

*believeth that Jesus is the Christ is BORN OF GOD. We have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, ABBA FATHER.*

Whilst, then, we glory in this relation, and boast in having God as our Father—shall we neglect to live as the children of that all-perfect Parent? Think not to say within yourselves, *We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.* Equally vain would be the boast of the Christian, if his practice belied that relation, or his works declared that he was rather of his father the devil.

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord,* is an evangelical precept founded on reason and justice: if I then be a Father, where is my honor, saith the Lord of Hosts? Will not disobedience, and ingratitude, a neglect of his service and a profanation of his name, fall under all the severity of this rebuke, *Do ye thus requite the Lord? O foolish people and unwise! Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? hath he not made and established thee?* Created in His image and likeness, shall we yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin? Being created in Christ Jesus unto good works, shall we then continue in sin?

God forbid: but glorying in this relation and looking with hope to the consummation of its happy privileges, let us strive to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is also perfect, that, at the Day of Judgment, we may be greeted with these rapturous words, *Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inhe it the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.*

Yet although God be our Father, and as a Father pitieth his own children, so doth the Lord pity us who fear him—although, by our knowledge of this relation, we are peculiarly incited to follow that blessed pattern in all holy conversation and godliness, there is yet another still more important sense annexed to the word FATHER in this Article. In the subsequent divisions of the Creed, we meet with the Son and Holy Ghost, as well as with a particular and express allusion to their nature and offices—who, with the Father first mentioned, constitute those “Three Persons in the Unity of the Godhead who are of one substance, power and eternity.” He is the Father of whom the Son is begotten, and from whom, together with the Son, the Holy Ghost proceeds: He is the Fountain and Source of that Divinity which is common to the Triune Godhead.

And the priority of the Father consists, not in any pre-eminence or superior excellence in Essence or Attributes, but because the Father hath that Essence of himself; the Son by communication from the Father—or to use the language of Christ himself, *as the*