

His Name—The Everlasting Father

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 9, 1866,

BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"The Everlasting Father." *Isaiah 9:6*.

How complex is the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ! Almost in the same breath the Prophet calls Him a "Child," and a "Counselor," a "Son," and "the Everlasting Father." This is no contradiction, and to us scarcely a paradox, but it is a mighty marvel that He who was an Infant should at the same time be Infinite—He who was the Man of Sorrows should also be God over all, blessed forever—and that He who is in the Divine Trinity always called the Son, should nevertheless be correctly called "the Everlasting Father."

How forcibly this should remind us of the necessity of carefully studying and rightly understanding the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ! We must not suppose that we shall understand Him at a glance. A look will save the soul, but patient meditation alone can fill the mind with the knowledge of the Savior. Glorious mysteries are hidden in His Person. He speaks to us in plain language, and He manifests Himself openly in our midst, but yet in His Person itself there is a height and depth which human intellect fails to measure.

When he has looked long and steadily, the devout observer perceives in his Well-Beloved beauties so rare and ravishing that he is lost in wonder! Continued contemplation conducts the soul, by the power of the Holy Spirit, into an elevation of delighted admiration which the less thoughtful know nothing of. So deep is the mystery of the Person of our Lord that He must reveal Himself to us or we shall never know Him! He is not discovered by research nor discerned by reason. "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona," said Christ to Peter, "for flesh and blood have not revealed this unto you." "When it pleased God," says the Apostle, "to reveal His Son in me."

Another Apostle asked the question, "How is it that You manifest Yourself unto us?" There is no seeing Jesus except by His own light. He is the Door, but no man opens that Door but Jesus Himself, for "He opens, and no man shuts. He shuts, and no man opens." He is the lesson, but He is also the schoolmaster. He is both key and lock, answer and riddle, way and guide. He is that which is to be seen, for we are to look unto Him, but it is by Him that we are enabled to see, for He gives sight to the blind!

Let us then, dear Friends, if we really desire to understand that most excellent of all sciences—the science of Christ Crucified—entreat the Lord Himself to be our Rabbi, and beg to be allowed to sit with Mary at the Master's feet. Be this our prayer, that "we may know Him," and be this our desire, that "we may grow in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." For "to know Him is life eternal," and to be taught of Him is to be "wise unto salvation."

The title before us is a somewhat difficult one. Some years ago I preached to you from "His Name—Wonderful" [Sermon #214, Volume 4.] I felt I could expatiate upon that with ease. We advanced as far as "Counselor," and then we halted a while. After a time we were led to preach upon "The Mighty God." But we have been somewhat diffident of our ability to open up this particular title, for there is a depth in it which we are not able to fathom. This morning I cannot pretend to dive into the profound depths of the Word, but can only skim the surface as the swallow skims the sea. Silver of deep learning and gold of profound thought I have none—but such as I have I give you. If my basket contains nothing more than a barley loaf and a few small fishes, may the Master of the feast multiply the food in the breaking, that there may be food convenient for His people.

It is necessary at the outset to observe that the Messiah is not here called "Father," by way of any confusion with Him who is pre-eminently called "THE FATHER." Our Lord's proper name, so far as the Godhead is concerned, is not the Father, but the Son. Let us beware of confusion. The Son is not the Father, neither is the Father the Son. And though they are one God, essentially and eternally, being forever One and indivisible, yet still the distinction of Persons is to be carefully believed and observed. For the mere word "Persons" we do not contend—it is but a make-shift word, although we know not what better term to use.

But the fact is all-important that the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father. Our text has no bearing upon the position and titles of the three Persons with regard to each other. It does not indicate the relation of Deity to itself, but the relation of Jesus Christ to us. He is to us "the Everlasting Father." The light of the text divides itself into three rays—Jesus is Everlasting." He is a "Father." He is the "Everlasting Father."

I. First, Jesus Christ is EVERLASTING. Of Him we may sing with David, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever." A theme for great rejoicing on our part! Rejoice, Believer, in Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever! Jesus always was. The Babe born in Bethlehem was united to the Word which was in the beginning, by whom all things were made. The title by which Jesus Christ revealed Himself to John in Patmos was, "Him which is, and which was, and which is to come."

"His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow," to betoken that He is the Ancient of Days. "Before sin was born, or Satan fell, He led the host of morning stars. (Your generation who can tell, or count the number of Your years)?" In His priesthood, Jesus, like unto Melchisedek, "has neither beginning of days nor end of life." His pedigree is thus declared by Solomon: "When there were no depths, I was brought forth. When there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills were I was brought forth. While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

"When He prepared the heavens, I was there. When He set a compass upon the face of the depth: when He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of

the deep: when He gave to the sea His decree that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and My delights were with the sons of men."

Think not that the Son of God ever commenced to be—

"Ere the blue heavens were stretched abroad, From everlasting was the Word; With God He was; the Word was God, And must divinely be adored."

If He were not God from everlasting, we could not so devoutly love Him. We could not feel that He had any share in the eternal love which is the fountain of all Covenant blessings. He must be eternal who has a part in the eternal purpose! Since our Redeemer was from all eternity with the Father, we trace the stream of Divine love to Himself equally with His Father and the blessed Spirit. We were chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world, and thus in our eternal election He shines forth gloriously.

We bless and praise, and magnify Him that the name, "Son," does not at all import any time of birth or generation, or of beginning. We know that He is as eternally the Son as the Father is eternally the Father, and must be looked upon as God from everlasting. He is "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by Him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

As our Lord always was, so also He is for evermore the same. Jesus is not dead! He ever lives to make intercession for us. He has not ceased to be. He has gone out of sight, but He sits at the right hand of the Father. Of Him we read, "And, You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Your hands: they shall perish, but You remain. And they all shall wax old as does a garment, and as a vesture shall You fold them up, and they shall be changed: but You are the same, and Your years shall not fail." Jesus is as truly the I AM, as that Jehovah who spoke out of the burning bush to Moses, at Horeb!

