

Divine Titles.

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It is at once interesting, instructive, and edifying to mark the various titles under which God appears in the Holy Scriptures. These titles are expressive of certain characters and relationships in which God has been pleased to reveal Himself to man; and we are persuaded that the Christian reader will find solid profit and real spiritual refreshment and blessing in the study of this subject. We can do little more in this brief paper than offer a suggestion or two, leaving the reader to search the Scriptures for himself, in order to obtain a full understanding of the true meaning and proper application of the various titles.

In the first chapter of Genesis we have the first great title — "God" (Elohim): "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This presents God in unapproachable, incomprehensible Deity. "No man hath seen God at any time." We hear His voice and see His work in creation; but Himself no man hath seen or can see. He dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto.

But in Genesis 2, we have another title added to God, namely, "Lord" (Jehovah). Why is this? Because man is now on the scene, and "Lord" is expressive of the divine relation with man. Precious truth! It is impossible to read these two chapters and not be struck with the difference of the titles "God" and "the Lord God" — "Elohim" and "Jehovah Elohim"; and the difference is at once beautiful and instructive.

[We shall here give the various divine titles given in Scripture: and the reader can, if so led, examine for himself the passages in which they occur, and see the way in which they are applied.

"Elohim" — God. "Jehovah" — Lord. "Adonai," also rendered Lord, see Ps. 16: 2. Adonai, or Adon, has been taken to mean Ruler, or Sovereign, from the root "Dan," to judge. In some English Bibles, Jehovah is rendered in capital letters, LORD; Adonai, Lord. Thus the distinction is easily seen. "O my soul, thou hast said, Jehovah, Thou art my Adonai" (Ps. 16: 2). This is very striking and most beautiful.

Then, in Gen. 14: 22, we have "Elion" — the Most High God. This is His millennial title. And in chapter 17: 1 we have Shaddai — the Almighty. "I am the Almighty God: walk before Me, and be thou perfect." In Psalm 91: 1-2, we have a very beautiful application: "He that dwelleth in the secret places of Elion shall abide under the shadow of Shaddai. I will say of Jehovah He is my refuge and my fortress; my Elohim; in Him will I trust." All this is full of precious instruction; and we trust the reader may be led to pursue the study for himself. It is hardly needful to add that, for the ineffable title and relationship of "Father" we must turn to the New Testament.]

Gen. 7: 16 presents an interesting example. "And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the *Lord* shut him in." God, in His government, was about to destroy the human race, and every living thing. But Jehovah, in infinite grace, shut Noah in. Mark the distinction. If a mere man were writing the history, he might transpose the titles, not seeing what was involved. Not so the Holy Spirit. He brings out the lovely point of Jehovah's relationship with Noah. Elohim was going to judge the world; but as Jehovah He had His eye upon His beloved servant Noah, and graciously sheltered him in the vessel of mercy. How perfect is Scripture! How edifying and refreshing to trace the moral glories of the divine volume!

Let us turn to a passage in 1 Sam. 17, where we have the record of David's encounter with

Goliath. He boldly tells the giant what he is about to do, both to him and to the host of the Philistines, in order "that all *the earth* may know that there is a *God* (Elohim) in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the *Lord* (Jehovah) saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is Jehovah's, and He will give you into our hands" (vers. 46-47).

"All the earth" was to know and own the presence of God in the midst of His people. They could know nothing of the precious relationship involved in the title "Jehovah." This latter was for the assembly of Israel alone. They were to know not only His presence in their midst, but His blessed mode of acting. To the world He was Elohim, to His beloved people He was Jehovah.

Well may these exquisite touches command our hearts' admiration. Oh, the living depths, the moral glories, of that peerless Revelation which our Father has graciously penned for our comfort and edification! We must confess it gives us unspeakable delight to dwell on these things and point them out to the reader, in this infidel day when the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture is boldly called in question, in quarters where we should least expect it. But we have something better to do just now than replying to the contemptible assaults of infidelity. We are thoroughly persuaded that the most effective safeguard against all such assaults is to have the Word of Christ dwelling in us richly, in all its living, formative power. To the heart thus filled and fortified, the most plausible and powerful arguments of all infidel writers are but as the pattering of rain on the window.

