was by the Father's command, and in execution and accomplishment of the Father's will. It is undoubtedly true that his sufferings were all, from first to last, voluntary. It was spontaneously, of his own free will, that he gave himself to them all. But still it was in compliance with the Father's will and for the doing of the Father's work. It was obedience still, however willing. "No man," he says, in reference to the crowning instance of his sufferings,—his laying down his life for the sheep,—"No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself ; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." But observe how he instantly and emphatically adds, "This commandment have I received of my Father" (John x. 18).

4. Finally, let it be noted, it was "the obedience" that he thus learned (*την ὑπακοήν*). It was the very obedience needed, not for himself, but for the "many sons" he is to "bring unto glory." It was the obedience which the first Adam failed to learn that the second Adam learned, by the things which he suffered.

The learning of it was not, indeed, by any means so

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easy, when the second Adam came to repair the damage that the first Adam had done. But the issue is more glorious by far. Let us mark, in this view,—first, the difference between what the first and second representatives of men had to learn ;—and secondly, the difference between what might have been the position of all the race, in covenant relation to the first Adam, if he had “learned obedience” through trial—and what actually is the state of believers now, standing in covenant relation to the second Adam, who has, in fact, in a far higher sense, “learned obedience by the things which he suffered.”

First, Let us compare, or contrast, the second Adam with the first in the tasks assigned to them respectively.

Here the difference is vast. In the first instance, if it could be said that obedience was to be learned through suffering at all, it was through suffering without either sin or the sense of sin—through suffering in no way partaking of a judicial character. It was suffering, in short, allowing it to be properly suffering, neither retributive in its purpose, nor severe in its nature. For, on the one hand, as to its design, it was not punitive or penal, but preventive and probative merely,—intended not to punish but to try. And on the other hand, as to its amount, it implied no actual ordination of evil, but the mere withholding of what might seem to be good—restraint, therefore, merely, and not positive pain. Adam in Paradise would have “learned obedience,” had he simply suffered the abridgment of his absolute discretion, to the extent of abstaining from the forbidden tree.

Very different is the task of the second Adam. The scene of his discipline and trial is not the school of an unforfeited and unpolluted paradise, but the school of a condemned cell—the residence of prisoners, guilty, and awaiting execution. The obedience he has to learn, when

he takes the place of such criminals, is not mere abstinence from what may condemn them ;—it reaches the endurance of that actual condemnation which they have all already incurred. In the capacity in which he has to “learn obedience,” he stands as the representative, not of a race that may fall, but of a people already fallen. And he has to “learn obedience,” to the full extent of undertaking all their liabilities, and answering for all their sins.

Ah! what a burden is it that is thus laid on this Divine learner in the school of suffering!

It is not the burden merely of keeping his eye from beholding—his heart from coveting—and his hand from touching—a certain forbidden thing. It is the far, far heavier burden of bearing for us the guilt of that first sin which our natural covenant-head, the first Adam, committed,—and of all our sins that have flowed from that dismal source. What did he suffer? And how, by all that he suffered, did he learn obedience? He “bore our sins in his own body on the cross.” He was “made sin” and “made a curse” for us. He bared his bosom to the bolt of wrath that should have scathed and destroyed us for ever. And when the Father said, “Awake O sword against my Shepherd, against the man that is my fellow!” the answer of the Son was still the same, “Lo I come, I delight to do thy will O God.”

Secondly, We may now see how much more precious to us, as well as how much more costly to himself, the attainment of the second Adam is, as compared with what that of the first would have been, even if he had stood.

For what comparison can there be between the position we might have occupied, as represented by a mere innocent creature, trained and tried in obedience by a slight and arbitrary test, and the position which we may now occupy, as represented by the very Son of

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the Highest himself ;—and by him as “though he were a Son, yet having learned obedience by the things which he suffered”? In the former case, our position at the best would have been that of a servant reconciled to service ; in the latter, it is that of a son taught, O how willingly, to obey. For let us remember, the Lord associates and identifies us with himself, in respect of what he personally is to the Father, as well as in respect of what he has learned by the things which he suffered. He makes us one with himself in his sonship, as well as in the obedience which, as the Son, he learned through suffering. In fact, it is the sonship of the second Adam, that makes his “learning of obedience through suffering” so much more precious and profitable, than the first Adam’s success, had he succeeded, would have been. Or rather, it is the combination of these two—the depth to which he descends as suffering for us in obedience to the Father, and the height to which he raises us as one with him in his sonship—that completes his fitness for being our Saviour. It is thus that “being made perfect, he is the author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him.”

For that is the practical issue of the wondrous education of the Son of God in the school of suffering.

