

THE USE OF THE DIVINE TITLES

A Proof of Inspiration.

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(At the Keswick Conference, 16th July, 1895)¹

I PROPOSE to commence by taking one of the first questions that have been sent in to be answered during the Conference, and the Question is-

"Why do we have the word 'God' in the 1st of Genesis, and 'Yahweh God' in the 2nd chap, and 'Yahweh' in the 4th chap.; and are these titles used apparently indiscriminately?"

I assume that the question is put honestly, and not hostilely, against the inspiration of the Word of Yahweh.

The popular theory is that Moses, when he sat down to write the book of Genesis, had before him a number of old documents written by different individuals—one of them always used the word "Elohim," or God; the other always used "Yahweh," or Lord; and a third used the combined title, the "Lord God," or Yahweh Elohim.

This of course is purely imagination, a theory invented to explain phenomena; those who use such a theory as that, and oppose the inspiration of the Scriptures, need instruction. It says so in 2 Timothy 2:25: "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." This implies that those who "oppose themselves" need instruction. It says (if we have ears to hear), "if they had more instruction they would not oppose."

This is also part of a larger question, viz., the usage of the Divine Titles, and the perfection of the Word of Yahweh. We maintain, not only that Yahweh means what He says, but that He has a meaning for everything that He says; that if He uses one particular word, or one particular expression, there is a reason why no other word or expression would do; we may not know the reason of it, but it does not alter the fact—the fact is there. We have just received a very profitable word from 1 Kings 13; but did you notice in reading it that the man of Elohim that had come from Judah to prophesy against the altar Jeroboam had set up always said that "Yahweh" had said unto him. It was said unto him by the "Word of Yahweh" that he was not to eat meat, or drink water, or to stay in the place where his prophecy was to be delivered (verse 17). Then you notice that "the old prophet" who had induced him to go back with him, replied, "An messenger spake to me, bring him back." The man of Elohim went back with him, and the consequence was that on his way home a lion met, and slew him. Now, there is a word to us: beware of "old prophets!" and beware of "messengers" and the word of messengers; for there are various kinds of spirits that are gone out into the world, and you remember the words that "though we, or an messenger from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed." If one may speak for another I am sure I may say for all on this platform that we desire you not to take our word without trying it by the Word of Yahweh. There is not one here, if one may speak for another, that has

¹ I edited Jehovah and 'the Lord' to Yahweh and God to Elohim and El.

not years ago taught many things he would not teach now. This shows us the necessity of trying the word that is spoken now.

Now the different names for the Divine Being always imply a difference of relationship, just as various names do among men. We all are known by various names, and each name bespeaks different relationship. There are the names by which strangers know us and speak of us and to us; there are the names by which friends speak of us and to us; there are the names which we have in our home circles, and there are the names in the innermost circle no one outside has ever heard of. Each of these names bespeaks a difference of relationship, coming closer, and still closer according to the title that is used. Just so do these Divine names bespeak a certain relationship.

"ELOHIM" AND "YAHWEH"

Now, these names are for the most part marked by the use of various types in our Bibles. The word "God" in small letters always represents the word Elohim,—the word "GOD" in capital letters means "Yahweh,"—that is to say, it has the same consonants as the word "Elohim," but it has the same vowels as the word "Yahweh." The reason for that we cannot go into now, but I merely point it out in passing.

Then, where you have the word "LORD" in capital letters—it is Yahweh;—where you have it in small letters ("Lord ") it is either Adon, Adonai, Adonim, but you cannot tell which, for the types do not show the difference. All this points to the perfect use which Yahweh makes of these titles.

The word "Elohim" has regard to Yahweh as the Creator; it expresses the relationship of Yahweh to creation, and of creation to the power that created, and to the glory that is manifested in that creation.

But when you have the word "Yahweh" you have the covenant relationship of that Yahweh to the creatures of His hands. There is no such relationship to them in the word "God," but there is covenant relationship when you have the word "Yahweh." You can say "my God," and we can say "our God"; but we cannot say "my Yahweh," or "our Yahweh," because Yahweh is "my God;" Yahweh is "our God," and of itself it expresses and includes this relationship.

