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things for which the reproof was found necessary. A mere profession that such a condition of heart has been reached will prove insufficient; such works as are appropriate to this soundness in the faith must accompany the profession, being the outward manifestation of the fact that both mind and conscience have been cleansed of their defilement.

7. *The Coming of the Lord* will convict all the ungodly of their ungodly deeds (Jude 15). Men who have refused the convicting power of the Spirit in this day of grace will then be convicted, as the Lord executes judgement upon them; their own ungodly deeds which they have ungodly wrought and their ungodly words which they have spoken against Him will then condemn them.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD— FOUR VIEWS

JAMES H. TODD

The Fatherhood of God is a most blessed truth for the children of God, for it implies that most wonderful relationship of children to a father, only realized through the Gospel.

The Scriptures do not teach that God is the Father of all men, for Christ said to some of the Jews, 'Ye are of your father the Devil' (John 8:44); and in John 3:10 a contrast is drawn between the children of God and of the Devil. In John 1:12, 13, we are told also how we become children of God (cf. Gal. 3:26).

In the very many references to God as Father there are *seven* in which He is spoken of as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, all of these bringing Him before us as the object of praise and blessing. Besides these there are just *four* other expressions linked with the name of Father, which bring out four aspects of His relationship towards us and His dealings with us as His children.

1. In James 1:17 He is *the 'Father of Lights'* from whom comes every 'act of giving and every perfect gift.' As such He is the

Unchanging One, ever the same, and not subject to change as the heavenly bodies nor casting shadows as they do. With Him it is not day and night, nor summer and winter—sometimes bright and at other times cloudy and dark. He is the Light unsullied, pure and clear, that can know no cloud nor darkness. And He is the Source of all lesser lights and the Sustainer of them.

He is the Giver of every gift, the bountiful Bestower of every blessing. It is He who begat us and gave us life. He is the Giver of wisdom to those who need it and ask for it. In this epistle of James where faith is so prominent, God is the Father of Lights, the Great Giver, who is the object and confidence of our faith. As each new day breaks forth at dawn and as each night returns revealing the glories of the heavenly constellations we are reminded of Him who changes not—the ever-abiding, true and faithful God, bestowing so freely and unstintedly His richest blessings.

How blessed to be 'children of light' through the very sunshine of the Gospel having shone into our dark hearts, dispelling all darkness and gloom and giving us to know its radiance! As surely as the Father of Lights enlightens us, so we may count on Him to keep our light bright and undimmed in this world of darkness, 'among whom ye shine as lights in the world'.

2. *'Blessed be God . . . the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort'* (2 Cor. 1:3). The theme of this Epistle is ministry, and all through it we constantly come across references to comfort or encouragement. Service calls for sacrifice, for weariness and labour; and every true servant has to face suffering in some way. What wondrous comfort and consolation there is in the great heart of the Father of compassions, for every minister. How unlimited these are, how tender, how boundless, how sure, and how personal too. In the Old Testament His mercies are again and again mentioned as 'tender' and as 'great' or many. In 2 Cor. 6:17, 18, He gives a special promise, as the Lord Almighty (*El-Shaddai*), to be a Father to those who will turn away from all that is contrary to Him, and in so doing they will prove the blessedness of sonship with such a Father. As the Father of mercies and

God of all comfort He is the one in whom we may confide and trust, and ever turn to in our need of comfort and cheer, and be sure of being encouraged and cheered.

3. In Hebrews 12:9, where chastening is the subject, God is brought before us as '*the Father of (our) spirits*' in contrast with our earthly fathers of the flesh. They chastened or disciplined us according to what seemed good to them, and such correction may have been fair and just or may not; but the Father of our spirits knows exactly what we need and just what we can bear. He disciplines too for our profit with a view to our becoming partakers of His holiness. He sees beneath all outward seeming and knows our innermost life, for He is the Father of spirits. His chastening is the pledge to us of our sonship and of His Fatherly care and concern, and is in order to make our lives fruitful and blessed.

Surely then the son can only welcome the discipline and pray he may not miss it nor lose the blessing in it, nor the lessons to be learned through it. Blessed discipline, blessed correction, from the Father of spirits, by which He reveals to us His Fatherly heart and pledges His Fatherly concern, for our best welfare and fruitfulness!

4. The last title to be noticed and possibly the greatest is '*Father of Glory*' in Eph. 1:17, where He is intreated for 'the spirit of wisdom and revelation,' so that the saints may know their wondrous blessings in Christ—particularly 'the hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of His power to usward'. This is the epistle which opens up so wonderfully the marvellous grace of God in blessing so richly those who were dead in sins and far off from Him. It is from the Father of Glory that grace streams forth so freely and fully.

Glory refers to His excellence and majesty, the very perfection of His being and is ever linked to grace. Glory is but the expression of what He is, and grace means His acting according to the measure of what He is. Later on in the epistle He is referred to as '*the One Father who is above all, and through all, and in all*'; and again as '*the Father of the whole family in heaven and earth*';

the One to whom prayer ascends. Supplication is based on grace, for in the Old Testament to supplicate is to plead the grace of God (as in the expressions 'be gracious' or 'be merciful').

Here then is the One to whom we pray—the Father of Glory. He is the One who is excellent and perfect in all His ways as well as in His being. He has acted gloriously and will ever act so, bestowing lavishly and freely the best and greatest blessings wherever He finds a heart open to receive. For all He does in grace is for His own glory and praise, and our eternal blessing.

The Lord Jesus said 'My father *and your* Father' (John 20:17). How well may we confide in Him and trust Him! How we should delight in Him as our Father, and so learn more and more of the blessedness of being sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty!

DANIEL THE PROPHET

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The Lord Jesus Christ, in his eschatological discourse on the Mount of Olives, refers to 'Daniel the prophet' and his writings, which are, for that reason, and because they predict events that have already taken place, events occurring in these last days and events that lie still in the future, deserving of the closest study and attention by all who look for the second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ and His glorious kingdom.

The Book of Daniel, which is twenty-seventh in order in the Old Testament books, bears a strong resemblance in many respects, and is closely related in prophetic outlook, to the twenty-seventh book of the New Testament, the 'Revelation of Jesus Christ'. It has been said that, without Daniel, Revelation would be a sealed book. Daniel the prophet is called 'a man greatly beloved': John, the writer of the Book of Revelation, describes himself as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'. Both books are prophetic and deal chiefly with the times of the end, culminating in the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords in a day when kings and lords will set the living God at defiance (Ps. 2:1-3).