We shall give the reader only one more illustration of our subject from the Old Testament. It occurs in the interesting history of Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 18: 31) And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It is the king of Israel. Therefore they compassed about him to fight: but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the *Lord* (Jehovah) helped *him*; and *God* (Elohim) moved *them* to depart from him."

This is deeply affecting. Jehoshaphat had put himself into an utterly false position. He had linked himself with the most ungodly of Israel's kings. He had even gone so far as to say to the wicked Ahab, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war." No marvel, therefore, if the Syrian captains mistook him for Ahab. It was only taking him at his word. But when brought down to the very lowest point — into the very shadow of death — "he cried out"; and that cry went up to the gracious and ever-attentive ear of Jehovah, who had said, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee." Precious grace!

But mark the lovely accuracy in the use and application of the divine titles — for this is our thesis. "He cried out, and Jehovah helped him;" and — what then? A mere human author would doubtless have put it thus: "Jehovah helped him, and moved them." But no; Jehovah had, as such, nothing to do with uncircumcised Syrians. His eye was upon his dear, though erring, servant; His heart was toward him, and His everlasting arms around him. There was no link between Jehovah and the Syrians; but Elohim, whom they knew not, moved them away.

Who can fail to see the beauty and perfection of all this? Is it not plain that the stamp of a divine hand is visible upon the three passages which we have culled for consideration? Yes, and so it is upon every clause, from cover to cover, of the divine volume. Let no one suppose for a moment that we want to occupy our readers with curious points, nice distinctions, or learned criticisms. Nothing is further from our thoughts. We would not pen a line for any or all of these objects. As God is our witness, our one great object in writing this paper is to deepen in the hearts of our readers the sense of the preciousness, beauty and excellency of the Holy Scriptures, given of God for the guidance help and blessing of His people in this dark world. If this object be gained, we have our full reward.

But we cannot close without referring, for a moment, to the precious pages of the New Testament

— We shall ask the reader to turn to Rom. 15, in which we have God presented to us under three distinct titles, each one of which is in perfect and beautiful keeping with the immediate subject in hand. Thus, in the opening verses of the chapter, which properly belong to Rom. 14, the inspired apostle is urging upon us the necessity of patience, forbearance, and kindly consideration one of another.

And to whom does he direct us for power to respond to those holy and much-needed exhortations? "To the God of patience and consolation." He presents God in the very character in which we need Him. Our small stock of patience would soon be exhausted in seeking to meet the varied characters which cross our path, even in intercourse with our brethren. There are constant claims upon our patience and forbearance; and most surely others have need of patience and forbearance with us. Where are we all to get the means of meeting all these claims? At the exhaustless treasury of "the God of patience and consolation." Our tiny springs would soon dry up if not kept in unbroken connection with that ever-flowing Fountain. The weight of a feather would be an overmatch for our patience; how much more the ten thousand things that come before us even in the Church of God!

Hence the need of the beautiful prayer of the apostle, "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God."

Here lies the grand secret, the divine power of receiving one another, and going on together in holy love, heavenly patience, and tender consideration. We cannot get on otherwise. It is only by habitual communion with the God of patience and consolation that we shall be able to rise above the numberless hindrances to confidence and fellowship that continually present themselves, and walk in fervent love to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

But we must draw this paper to a close, and shall merely glance at the other divine titles presented in our chapter. When the apostle speaks of the future glory, his heart at once turns to God in the very character suited to the subject before him. "Now *the God of hope* fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." If we would have the hope of glory heightened in our souls — and truly we need it — we must turn our eyes to "the God of hope."

How marked and striking is the application of the divine titles, wherever we turn! Whatever may be the character of our need, God presents Himself to our hearts in the very way adapted to meet it. Thus, at the close of the chapter, when the apostle turns his eyes towards Judea, and the difficulties and the dangers awaiting him, his heart springs up to *the God of peace*." Precious resource in all our varied exercises, anxieties, sorrows, and cares!

In a word, whatever we want, we have just to turn in simple faith to God, and find it all in Him. God — blessed forever be His name — is the one grand and all-sufficient answer to our every need, from the starting-point to the goal of our Christian career. Oh for artless faith to use Him!