Now, so far from these words being used indiscriminately, I want to point out to you that they are used with the greatest precision, and with the greatest perfection. Man, you see, would divide the book of Genesis in accordance with the usage of these words, but he has, as usual, divided it in the wrong way, and begun at the wrong end. Yahweh has already divided the book of Genesis into twelve parts, and you can work them out for yourselves when I tell you that each one of the eleven after the Introduction (1:1 to 2:4) begins with the similar phrase. "These are the generations"—there are eleven of these, and these, with the Introduction, make up the twelve portions.

Now, note, that we find on examination that these titles are used indiscriminately in those divisions—for example, the First (or Introduction) is the only one that has the word "God" and no other title.

The fourth division is the only one that has "Yahweh " and no other title.

Then there are five that have both titles—these are the second, third, sixth, eighth, and eleventh divisions.

And one (the second) has all three Titles—"God," "Yahweh," and "Yahweh Elohim."

There are four that have neither. So you see that man's theory about the usage of these titles entirely breaks down when we come to examine it in the light of the divisions into which Yahweh has divided the book.

Read the book of Genesis with this object, and mark out and find these twelve divisions and see what those generations are—and note the persons using the title; they all use "Yahweh," except the Serpent; there is no relationship of Yahweh to the Serpent; Abimelech uses it to Isaac, but not to Abraham; the sons of Heth do not use it; Pharaoh does not use it; Joseph's brethren do not use it; and, most remarkable of all, Joseph does not use it, but then he had it in his name, for part of the name Joseph is part of the word "Yahweh."

Now, when we open the first chapter we have "God." "God moved," "God said," "God created," "God made," "God divided." Thirty-five times in that brief account of the creation (five times seven: the perfection of spiritual perfection). Why? To impress upon us the fact that there is no evolution here, but a living person, moving and acting, producing the work of His own hands.

But when we come to the second chapter—to the creation of man, and the dealings of this Elohim with man, whom He has made, then we find that this "Elohim," this God, is also Yahweh—that he stands in a covenant relationship to Him. Hence we have the title, "Yahweh Elohim."

So, when you come to the account of the Flood, there are two accounts of the animals. In one "Elohim" speaks to Noah, and tells him what to do, and in the other it is "Yahweh" who speaks to him and tells him what to do. Both are correct; and you will find when it says "God" told him to take the animals into the ark it had reference to the twos (Gen. 6:13, 19-22)—reference to creation. But when He tells him to take "clean beasts" into the ark by sevens, which had relation to spiritual things and to spiritual worship, we may well understand that it is "Yahweh" who speaks to him and gives the command (7:1-3).

And so we find it throughout the Old Testament. In Exodus 6 He says,—"I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty (El-Shaddai), but by My name Yahweh was I not known to them." That has created a great difficulty in the minds of many, but when you understand what the meaning of the word know is, then the difficulty vanishes immediately; it does not mean to have knowledge of, but it means to understand; it does not merely mean to know about a thing, but to know the thing: we may know of a person without knowing him? That is what it is here. The Patriarchs used the word "Yahweh" over and over again; they knew of it, but they did not know what it meant, the meaning had not been revealed to them. Just as Manaoh did not know it was the messenger of Yahweh till after that wondrous act in the bringing of fire out of the rock to consume the offering, then it says Manaoh knew. This is the word that is used, and it means to know by experience.

