

THE EVERLASTING FATHER

"His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isa. 9:6.)

Two of these titles of our Lord Jesus have rather bewildered many of His children, and the churches in general holding to the Papal heresy of a triune God – or three Gods in one, equal in power, glory and all other respects, have rather been interested in adding to the bewilderment than in explaining the text.

Not to go into the subject in great detail, we would mention a few thoughts on the titles – Mighty God, and Everlasting Father.

The English word God, as found in the Old Testament, is the translation of several Hebrew words – sometimes one, sometimes another. In this instance it is the word El. El signifies strong or powerful, consequently is applicable to any powerful being and especially so to the most powerful – the Almighty Jehovah.

That the word is thus used may be readily seen by any one who will carefully note the following texts, in which the English translations of the Hebrew word El are in italics:

"It is in the power of my hand." (Gen. 31:29) – "there shall be no might in thine hand." (Deut. 28:32) – "neither is it in our power." (Neh. 5:5) – "like the great mountains." (Psa. 36:6) – "in the power of thine hand to do it." (Prov. 3:27) – "pray unto a god [mighty one] that cannot save." – (Isa. 45:20) – "who among the sons of the mighty." (Psa. 89:6) – "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty" [the saints]. (Psa. 82:1) – "Who is like unto thee O Lord [JEHOVAH] among the Gods" [mighty or ruling ones]. (Exod. 15:11) – "Give unto the Lord [JEHOVAH] O ye mighty." (Psa. 29:1) – "The mighty God [ruler] even the Lord" [JEHOVAH]. (Psa. 50:1.)

Notice the above texts carefully and critically and all will agree that the context in every case shows the meaning of the Hebrew word El to be powerful one. How clearly it is stated in the last three quotations that JEHOVAH is the chief "el" and ruleth over all other el – powerful ones. And it should be known to all, that JEHOVAH is the name applied to none other than the Supreme Being – our Father, and him whom Jesus called Father and God. (John 20:17.) The meaning then of the words "Mighty God" in our text, is, – He shall be called the mighty powerful. And so he is, for to him the Father has given all power in earth and heaven – (Matt. 28:19, and 11:27.) "He is Lord of all" – next to the Father for "The head of Christ is God." (1 Cor. 11:3.) They are one in mind, purpose, etc., because Jesus gave up his own will and took the Father's (John 5:30) just as we must give up our will, mind, spirit and receive the Father's if we would be made heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord. Does any one ask further proof of a distinction of persons? If so we request such to read Matt. 22:44 – Jesus' application to himself of Psa. 110:1, remembering that the words used by David, translated Lord [Master] are totally distinct and entirely different words, the first one being Jehovah, and the other adon. We give Young's translation of this verse

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"The affirmation of Jehovah to my Lord –
Sit at my right hand,
Till I make thine enemies thy footstool."

Now let us notice the second appellation – "Everlasting Father." This in the Hebrew signifies just what it does in the English, viz.: a father forever. The word father signifies cause or authorship of being – or life giver. So that Isaiah's declaration means that Jesus shall be hereafter known as an author of life – or life giver to some one. Next we inquire to whom will he give life? and Paul answers "As in Adam all die so in Christ shall all be made alive." This teaches then that Christ becomes the Father of the entire race. Next we ask what kind

of life or nature will [R296 : page 10] Christ give the race? And the answer is, a perfect human nature, and hence an eternal human life – just what they lost through Adam's transgression. So Paul tells us (Rom. 5:18,19) "As through one [person's] offence sentence came on all men to condemnation [condemning all to a loss of life] so also, through one [person's] righteous act sentence came on all men to justification of life. [That is, through the obedience of Christ the death penalty is to be removed – in his death it was paid and all men shall have a right to life again – the same life and nature once possessed, then lost, which has been redeemed or purchased back.] "For as through the disobedience of one man the many were made sinners [and because sinners deprived of life,] so also, through the obedience of the one [Christ] the many [the same number] will be constituted [made] righteous." And being no longer sinners they will no longer be subject to the penalties of sin – sickness, pain, DEATH.

We see then that the special work of Christ for the human race was the counteracting or rolling back of sin and its penalty – death (the loss of life). In this, he is the Great Physician or Restorer; and the age during which this (result of his death on their behalf,) will be accomplished is called "The times [years] of restitution" – or giving back – of the blessings lost through the entrance of sin. Human life was the principal thing lost and it Jesus is to give back – and in so doing he shall (future) be called the "Everlasting Father."

