

### The Fatherhood of God.\*

DEAR EDITOR:—I would not by word or inference reflect on Bro. Freeman, "as a preacher of God's gospel." I am quite sure he believes in the New Birth, that he experiences its blessedness, and is happy in being used of God, in helping many more to know its reality. The standing and position of Bro. F. and the scope and influence of the paper in which he writes, demand that his statements, on the Universal Fatherhood of God, should not and shall not go unchallenged, for on this subject, he is bewildering and misleading. And each progressive step taken by him, but adds "confusion worse confounded." The potter has power over the clay, and moulds as he will, one lump into the likeness of a dog, one a hog, one into the image of a man. Bro. F. says the image of the potter is the potter's son. I ask why, he so says? and it gives him the "cold shivers" to only be able to give as a reason, that the "hog and dog" were not made in the potter's image and likeness. Has Bro. F. based his argument on God's breathing unto man the breath of lives, "it would have been more worthy of him, and worth an answer. I know not how Bro. F. can get free of being "classed" in the animal kingdom, or how he can "rule" "hog" or "dog" out. I noticed, just after Bro. F. had the chill, in his hurry, he "unwittingly, I am sure," run into the embrace of the brotherhood of the devil, but then the logical conclusion of his argument, compels him into strange places. For if man is a spirit, and the devil is a spirit, and God is father of both, how then can he get clear of acknowledging the devil as his brother?

I repeat, if men are the sons of God by natural birth, all that is needed is to win their affections, and carry that life up to its highest point of attainment if by natural birth, he is born of the Spirit, there is no place for the New Birth. A born child cannot be unborn. The holding that man is begotten of God in generation, discards regeneration. And if is worthy of note, in all Bro. F.'s letters, he never tried to once grapple with that problem. He says, "Fatherhood is a nature," and asks "how can we rightly image to our thought, the Fatherhood of God?" except through the fatherhood as we know it among men and that idealized and multiplied by infinity." "As we know it among men" one child belongs just as much to the father as another. "Imaged as we know it among men," "distinctions of limited Fatherhood" and "full orb'd" sonship are a farce. Servants are created but sons are born, and each partakes of his father's nature. They, every one, are "partakers of flesh and blood." Turn which way you will, you are shut up to this, if Adam was a son of God, in the sense that term is known among men, then he partook of God's nature, and when he fell, Divinity fell. When a son of Adam sinks to hell, a son of God, Divinity itself, is left to wreath forever in the torment of the damned.

But far more confusing and serious becomes your statement as I read them in the light of "that deathless sentence," John 3:16. You say "Fatherhood is a nature," that Fatherhood and Sonship, are correlative terms, "sonship, imaged, as we know it among men," would require the life of a son to save one son from death's penalty. One son could but atone for one. If men, by nature, were sons, Christ could not purchase redemption for millions with His blood, and then have such a mighty margin left. That he could enter heaven's portals, the King of Glory, and sit upon his Father's throne. Had man been divine and sentenced to eternal doom, the Divine One would have to go into eternal night to redeem one soul. Say not because I deny man's divinity, apart from Jesus Christ, that I set a light value upon man. No, Jesus taught that one soul was worth more than all the material world. But John 3:16 teaches one Son of God is worth more than millions of the sons of men. I minimize not humanity, but magnify Sovereign Grace, when I say God loved and gave His Only Begotten Son, and that one Jesus is worth more than all Adam's race, because imaged as we know sonship among men. He possessed His Father's nature, therefore was he able "by one offering to forever perfect them that are sanctified."

Another statement calculated to give impressions, that Bro. F. does not hold, is this, "By the fact of his Fatherhood, God is obligated to do his utmost to recover the lost soul from sin." Daniel 4:35 reads, "And he doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand or dare say unto him, What doest thou?" Read in the light of that verse, Bro. F.'s statement, smacks of the dry rot of Universalism. Surely the "salvation of the sinner is wholly of Grace," surely God was under no obligation to any of Adam's sons. (Rom 8:20, 21.) It is by unmerited favor we are saved (Eph. 2:8.) Neither will God let the soul of a son come under condemnation to need recovering, (Phil. 1:6). "The ser-