1. He is thus “made perfect.” The expression is remarkable. He himself uses it in anticipation of his sufferings and their glorious issue (Luke xiii. 31, 32). The Pharisees said “Depart hence, for Herod will kill thee.” No! he replies, I am not to be thus hurried. For all Herod’s bloody purpose, I have some days yet for doing good on the earth before I “shall be perfected.” When the time comes, and not before, I shall be perfected : perfected by the very measure Herod proposes when he fain would kill me. To the same effect, using the same word,

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the Apostle speaks, "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. ii. 10).

In several different ways, the sufferings of the Lord may be regarded as constituting or contributing to constitute, his perfection or completeness. For one thing, they fit him for having compassion on his people and sympathising with them. They have the same conflict which he had; the same temptations; the same solicitations and assaults of the adversary. And in all of these they have this double consolation and encouragement. On the one hand, they may remember that Jesus was really tempted like as they are,—that he did not insist or presume upon his power and prerogative as the Son, but was simply like them a servant and a sufferer in the hands of his Father. On the other hand, they may be assured that whatever support the unbroken sense of his Sonship afforded to him, is afforded also to them; inasmuch as they also, in and with him, are sons. For, as he makes himself one with them in their sufferings, so he makes them one with himself in his sonship.

But the perfection reached through suffering has reference chiefly, beyond all doubt, to the Lord's official character and ministry as the great "high-priest of our profession,"—the representative of his people. In that character, he occupies the place of the first Adam in Paradise. And on behalf of those for whom he stands, he has to reach that platform of confirmed acceptance to which Adam would have been raised, when his temporary probation was over, had he "learned obedience" by the thing wherein he was tried. Our great high-priest, standing in this representative position, must be proved as Adam was proved, and perfected as Adam would have been perfected; per-

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fectured by passing from a condition of trial to one of finished and complete victory. This was in large measure "the joy that was set before him," for which "he endured the cross, despising the shame" (xii. 2). And this joy was perfected, when "God exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts v. 31).

2. Being thus "made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation." For now, on the footing of his obedience, "learned by the things which he suffered,"—and rewarded as well as attested by his resurrection to glory,—he is in a condition to bestow, not a contingent or conditional, but a complete salvation; not the temporary enjoyment of an opportunity of salvation, but eternal salvation itself.

How grievously do they dishonour him,—how sadly do they detract from the perfection of his priestly character and work,—who conceive of him as merely giving men another chance, as it were, for trying, upon easier terms than before, to win for themselves eternal life. Is this all the effect of his interposition on our behalf?—to put us again upon probation?—that we may try to succeed where our first father failed? No. Let us be sure that the Son, in virtue of that obedience which he "learned through suffering," and the "perfection" to which he thus attained, is in a position to be to us at once and immediately "the author of eternal salvation." He is complete for us, and we are complete in him. We are "of God in him," and he "is of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30).

3. For fully finishing in us what he has fully obtained for us, he requires nothing more than what is reasonable, when he requires the same mind that was in himself. He is the author of eternal salvation to "all them that obey him."

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For this obedience on our part is really nothing else than sympathy with Jesus in his obedience.

Thus viewed, it is of a twofold kind. We are to obey him by submitting to him in the things which he suffered for us. And we are to obey him by submitting to him in the things which he would have us to suffer with him.

In the first place, we obey him when we submit ourselves to his righteousness, or to himself as "the righteousness of God;" when, born of his Spirit and believing his gospel, we enter into his perfection as our great representative, High Priest and surety, and into the completeness of that salvation of which he is become the author. Our first obedience to the Son is to receive the fruit of his obedience. We first honour him by believing in him; renouncing for ever the vain conceit of our being saved by any present or prospective or possible obedience of our own; not seeking to perfect our own peace with God, but yielding ourselves up to him who is our peace, already perfected. Let us receive him, as the author to us personally of "eternal salvation." Let us be sure that the obedience he learned as the Son is infinitely perfect,—as the sufferings by which as the Son he learned it are infinitely precious. There is a perfection of merit in the obedience to justify us wholly,—as there is a perfection of efficacy in the sufferings to atone for all our sins. Let us not be disobedient to him when he asks us to submit to him, in his thus doing all and bearing all that, in the view of his Father's righteous government and law, was needful for our eternal salvation.

Then, let us submit to him,—as in what he obediently suffered for us,—so in what he calls us obediently to suffer with him. Let us bear this reproach; take his yoke upon us; take up his cross; fill up the measure of his sufferings. And let us do all this in the spirit of simple obe-

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dience : not as being profitable to him, or rendering any favour or service that can avail him, or doing any great thing, or exercising any great virtue ; but simply as, in and with him, " learning obedience through endurance and suffering."

For indeed it is a great thing to be thus going about every duty, enduring every sorrow, submitting to every privation, simply as like-minded with him,—obedient to him as he was to the Father. Truly, thus suffering with him, we may expect to be glorified together ; glorified in the full joy and liberty of the day of the manifestation of the sons of God.

THE END.