Then there is an interesting example in 2 Chronicles 18:31. Jehoshaphat had gone into the battle, but had made an unholy alliance with Ahab; he said, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people." Ahab took him at his word, but it is well that Yahweh did not, for Ahab "disguised himself;" but though he was disguised, Yahweh guided the arrow to the joint of his harness. Jehoshaphat (who was mistaken for Ahab), when he

was hard pressed by the enemy, "cried unto Yahweh;" and we read (verse 31) Yahweh helped him, and Elohim moved them to depart from him." As Yahweh He stood in no relationship to those Syrians—they were no covenant people. Jehoshaphat was in covenant with Yahweh, but Yahweh was not the Lord of those Syrians; and so, with the most absolute perfection it is written, "And Yahweh helped him, and God (Elohim) moved them to depart from him." Ah! it is well, I repeat, that God did not take Jehoshaphat at his word; he was not as Ahab when dogs licked Ahab's blood, but he was delivered by his covenant Yahweh.

Then there are several wonderful combinations of the Yahweh titles, which it is not possible to go into now. In Things to Come there is a short Bible study, giving the whole of these Yahweh titles.

GOD (EL) ALMIGHTY (SHADDAI)

Now, there is another title; He says (Exodus 6:3), "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty (El-Shaddai)." And it is well to repeat here that the first occurrence of a word or an expression in the Scriptures is, generally, if not always, the key to its meaning. At any rate it will always throw light on it.

Now with regard to this term "Almighty," there is a flood of light comes to us. For where does the term "Almighty" first occur? Genesis 17: "I am the Almighty God (El-Shaddai), walk before me." Now the word "Almighty" has not so much reference to power as to provision. It has reference specially to support, to nourishment and supply. And notice in that first occurrence—for these titles are always in harmony with the special circumstances that called them forth—it was at the very moment when Abraham was called to walk before Yahweh in a special manner with regard to the fulfillment of His promise. He was reminded by that title that Yahweh was able to support him, that He was able to supply all his need, though he might be cut off from the arm of flesh in walking absolutely before Yahweh; that was a precious moment for him to be reminded that El-Shaddai had all power to supply all his need.

And is it not very precious, that in the very first occurrence of the word "Almighty" in the New Testament you have the same blessed lesson (2 Cor. 6:17 and 18): "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith Yahweh, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the El-Shaddai." We today have the same promise that Abraham had, when He calls us to come out unto him. He reminds us by the use of this, title here that He is able to supply our every need, and to satisfy our heart's desire.

In the New Testament, the word "Lord" is the counterpart of the word "Yahweh." It relates to sonship, for the word in the New Testament brings in the additional thought, not merely of covenant relationship, but of sonship in a very special manner. "Ye are not your own." It can be said of us today, as it could be said of the Old Testament saints, but in a more especial manner, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." And the word "Lord," wherever we have it, always gives voice to that relationship. Hence it is you find that all the various duties and responsibilities of Christian life are all bound up with that title. If it says "Children, obey your parents," it adds "in the LORD," not in

Christ, not in Jesus, but "in the Lord," as recognizing His right to give this precept, and as recognizing His authority in the carrying it out. So again, it is "marry only in the Lord," i.e., in taking such an important and solemn step, recognize the Master's ordering, and the Master's will. Some might think it to be quite sufficient if it had said "a Christian," but it is not enough; that would apply if it said "marry only in Christ;" but it says "marry only in the LORD." So you have that title used in all perfection in connection with the various duties and responsibilities of the Lord's people in the New Testament; hence it is written, "No man can say that Jesus Christ is LORD but by the holy spirit" (1 Cor. 23:3). But surely, anybody can say it! Yes; with the lips. But to say that He is "Lord," is to take Him for my Master, is to take Him for my Owner, for the one who has authority over me, for the one who has right to rule my life, to order my goings; and no man can do that but by the holy spirit.

NEW TESTAMENT TITLES

Then, not only this title of "Lord," but even the titles of "Jesus," and "Christ," and "Jesus Christ," and "Christ Jesus," are all used with the same perfection. True, we use them in our prayers, our addresses, and in our hymns at random; but they are used in the Scriptures of truth in absolute and Divine perfection, so perfect, that to those who are initiated, we have one of the greatest proofs of the Divine authorship of this book.