vant abideth not in the house forever, but the Son abideth ever." (John 8:35). Rev. A. J. Gordon, D. D., in his "Ministry of the Spirit," says, "By no process of evolution, however prolonged, can the natural man be developed into the spiritual man; by no process of degeneration can the spiritual man deteriorate into the natural man. These two are from a totally different stock and origin; the one is from beneath, the other is from above. There is but one way through which the relation of sonship can be established, and that is by begetting. That God has created all men does not constitute them his sons in the evangelical sense of the word. The sonship on which the New Testament dwells so constantly is based absolutely and solely on the experience of the new birth, while the doctrine of universal sonship rests either upon a daring denial or a daring assumption—the denial of the universal fall of man through sin, or the assumption of the universal regeneration of man through the Spirit. In either case the teaching belongs to "another gospel," the recompense of whose preaching is not a beatitude but an anathema."

Yes, Bro. F., the turning of your "wall" of Universal Fatherhood, makes it higher. It now has in addition to a Begotten Son, a full Orb Son and a limited son, the devil a son. It turns so easily and looms so high, one is not minded of rock, "but a fence of straw and when the torch is applied to it, the fire goes near to burn the house it was built to defend." Trusting you have wholly recovered from that "cold shiver," positively refusing to believe the devil's brother could in any wise do the great and glorious work, you have and are doing for our Father, I sincerely hope yours may be a Happy Christmas, a pleasant and prosperous New Year.

R. M. BYNON.

### Rev. J. D Freeman's Reply.

DEAR EDITOR:—To a bat the very sunshine is "bewildering and misleading" but that is no reason why the light should be put out. Bro. B. says "it would have been more worthy" of me "and worth an answer" if I had based my argument, for man's sonship on God's "breathing into him the breath of lives" instead of on his "creation in God's image and likeness." That remark does little credit to my brother's respect for the Scriptures, for both the above statements are Scriptural. They are found in the two creation stories—one in the first, the other in the second chapter of Genesis. They are of equal authority and value and equally "worthy" of Bro. B.'s respect, since they are worthy of God himself. One describes the method, the other states the result of the divine creative act. God created man in his own image and likeness by breathing into him the breath of life or lives. Created in God's image by this inbreathing, man possesses personality, self-consciousness, conscience, affections, reason and will. Since he has endowed man with these spiritual faculties, involving immeasurable potencies and possibilities, God loves man with a father's love. He seeks to come into personal and harmonious relations with the creature thus wonderfully endowed. He looks upon him as his child to be instructed, guided, sought, warned, disciplined, redeemed. It does not appear that he has similarly endowed "the hog and the dog," or that he has engaged in like activity on their behalf. If Bro. B. cannot see how to "rule hog and dog out" of man's class he is indeed sunk in "confusion worse confounded." That cold shivery feeling comes back to me as I see him floundering in helpless bewilderment.

I am twitted with having "run into the embrace of the devil." Really, I was not conscious of any such "embrace." Bro. B. does not mean that and already regrets having written it. Everybody knows it was not I who dragged the devil question into this discussion. I have referred to him cautiously, having some regard for the limitations of human knowledge. But if I grant that the devil is a lost son, do I thereby "run" into the "embrace" of his brotherhood. I regret that one creature of God has become a devil, and am glad it is not necessary for me to receive his embraces. If a brother of mine should become a murderer, it would not dispose me to think more kindly of murder, or compel me to share his guilt. Bro. B.'s figure when he uses the word "embrace" is slightly strained. I fear he is a failure as a humorist.

But in his second-paragraph the core of the whole question is touched. He says if by nature man is God's child there is "no place for the new birth." Yet he himself indicates the place for the New Birth when he admits it is "necessary to win man's affections." Exactly. And the winning of man's affections constitutes the New Birth. Bro. B. writes as though it were a small matter for God to win man's affections. But it is everything so far as regeneration is concerned. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." When the heart, man's life is given a new attachment, a new direction, a new centre. There is a new controlling power resident within him, even the Holy Spirit of God. The man is thus renewed in "the spirit of" his "mind" and is regarded as a new creation. No new faculties are im-

