

But all christians are dear brethren, for higher reasons. (a.) *They all have the same Father.*—They are descended from the most ancient, the most noble, and the most honourable family. They are heavenly in their extraction, partakers of the divine nature; born again, “not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible; by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” The whole human family are indebted to God for their daily temporal existence, but believers in Christ are indebted to Him for their spiritual existence. That special principle of life by which their soul is actuated, “comes from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.” He has “begotten them again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” It is a very endearing and encouraging title of Father the great Jehovah sustains to His children. If He be a Father to all His believing people, then as such He will protect them and watch over them with all that parental tenderness which their various circumstances render necessary. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord will pity them that fear him.” No evil shall befall them, nor any plague come nigh their dwelling, without permission. He will give His angels charge over them, to keep them in all their ways. He who is the Father of the rain, the Father of the universe, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, is also the living Father of all His believing people. It is natural for a child of God to go to Him in every danger—to seek His wisdom for direction—His power for defence—and His grace to bless. Believers, in short, have daily access with confidence by one Spirit, to the Father of mercy; they can therefore address Him as their Father in Heaven, as reconciled by their adorable Saviour Jesus Christ.

All christian believers are dear brethren, for (b) *they are all adopted into the same family.*—By nature and wicked works, they were once “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” They are called the children of Satan, the children of disobedience, and the children of wrath. It is by an act of sovereign and unmerited mercy that they are delivered from this their natural condition; that they are delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. “Behold,” saith the beloved apostle John, “what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we should be called the sons of God.” God the Father hath “predestinated them to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself according to the good pleasure of his will, wherein he has made them accepted in the beloved.” It is worthy of note that the privilege of the act of adoption comprehends in it many and great blessings. The adopted ones are entitled, as the children of the same Father, to all that He has adapted to make them both rich and happy. Every blessing, promise and privilege, both in the Old and New Testament, belong in an especial manner to them as their right. To them it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom; the secret of the Lord is with them, and He will shew them his covenant. They are precious and honourable in his esteem; he brings them into his banqueting-house, and his banner over them is “Love.” Brethren, you who can lawfully lay claim to an alliance as the children of the royal family of heaven, degrade not and undignify your character by the mingling in and associating with the ungodly and the profane. Choose and select those for your companions and associates who are the people of God, the excellent of the earth, children of the same united family, and descended from the same illustrious parentage.

Christians are dear brethren, for they (c) *all have access to and partake of the same rich provisions.*—Their Father in Heaven is the “Good Shepherd, therefore they shall not want.” He keeps His table richly and generously supplied with every kind of provision that is necessary to comfort, nourish and strengthen the soul to eternal life. This rich and unfailing nutriment was specially procured for believers by the death of Christ, as the “Lamb slain,” and is now exhibited