

Our Contributors.

FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

The fatherhood of God has been limited, which is exceedingly strange in this day, and in this age, for if one truth of Biblical theology stands out clear and distinct, and is of general acceptance, it is that of the universal fatherhood of God. The history and growth of the doctrine might be traced, and its development from the days of Erskine, of Linalthan, is one of the deepest interest.

Erskine, Campbell, T. T. Lynck, Baldwin Brown, H. W. Beecher, have been well named "a school of the prophets," for they, with others, because of insight, vision and fidelity to that which is, had to endure the prophet's fate—persecutions and suffering. Happily we live in more spacious days, and their deemed heterodoxy is the orthodoxy of an age that seeks to think the largest and best things of a good, kind and gracious God.

With the growth of the universal fatherhood of God, step by step has come the universal brotherhood of man. Indeed, the first is cause and reason for the second. If one is limited, so is the other, for the second grows out of and is consequent of the first. And if limitation in the first, then that limitation is in the second, for effect cannot be greater than the cause. Then reasoning from unquestioned claims of universal brotherhood, the universal fatherhood becomes a necessity. But, mark what limitation implies; however qualified it contains privilege, and privilege carries us back to that local and temporary. And, what is that Judaism? Christianity is: "God so loved the world," the universal. Thus the Fatherly heart being universal, must not the term father be as deep and as broad as the inmost spirit expressed in the cross? Then, if Christ is our likeness of God, where is limitation in his Spirit? He said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." But Christ is representative of man in all relations; man as man. And his statement is: "My Father and your Father." The two-fold relationship being unquestioned, our Lord is the expression of the Father, and as "Son of Man" the expression, true expression, of man's relation, as man to the Divine Father. If that position is fact, clearly limitation is clearly shut out.

Now, it is quite true that the fact of relationship is one thing, and the realization of that relationship and obedience therein, another; but, to deny the relationship until conditions are fulfilled is to destroy a filial relation, tender and gracious, that is a potent force of obligation.

Again, without doubt there are privileges consequent on obedience, but the prodigal in "a far country," the words are "my son." The "far country" did not end the relation, nor coming home change it. He was ever a son. But, this by obedience he became a son indeed. He realized the obligation of his sonship, and by obedience entered into the privilege conditioned by obedience.

He turned to "my father," who had not forsaken his son; and, it is the one father, in the parable above all parables that gives us the heart and core of the blessed gospel of grace.

Also, our Lord, in his great charter of "the kingdom," said: "For he," the Father, "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Thus in the realm of Providence universal fatherhood. The God of Providence is the God of grace. Grace means deeper relations. Can God be less in the one realm than in the other? That cannot be. Then, if father in the one, why not in that greater and deeper? And if in that greater and deeper, why less a father? The broad or general truth, being one of relation, and that relation being universal, it follows that the Divine Fatherhood belongs to a race. And it is the general truth that is of the greatest moment.

Now, did our Lord, in the Lord's prayer, invalidate this general truth? Did he limit the term "Our Father" to the disciples? Even if granted in the circumstances, clearly that in no way sets aside the general truth. But he said: "When ye pray." Whom? Were only the disciples present? Matthew records "seeing the multitudes." And if Luke's record is taken with that of Matthew, there is no reason for fastening it alone to the "disciples." Whether it is wise to make the first petition of the Lord's prayer a basis for a general truth is another question, but the fact of such a general truth in the revelation of God by Jesus Christ being manifest, this particular reference is not exclusive, but inclusive, of the general truth, because the general contains the particular.

T. H. SIDDALL.

BITS OF LETTERS.

From a recent letter of a Nova Scotia pastor we make this quotation. It may be suggestive to somebody:

"In February I hung the INTELLIGENCER list of subscribers here in the church, near the door. In two sermons I spoke of the paper to the congregation. In conversation with the brethren I have personally spoken of the importance of being regular readers of the denominational paper. In these ways I have kept the claims of the paper before the people, and have had some degree of success."

Bro. Wm. Cliff, formerly of Queensbury, and well known to many of our people in York Co., writing from West Somerville, Mass., where his home now is, says:

"Our much beloved pastor begins the fourth year of his ministry with the West Somerville Baptist church. The past three years have been years of activity, harmony and prosperity. Every department of church life has been characterized by vigor and growth. Sunday services, prayer meetings and the Bible school have been largely attended, especially during the last year. The pastor has had the hearty co-operation and loving sympathy of a devoted people. During the three years 258 members have been received into the church. The present membership is about 740. My sympathy is with this church."

What Others Say.

NOT HALF SO MUCH.

The utter depravity of an open sinner will never hurt the cause of Christ half so much as the half-heartedness of a professed Christian.—*Free Baptist.*

BOASTING.

A hen that crows, or a hen that cackles before she lays, is a hen that is of no account. Her conduct is too much on a par with loud boasting.—*The Telescope.*

A SWORD ALSO.

The spirit of Christianity is peace; but it is peace only to those who are doing right. Christianity is always at war with evil and any peace that sacrifices righteousness for the sake of freedom from physical pain is a false peace. Christ came to send a sword as well as peace.—*Free Baptist.*

KNOW HIM.

Be assured of the soundness of doctrine taught by an evangelist, before inviting him into your pulpit, is good advice that may well be heeded by pastors and congregations and will be welcomed by all orthodox evangelists. We have just learned of the sad condition of a church which rejoiced in a great ingathering last year, following the labors of an evangelist. But this evangelist is said to have impregnated the converts with false doctrine, so that the church is in trouble, while pastor and officers are disheartened and discouraged. The evangelist was one of the peripatetic kind, whether with or without references, we are not informed, but the result is sad enough to warrant the exercise of especial care on the part of church officers in making their selection of a religious instructor.—*The Presbyterian.*

IS SHE?

"Woman is the weaker vessel." This remark is generally made by young, unmarried men. We, who have been through the mill, so to speak, know better. There are those among us who might go as far as Adam Clark in affirming that "one woman is worth seven and a half men," and with Solon, who said, "One hair of a woman will draw more than a hundred yoke of oxen." I know from personal observation that a woman in Holland will draw a loaded canal boat while her husband sits at the tiller with his eyes half shut and a long pipe between his knees. I know, moreover, certain able-bodied men who allow themselves to be supported by these "weaker vessels." A while ago, in one of our police courts, the magistrate asked the prisoner at the bar how he made his living. The answer was, "My wife takes in washing."—*Dr. Burrell.*

THE SERMON.

When some one comes to you and tells you that he enjoyed your sermon do not be exalted above measure. It may simply mean that in some vague way you gave him pleasure. If, however, he tells you what struck him and there is real spiritual truth in the point you may feel hopeful that you did execution. No man is helped by a whole sermon, for he does not take it all in. We need not expect the average hearer to pick up more than a few fragments. We must seek to give every man his portion but not to every man the same portion. A sermon is like an eating house where every man goes to get what suits him. To be popular the eating house must have a variety, something to suit all tastes, and in a large degree a sermon must be equally rich in provision for various spiritual tastes.—*Baptist Argus.*

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