Adam was so created that he might be the father or life giver to a race of human beings. Through disobedience he lost his own right to life – became a dying sinner. He could only give to his posterity what he possessed – a dying nature – and consequently none of the race ever attained perfect life. Thus Adam failed to become in the proper sense a father or life giver. It is because Christ will accomplish this work of life giving in which Adam failed, that he is called the "Everlasting Father." [R297 : page 10]

But does some one inquire, Is not Jesus a spiritual being and of the divine nature since his resurrection? Yes. Then would not any life imparted by Him be of the same nature as his own, viz.: Divine and Immortal? By no means, Jehovah is the life giver, or father of all creation; yet all creation is not possessed of the Divine nature. Besides we must not deal in inferences while we have clear teachings of Scripture to guide us in this matter. If Jesus be the Father or giver of the Divine nature to the world in the next age, he must be equally so to his church of this Gospel age. How is this – is Jesus ever called our Father? No, he is called our "Captain," "Leader," "Forerunner," "Master," "Head," "Lord" but never is he called our Father. On the contrary, Jesus' own teachings and that of the Apostles, is that Jehovah is the only Father or Giver of the Divine nature, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is our Father and hath begotten us (1 Pet. 1:3) – that as He raised up Jesus to the Divine nature and likeness He would raise up us also by His Spirit.

It was Jesus himself who taught us to pray "Our Father." (Luke 11:2.) Who also said: "Glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:16) "Be the children of your Father, (vs. 45.) "Pray to thy Father in secret and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee." (Matt. 6:6.) "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of," etc., etc., Who said again, "I ascend to my Father and to your Father to my God and your God." (John 20:17.)

Again Jesus made a very emphatic statement of our dear and close relationship to him and to The Father when he said – "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matt. 12:50.) "Call no man Father on the earth for one is your father even God and all ye are brethren." (Matt. 23:9.) And Paul assures us that "Both he that sanctifieth (Jesus) and they that are sanctified (the "body") are all one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Heb. 2:11)

Do these statements seem out of harmony with that other statement of Jesus (John 10:27,28), "My sheep hear my voice and I give unto them eternal life"? We think not, for while it is thus expressly stated that we are begotten of God – that he is our Father, and that "God hath both raised up the Lord and will also raise up us also by his own power," (1 Cor. 6:14) it is also stated that "He which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus." (2 Cor. 4:14) The harmony of these Scriptures shows that Jehovah is our Father – life-giver – though he has used the Spirit and the Word as his agents in our begetting, and will use Jesus as his agent in our birth or resurrection.

But though accepting the statements of our Lord on this subject as conclusive, yet we desire to understand if we may, how Christ will be the "Everlasting Father" to the world, while Jehovah is the Father of the "little flock" who shall with Jesus inherit the kingdom; assured, that every such distinction has a reason, which, if understood, should shed some light upon the general plan.

First then, we remark that Jesus did a work for his church, without which they never could have received either the begetting or birth to the Divine Nature, i.e., he redeemed our human nature. Like all others of the human race, the church were sinners, and like all others of the race, we were redeemed – or justified, by the precious blood (life) of Christ. No one is justified to the Divine Nature by Christ's death – no, it was human life that was lost through Adam, and to human life all are justified by Christ. It was because it was a human nature that was lost that Jesus left the glory he had with the Father, and took upon Him the human nature – that he might give or sacrifice it as a ransom for our human nature. In a word, it must be evident to all that Jesus' death is the basis or cause of a restitution of the human nature, but not a cause of the giving of the Divine Nature.

Secondly, we remark that the Divine nature is Jehovah's gift – given as a reward of obedience (even unto death) to those who, by patient perseverance in well doing seek for it – "Glory, Honor and Immortality."

Paul informs us that it was because of obedience even unto the death of the human, that God highly exalted Jesus, or made him a Divine being. (All spiritual beings do not possess the Divine nature – Angels for instance.) And the promise held out during the Gospel age, under which the "Bride" or "Body" of Christ is called out of the World is, that if we follow in Jesus' footsteps, we shall attain to the same prize and experience the same high exaltation from the human nature to the Glory, Honor and Immortality of the Divine – as members of a body under Jesus our head.

