

This, Mr. Brooks dismisses, as perhaps, in the view of some, "too metaphorical," and turns to the "Lord's Prayer," so-called. He says:

"Hear Him [Jesus] teaching all men to pray, 'Our Father, who art in heaven.'"

Of course, the force of this reference lies in Mr. Brooks's expression "*all men*." How negligently that expression is here used becomes at once apparent the moment you remember that Jesus was not speaking to "all men" when he taught that prayer. He had withdrawn from the general "multitudes" into a mountain, and it was "his disciples" to whom he now spoke. "His disciples" are, throughout the discourse, a limited class, discriminated from men in general, from "all men," in such expressions as, "When men shall reproach you."

This is according to the narrative of Matthew. Luke tells us that "one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach *us* to pray, even as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto *them*"—whereupon follows the alternative form of the same prayer. Jesus, therefore, in the expression, "Our Father," taught not the fatherhood of God to "all men," but the fatherhood of God to his own disciples.

Mr. Brooks's third place is that saying of Jesus, uttered by Him when just risen from the dead: "I ascend unto my Father and to your Father." This—as Mr. Brooks himself intimates, but intimates without apparent consciousness that he thereby vacates his citation of all force to prove the universal fatherhood of God—this, I say, and this Mr. Brooks implies, establishes only God's relation of father to the "disciples" of Jesus.

Mr. Brooks's last text is an example of negligence, or of apparent negligence, on his part, more remarkable still. He quotes: "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God."

This, as a proof-text for "the certain truth that man, and every man, is a child of God"—assuredly it is surprising, extraordinary even. No one could have brought it forward as such who was not fully prepossessed with the persuasion of its being unnecessary to prove in any way whatever a doctrine assumed to be so self-evidently true. To any other man than such a man it must inevitably have occurred to inquire: "Why, if all men *are* indefeasibly children of God, should it have been needful for Christ to give a certain limited number of men power (or privilege) to *become* such?"

Does such a course of remark from Mr. Brooks show that at heart he feels independent of Scripture, free to make Scripture mean whatever he chooses? It looks like that at first. But we should, so thinking, do Mr. Brooks injustice. He is truly and profoundly reverent, obediently so, in presence of the Word of God. How, then, explain a handling of texts that at least seems so irreverent? Thus: Mr. Brooks is right, and is Scriptural, in his *thought*; it is only in his *image* for his thought that, whether or not right, he at least is not Scriptural. His real reverence for Scripture as a whole simply did not keep him from displaying an apparent irreverence toward particular places of Scripture.