parted in regeneration—but a vital change takes place in the ruling principle of man's life. Bro. B. evidently believes that before regeneration man is devoid of spiritual faculties or organs. He is on a level with "the hog and the dog." According to his teaching the very capacity for spirituality, for religion, must be created in the sinner before God can deal with him. That is the point where he and I part company. I hold with Paul that man as man is endowed with spiritual faculties that he may feel after God if haply he may find him. It is by virtue of this capacity, this faculty, this possibility, that we as men are "the offspring of God." Man is not a "divine" being, nor is he a mere animal. He is a human being. Embedded in his humanity are the capacities, the faculties, the organs, though enfeebled by sin may be quickened by the Holy Spirit and brought to the place of sovereignty in man's life. This occurs when man under the brooding influence of the Holy Spirit responds to God's loving call, "Son give me thine heart." Now Bro. B. "can never once" say again that I have not "grappled with the problem" of the relation of the two births. If man was not created with some capacity for God he could never receive God—never come to the second birth.

But how strange it sounds for Bro. B. to assert that he does not "minimize man!" How amazing to hear him declare that one man is worth more than the material world! The man whom he denudes of all honor, whom he empties of all spiritual content, whom he degrades to the level of the brute creation so that he cannot separate them into different classes—such a man has no spiritual value whatever. God could just as easily make a Christian out of a hog or a dog. And Bro. B. evidently believes and teaches that. It is all a matter of divine choice. If God willed to make the beasts of the field the subjects of the regenerative activity, they would have place in his spiritual kingdom. But I claim that God cannot make them the subjects of such an influence since he disqualified them for it in their creation.

Moreover, if man is such a creature as Bro. B. paints him, Jesus would not have died for him. There would have been no necessity. For such a creature could not sin. The possibility of sinning does not inhere in "the hog and the dog." They are free of guilt. Bro. B.'s anthropology would sweep away the Cross of Christ. And why does my brother open his mouth boldly and confidently to rebuke men, to warn them, to persuade them, to entreat them to be reconciled to God if they have no spiritual faculties or capacities? I wish he could see how inconsistent he is, how he misinterprets Scripture, how he arms the enemies of the Cross of Christ by robbing man of his birthright.

Bro. B. claims to find my writings tainted with "Romanism," "Armenianism," and "the dry rot of universalism." And yet I am not the least bit of a Romanist but a Baptist; not an Armenianist, but a moderate Calvinist; not a Universalist but something of an optimist, though the Scriptures make it clear to me that men—I tremble to think how many of them—will persist in endless sin and suffer endless penalty.

J. D. FREEMAN.

### How we Went Raspberrying.

One August morning the problem of "something for tea" became so pressing that we determined to revive a youthful custom and "go raspberrying." "We" were a friend whom I will call Lucy, and myself. The expedition was to be conducted as far as possible on wheels, and our destination was "our woodlot." A man accustomed to knowing things had assured us that a year old clearing is the place to look for raspberries.

We started at ten o'clock, each with two large tin cans strapped to her wheel. In one of the cans were sandwiches and cake, and in another a bottle of cream. The cream was a fine touch on the part of Lucy. It stimulated the imagination, [and converted trembling hope into solid belief of success. Already we beheld ourselves seated in a shady nook, regaling ourselves upon the surplus of our loaded cans. It was so in our youth: it should be so again. Wild raspberries and cream, infused, not coarsely eaten, amidst the fragrance of their native woods!—Oh! Oh!

The wheels whirled along westward to the Deep Hollow Road. If you know this road, you will remember, not far from the corner, a branch of it which climbs the hill to the right, and, indifferent to the public preference, takes its own wild and mysterious way to the hills. Up this way we turned, the exhilaration of the strong young morning in every vein. The whole world about us seemed in accord with our project. The warm sunshine on the bushes smelt of raspberries. The wind promised them in hurried whispers. The knowing leaves pointed and encouraged. The locust twanged his single chord, and sang of nothing else. Not the word, but the spirit of it, was in the very clouds, crouching among near hilltops, or wandering contentedly along distant fruitful spaces.

Another fork in the road, and again we took the less frequented way to the right. Sometime walking, sometimes riding, we followed it along the edge of a wood into a neat farmyard, where a young girl was engaged in

\*As Mr. Bynon's article was received too late to appear in last week's issue, and Mr. Freeman, according to the rules of public discussion, having the right of final reply, we have considered that it would be most satisfactory to our readers that Mr. Bynon's article and Mr. Freeman's reply should appear as they do here together. It would seem unprofitable to continue this discussion further.