The conditions of this high exaltation are so severe, that though many are called, few will be chosen, because only a few will make their calling and selection sure by so running as to obtain that great prize. (1 Cor. 9:24.) It is an extraordinary prize, and it is no easy race as all the runners testify from the head all down through this age. Yet, though difficult we run it with joy for the same reasons as the "head" – who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross despising the shame. (Heb. 12:2.)

Brother Paul tells us that the exceeding great and precious promises of the Word were given us, that by these (the strength and encouragement which they would afford us, as they did Jesus, to be "obedient even unto death") we might become partakers of the Divine nature. (2 Pet. 1:4.)

Let us glance at a few of these exceeding great and precious promises:

Jesus says: "To him that overcometh, I will grant to sit with me in my throne" (Rev. 3:21).

To him that overcometh, I will give power over the nations, and he shall rule, etc.,...even as I received of my Father. (Rev. 2:27.)

Paul says: "If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him." (2 Tim. 2:12.) "If we be [become] dead with him [dead to the World and to our own will – alive to the will of God] we shall also live with him." (2 Tim. 2:11.) If we seek Glory, Honor and Immortality, patiently and perseveringly we shall gain the prize. (Rom. 2:7.) Then again, he says that Christ is a son over a house of sons, whose house are we, if we hold fast to the end of the Gospel age, when the house will be finished. (Heb. 3:6.)

Peter mentions this special prize which is for the overcomers of this time saying: "Blessed be that God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who, according to his great mercy hath begotten us, again, to a living hope (through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead) to an inheritance incorruptible [immortal] undefiled [pure] and unfading, preserved in heaven for you,...that the proof of your faith...may be found to, [or result in] praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1:3-7. Diaglott).

Our Father might have asked our sacrifice without telling us how great should be our reward, but he knew that the influence of these exceeding precious promises was needful, that we might properly value the titles and honors of earth, and be enabled to count them all but loss and dross for the excellencies promised us as members of the body of the Christ.

Thirdly, we notice that all of these promises designed to help to the Divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) belong to the Gospel age. They will all be fulfilled when the church – or body is exalted to glory with the head – set with him on his throne. Read each of these again carefully and any others and see that none of the exceeding precious promises belong to the next age; all are confined by the context, to this age. To those who have covenanted to sacrifice the human, "now is the

acceptable time" – and to such only is the Divine nature given. True there are promises and great ones to mankind, to be fulfilled in the next age during the reign of The Christ head and body, but these are all earthly promises and will not compare with our heavenly ones. Among these, are the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Israel and the nations, all of whom are to be blessed under our spiritual Kingdom which will be the agency and power through which they will be restored to human perfection and happiness; as Paul expresses it: "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made PERFECT." (Heb. 11:40).

We see then, that the Divine nature comes to the church, as to Jesus, as a reward from the Father Jehovah for the race of faith well run, for the crucifixion – sacrifice, of the human nature. Does some one ask: Was not our human nature condemned to death already as sinful, and if so how could it be accepted of God as a sacrifice? Ah! that was where we were blessed in Jesus, the same as the World, i.e., his death paid our penalty and justified us. Had it not been for our ransom, we should have had nothing to sacrifice and could never have received the divine reward; but being justified we could present our justified humanity "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." (Rom. 12:1.) Our human nature having been redeemed by our Lord's death, must in the sight of Jehovah, be just as pure and perfect as was the human nature of Jesus, for his perfectness was imputed to us. Consequently, being justified by faith, we may run the race as acceptably as did our Lord. And though the race is a difficult one we are not alone in it as he was for he was a solitary traveler and "of the people there was none with him," while we have in each other helps by the way; and in Him as our Leader and "Fore-runner" a perfect example, and above all his watchful eye to guide and direct our course and to give "help in every time of need," as we climb after him. "Few there be that find this narrow difficult way. It is "a little flock to whom it is their Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom."

We conclude then that the titles, Mighty God, and Everlasting Father, are titles which fully understood, are very appropriate to Our Lord Jesus [R298 : page 10] Christ. And we might add that so perfectly is his Bride – body – church, associated with him, both in filling up the measure of the sufferings – being joined in sacrifice and also in the Glory that shall follow, that the same titles are applicable to the Church as his body – for "He that hath freely given us Christ, shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" "Therefore all things are yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's."

After the sacrifice – soon follows the power which will, under him as our head, constitute the whole body of Christ the "Mighty God" (el – powerful one) to rule and bless the nations – and the body with the head, shall share in the work of restoring the life lost in Adam, and therefore be members of that company which as a whole will be the Everlasting Father to the restored race.
