

nate fatherhood of God to men. In such expressions as those now to be quoted from him, of this idea, is it not the language of pure sentimentalism that at first thought Mr. Brooks seems to one to be using?

"The inspiring idea [of Jesus] is the fatherhood of God and the childhood of every man to Him. Upon the race and upon the individual, Jesus is always bringing into more and more perfect revelation the certain truth that man, and every man, is the child of God."

Mr. Brooks is very strong, very sweeping, not hastily but deliberately so, on this point. He says:

"This is the sum of the work of the Incarnation. . . . All statements concerning Him hold their truth within this truth,—that Jesus came to restore the fact of God's fatherhood to man's knowledge. . . . He is the redeemer of man into the fatherhood of God. . . . Man is the child of God by nature. He is ignorant and rebellious,—the prodigal child of God; but his ignorance and rebellion never break that first relationship. . . . To reassert the fatherhood and childhood as an unlost truth, and to re-establish its power as the central fact of life; to tell men that they were, and to make them actually be, the sons of God—that was the purpose of the coming of Jesus, and the shaping power of His life."

Mr. Brooks seems almost to be escaping, evading, the obligation to prove that his sentiment is the doctrine of Scripture, when he uses, concerning it, the following half mystical language:

"Of course, it is not possible to speak of such an idea—which is, indeed, the idea of the universe—as if it were a message intrusted to the Son of God when He came to be the Saviour of mankind. It was not only something which He knew and taught; it was something which He was."

Again, when you read confident guesses like the following, you seem to be listening rather to one who speaks from his own sentiment, than to one who gets his communication from authority outside of and above himself:

"He [Jesus] must have become aware that all men were God's sons, and felt the desire to tell them so and make their sonship a reality, kindling like fire within Him, just in proportion as He came to know, softly and gradually, under the skies of Galilee and the roof of the carpenter, the deep and absorbing mystery that He himself was the Son of God."

It does not take you by surprise—after an expression so close on the border of the sentimental as the foregoing—to find Mr. Brooks saying:

"It is not my purpose to prove here that this which I have given is a true statement of the idea of Jesus."

That looks, at first, like an easy air of superiority, on Mr. Brooks's part, in declining to seek in Scripture proof for his central idea. And when, notwithstanding, some ostensible proof from Scripture is adduced, the apparent negligence with which the process is conducted, confirms your impression that the speaker felt such resort on his part to be quite unnecessary. Mr. Brooks says:

"If any man had a doubt, I should only want to open the Gospel with him at four most solemn places."

Of these four places, the parable of the Prodigal Son is the first.