

the name Father as expressive of all God's relations to our sinful race. It seems to me impossible in the light of reason and scripture to maintain such a position. The two views of the divine character, as Ruler and Father, are not antagonistic. It is not derogatory to God that He should rule, and rule with absolute sovereignty. Nothing can be better for the creatures than to be ruled by the good pleasure of a God infinite in His wisdom, mercy and love. Besides, a father without authority to govern his offspring, who does not control them, fails in the exercise of his true functions. It is true that we should distinguish between rule borne by a father and that exercised, often ruthlessly, by strangers. Paternal rule is not magisterial or military in its spirit and methods. It is tempered by love of offspring—what the Greeks called *storge*, but it is not remiss or ineffective on this account. We may therefore speak of God, without dishonoring Him or misrepresenting Him, as the King, the Sovereign, as well as the Father of His creature man.

The Fatherhood of God, were it not for sin, should certainly be regarded as identical with His sovereignty over men. But sin involved the breach of sonship on the part of man. He thus forfeited the right to sonship; and, if he is to enjoy it again, he must be restored by grace to the status lost by sinning. This is clearly the New Testament view of the matter. God is Our Father in Christ Jesus, and in virtue of our exercising faith or trust in Him. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe in His name; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." If God were our Father by nature, and therefore the Father of all men indiscriminately, it would not be necessary to be born of God and to believe in Christ in order to gain a status already enjoyed. His work and that of His Spirit would be superfluous for this purpose, and thus the view, which with many is popular, closely looked into, proves most dishonoring to the Redeemer.

The term which is correlative with Fatherhood of God is