

## THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

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This thesis would be incomplete unless we consider what has been the result of the avowal of this false doctrine upon the church and the people. The pulpit with but few exceptions is declaring this teaching unto its hearers and the effect upon the message and the people can be readily traced.

First, and foremost of the effects of the teaching of such an unscriptural doctrine is, that the atonement of Christ's sacrifice is minimized, or wholly set aside as meaningless. If God is Father of all men, sin notwithstanding, then what foolishness for that Father to place before the world the suffering and death of His Son for any purpose whatsoever, when by a little love manifest in some other way He could win back a disobedient child! If there is not a gap between God and man that could not be bridged, why make such a costly sacrifice, the shedding of blood, for something which did not exist? It was not for the purpose of helping those who were in the family of God, but it was to reach those who were entirely severed from God by their sin who must have the way opened over which they might pass in their approach to Him who was justly displeased for man's sins. Remission could be granted only in the name and for the merit of that life which was a willing sacrifice for sinful man in order that God might be just as He became the justifier of those in sin. But if God is Father without making good this broken law and without showing the horribleness of sin, the whole scheme, as based upon Christ and His suffering and death, was wholly uncalled for. Sin, at most, with these contenders, is only a little disobedience which the Father can easily forgive or entirely overlook and expect somehow and sometime and somewhere that the imp of disobedience will return and take his place in the family and be counted one of the good sons of the kingdom. Thus, these doctrinaires make the atonement of Jesus Christ a meaningless thing and of no avail in the great economy of redemption. Such treatment of the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus is the fruitful base of the assertion of a probation after death, which has recently been brought into vogue to help out in these unscriptural positions assumed by men who desire to be thought liberal and up-to-date in their preaching and teaching, which in the last analysis mean that they want to have a good stand in with men of the world who do not and will not pay the price of a genuine sonship in the family of God. These moderns cannot point to a single verse of Scripture that gives them a foothold for this most insidious doctrine. If the universal Fatherhood of God is asserted, it will not stand alone save as it is bolstered up by the theory of a probation after death. Of course this means that there is the denial of a hell as a place of eternal punishment for sin. This is done either by direct statement in denying the existence of such a place, or by their silence on the subject. "Of course a Father could not be reasonable and send his own offspring to hell," so they argue. Then they affirm that the "eternal punishment"

announced in Matthew 25 does not mean what it says. But, over against this, they affirm that the "eternal life" spoken of in the same connection is all right. That will sure be the possession of God's children. If there is something eternal in one part of Matt. 25:46, there must be just the same in the other part, since the same word is used in both places to express the duration. This whole scheme only means that sin is not such a horrible thing as some people are wont to think. It can be easily overlooked by the Father as there is no eternal condemnation to be attached to it. Sin, according to this unscriptural doctrine, supported as it is by a false philosophy, false reasoning, and a false exegesis, is only man's fall upward in his search after God. As Veereck, an American writer, puts it, we have it summed up in a nutshell: "I respect sin, for it is part of the quest of the human soul for the Ultimate Good."

Another and a very regrettable loss, which the assertion of this false doctrine demands, grows out of the treatment of the Holy Spirit necessitated by the treatment of the evil heart of man. He has a very important place to fill in the redemptive economy of Almighty God. Thus, the office work of the Holy Spirit in human hearts is passed over as something fanatical, inconsequential or only as a persuasive influence proceeding from the religious thought of the world or the Word of God. He is a superfluity in all the work of redemption, for what is to be redeemed since nothing has been lost or taken over by a wrongful owner? Then, the scriptural pronouncement of His work of cleansing from all iniquity—depravity of human hearts—has been rendered unnecessary, since the enunciation of the universal Fatherhood of God demands that all thought of a depraved humanity must be put away among the discards of things that came from pagan ideas and Greek philosophy. There is no inherited tendency in human hearts that leads away from God accordig to the necessities of this position, but, on the contrary, it is asserted that all children born into this life, start as did Adam. Now, the only thing about this whole matter is, these children of modern birth do not run so long as did Adam before they show a tendency to go wrong and actually do go wrong and into sin. Of course an unlimited environment is brought in to account for early entrance into the walks of sin, and thus a scapegoat is found for the shortcomings of our modern children, while Adam had to bear the odium of being led into sin by the devil himself. But, today, that old scamp is quite a good fellow, since sin, which is the thing he deals in, is always a search for God. So, this philosophy has the unique distinction of presenting the devil as a helper in the work of redemption, and not as a hinderer to those who would enter therein.—Extract from Bible Champion.

"The workshop of character is everyday life. The commonplace hour is where the battle is lost or won."

"A good book is a good friend, always at hand when one wants it. The Book of Books is the best of all."

## WHITE GARMENTS IN SARDIS.

By J. H. Jowett, D.D., London.

Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white."—Rev. 3:4.

White garments in Sardis! And Sardis abounded in corruption. Only yesterday I saw a white flower unfurling its pure lovely petals like white banners in the sheltering defenses of a conservatory, and even in that guarded refuge the whiteness was exceedingly wonderful. But suppose I should have seen the same white floral banners waving in the Bowery in New York, or near the belching foundries of Middlesborough, they would have been more arresting still. To see holiness in some monastic retreat is one thing; to see it in the great trade thoroughfares is quite another. It is a wonderful thing to see the white robe in Sardis.

And yet we can see this wonder every day if we will only open our eyes. I have seen a young lovely girl unfolding a Christ-like holiness in the home of a drunkard. Beastliness invaded her surroundings, but she was as pure as a lily. The mud never got upon her garments. There are multitudes of men in business life whose garments are undefiled. They are known for their probity. They are keen, but they are never dirty. Their whiteness is never the external whitewash of a sepulchre, a white veil hiding a mass of corruption. Their purity begins in the soul. The outer whiteness is only the outshining of a central rectitude. The dirtiest day and the muddiest circumstances leave them unstained. They walk in white even in Sardis! They are in the world, but they are not of the world. They are as busy as anybody else in the ways of labor, but their citizenship is in heaven. Whenever we see the white garments in Sardis we see something of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

Now it is men and women of this kind who are the most powerful and arresting witnesses for the Lord. White is always very striking, but never more so than when it is the white flower of a blameless life. And when such a life is seen in the streets of Sardis everybody turns to look at it. When it reveals itself in a workshop, or in an office, or in a club, it captivates and captures all who are near. I do not say they like it, but they are compelled to see it. It has a mesmeric influence upon them, and everybody recognizes its presence.

And how did they come by such whiteness? How was this miracle of purity wrought in Sardis? "Who are these that arrayed in white robes and whence came they? These are they who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Made white by blood! It is a startling figure. Their lives have been washed in the sacrificial love and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Only Christ can make them clean. Only His grace can wash away the perilous stuff that weighs upon the heart. His grace can wash out the unclean bias and the foul desire. His grace can make life clean. "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool."—In Bible Champion.