For example, these words have meanings. "Jesus" is the name of His humiliation, of His shame. When He came down and took upon Him the nature of man, He became Jesus. "Christ" (Christos) means anointed; it means that He is the Father's anointed, the glorified one; and so, if we read "Jesus Christ," it means the humbled one who is now exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high. if you have the expression "Christ Jesus," it means the glorious one who afterwards humbled Himself even unto death. It is impossible here to give examples. We are always said to be "in Christ," never "in Jesus."

No! we are "in Christ." We are not in the humbled one, but we are in the glorious one; members of Christ's Body. That is what being "in Christ" means. It means that we are members of His mystical body; that we are immersed in holy spirit into His body, and made members of that body of which the glorious head is now in heaven, and his members are here upon earth; that body which is now waiting to be received up in glory.

Now, there is just the same perfection in the use of

HUMAN TITLES

I believe Yahweh gives all His people a "new name," as He did in the past in a great many cases. People give us names now, but they mean absolutely nothing; when Yahweh gives a name, you may be quite sure it is perfectly right. You may call your son "Shakespeare" if you like, but it does not follow he will be a poet; you may name him Martin Luther, but it does not follow he will be, a Protestant and a Reformer; but Yahweh's names suit the persons to whom He gives them. To the apostles He gave new names: Simon, He called Peter. And you notice that when the Lord said, "Simon! Simon! Satan hath desired to have you (plural, i.e., all the apostles) that he might sift you (plural) as wheat." He does not say, "Peter! Peter!" But He takes him back to his old natural name to remind him of that old nature in which he stood, and to remind him

that he could not stand in that nature apart from Him. Peter learned the lesson, for you notice in his first Epistle he says—"Peter an apostle "; in the second Epistle it is—"Simon a servant." As he gets nearer to the end of his days, and nearer to that end which the Lord had foretold, the name is used by Yahweh which corresponds with that, and which suits the sense which he had of his own relationship to Yahweh, of his own weakness, and of his own need of Divine grace.

Then there are the titles "Jacob" and "Israel." There was a letter in The Record a little while ago, asking a question about this, but so far as I could see, there was no answer to it. The writer says: "Can any of your readers suggest any principle which will account for what seems to me (you notice that) to be an arbitrary choice of the historian in Genesis, to use now the one and now the other patriarch; the idea of an ethical definition of that might perhaps hold good in some cases, but cannot, it seems to me, be maintained?"

Well, that is what it "seems" to the writer; but what is the fact? That these names are used with the greatest precision. Jacob was his natural name—Jacob means "supplanter," and that is the title that is used; that is the thought given to us. Israel means "a prince with El," a prevailer with El, and when that title is used that is the thought that is connected with it. For example, when Jacob saw the wagons, and they said to him, "Joseph is governor over the land of Egypt," Jacob's heart fainted (it does not say Israel's), and when he saw the wagons Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. Then, in the next verse: "And Israel said (yes! these are the words of the spiritual man, these are the words of the spirit of Yahweh upon him), "Joseph my son is yet alive," and that was the language of faith, therefore it suited the term Israel, and would not have suited the term Jacob so well.

THE EL OF JACOB.

Well, it is written, "Happy is he that hath the El of Jacob for his help" (Psalm 146). Why does it not say the El of Israel? That would have been very good, but it is better for us, because it says, "Happy is he that hath the El of Jacob." And who was Jacob? He was the one who found El for his help when, on that night he fled from his fathers house, and El met him at Beth-El, when he had nothing but a staff in his hand, and a stone for his pillow; when he had nothing, and when he needed everything, Yahweh met him and promised him all.

May it be our blessed portion to know what all this means in our own happy experience, and say, "I will praise Thy name, O Yahweh, for it is good" (Psalm 54:6).

It is written, "According to Thy name, so is Thy praise (Psalm 48:10).

"The El of Jacob" is 'the Elohim of all grace,' and happy is he that hath the El of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in Yahweh his Elohim " (Psalm 146:5).

"The El of Israel is He that giveth strength unto His people; blessed be Elohim!" (Psalm 68:35).