THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

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The Fatherhood of God by Robert Mitchell

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ROBERT MITCHELL

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BY

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PREFACE.

"EVER in my distresses and my loneliness," writes Carlyle, "has fantasy turned, full of longing, to that unknown Father, who perhaps far from me, perhaps near, either way invisible, might have taken me to his paternal bosom, there to lie screened from many a woe. Thou beloved Father, dost thou still, shut out from me only by these penetrable curtains of earthly space, wend to and fro in the crowd of the living? Or art thou hidden by those far thicker curtains of the Everlasting Night, or rather of the Everlasting Day, through which my mortal eye and outstretched arms need not strive to reach?" It is so a human heart works along the lines of the lower and the higher relations. It feels its way to a

Its longings lead it over all the boundaries by which a false science or a vain philosophy would confine it. The Father. to whom all the children created in His image are dear, is drawing them to Himself by many a cord. Men who understand this will not be moved by what is going on in the laboratory or the dissecting-room. The universe means more than chemistry and nerves. It is not into empty space affection spreads out its arms. By early sicknesses, by early deaths, by many a blighted hope, by heartaches which no words can picture, the great Father is leading the human heart to Himself. The goodness of God is leading men to repentance. patience of God is giving men an opportunity of testing every scheme by which they would solve the problem of the world. He waits to be gracious.

Science has many irons in the fire, and with deftly blows is hammering some of them into formidable weapons in whose presence Christian men are expected to tremble. Why should it be so? What secret has human thought discovered that can enable the race to do without the Father? Can men stand in the bosom of a family and think only of fate or force?

The following chapters are written in the faith that nothing can shake the idea of the Fatherhood of God. The subject is vast, and has many sides, at some of which we have tried to look with such light as we had at our command. The pages produced are simple, but we trust they are not on that account dull. Theological controversy has gathered a considerable literature round the question, a review of which would be interesting enough had that been our aim; our object, however, is a practical one, and we have tried to keep that in view throughout.

God may be fitly styled Father: Father of all things being: Father of all intellectual beings especially: the Father particularly of all men; and among men, chiefly of good men.—Barrow.

That Maker and Father of this universe it is hard to find out, and having found Him, it is impossible to express Him unto all men.— Plato.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.—John.

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