He lives! He lives! This is the foundation of your comfort, "Because He lives you shall live also." "Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need."

Resort to Him in all your times of need, for He is waiting to bless you still! He is made higher than the heavens, but He still receives sinners and effectually puts away their sins. And since "He ever lives to make intercession for them, He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him." Jesus, our Lord, ever shall be! He could not be called

"Everlasting" if it were supposable that He must one day cease to exist! No, Believer, if God shall spare your life to fulfill your full day of threescore years and ten, you shall find that His cleansing fountain is still opened and His precious blood has not lost its power! You shall find that the Priest who filled the healing fount with His own blood still lives to purge you from all iniquity!

When only your last battle remains to be fought you shall find that the hand of your conquering Captain has not grown feeble, nor His arm waxed short. The living Savior shall cheer the living saint! Nor is this all, for when death has taken you away as with a flood, and all the men of your generation have fallen like grass beneath the mower's scythe, Jesus shall live, and you, caught up to Heaven, shall find Him there bearing the dew of His youth! And when the sun's burning eye shall be dim with age, and the lamps of Heaven shall be paled into eternal midnight—when all this world shall melt as melts the winter's ice at the approach of spring—then shall you find the Lord Jesus still remains the perennial spring of joy, and life, and glory to His people!

Living waters you may draw from this sacred well! Jesus always was, He always is, He always shall be! He is eternal in all His attributes, in all His offices, in all His might, and power, and willingness to bless, comfort, guard and crown His chosen people. The connection of the word, "Father," with the word, "Everlasting," allows us very fairly to remark that our Lord is as everlasting as the Father, since He Himself is called "the Everlasting Father," and whatever antiquity paternity may imply is here ascribed to Christ.

According to our common notions, of course, the Father must be before the Son, but we must understand that the terms used in Scripture to represent Deity to us are not intended to be literally understood, and rendered in their exact terrestrial sense. They are only so far descriptive as they may be but do not compass the whole Truth of God, for human language utterly fails to convey the very essence and fullness of celestial things. When God condescends to speak to men, who are but as infants before Him, He adopts their childish speech and brings down His loftiness of thought to the littleness of their capacities.

Babes have no words for the thoughts of senators and philosophers, and such matters must be stated in childish language if babes are to know them—and then the statement must inevitably fall far short of the great fact. The relation between the Father and the Son is a case in point. It is not precisely the same as the relation between a father and a son on earth, but that happens to be the nearest approach to it among men. We must beware of stretching and straining the Word in its letter, especially in points where it would make us err from the spirit of the Truth. Christ Jesus is as eternal as the Father or He would never have been called "the Everlasting Father."

It is the manner of the Easterns to call a man the father of a quality for which he is remarkable. To this day, among the Arabs, a wise man is called "the father of wisdom." A very foolish man is called, "the father of folly." The predominant quality in the man is ascribed

to him as though it were his child, and he the father of it. Now, the Messiah is here called in the Hebrew "the Father of Eternity," by which is meant that He is pre-eminently the possessor of eternity as an attribute. Just as the idiom, "the father of wisdom," implies that a man is pre-eminently wise, so the term, "Father of Eternity," implies that Jesus is preeminently eternal—that to Him, beyond and above all others—eternity may be ascribed.

No language can more forcibly convey to our minds the eternity of our Lord Jesus. No, without straining the language, I may say that not only is eternity ascribed to Christ, but He is here declared to be the parent of it. Imagination cannot grasp this, for eternity is a thing beyond us! Yet if eternity should seem to be a thing which can have no parent, be it remembered that Jesus is so surely and essentially eternal that He is here pictured as the Source and Father of eternity. Jesus is not the child of eternity, but the Father of it! Eternity did not bring Him forth from its mighty deep, but He brought forth eternity!

Independent, self-sustained, uncreated, eternal existence is with Jesus our Lord and God. In the highest possible sense, then, Jesus Christ is "the Everlasting Father." I will only pause one minute to draw a practical inference from this doctrine. If our Immanuel is, indeed, eternal and ever-living, let us never think of Him as One dead, whom we have lost, who has ceased to be! What could be a greater sorrow than the thought of a dead Christ? He lives, and lives to care for us.

He lives in all the attributes which adorned Him upon earth, as gentle and kind and gracious now as He was then. Come to Him, Christian, rest upon Him now, just as if He were visible in this place, and you can whisper into His ear your troubles, and confess your sins at His feet. He is here spiritually. Your eyes cannot see Him, but faith will be better evidence to you than eyesight. Trust Him now with your cares! Rest upon Him in your present difficulties!

And you, poor Sinner, if Christ were on this platform would you not come and touch the hem of His garment and cry, "Jesus, let Your pitying eyes look on me and change my heart"? Well, dear Friend, Jesus lives! He is the same today as He was in the streets of Jerusalem. And though your feet cannot bear you to Him, yet your desires shall serve you instead of feet! And though your finger cannot touch Him, your confidence shall be a hand to you. Trust Him now! He whose love made Him die lives on! His precious blood can never lose its power. Come now, humbly come, and confide in "the Everlasting Father."

II. We come, in the second place, to the difficult part of the subject, namely, Christ being called FATHER. In what sense is Jesus a Father? Answer, first. He is federally a Father representing those who are in Him, as the head of a tribe represents his descendants. The Apostle Paul comes to our help here, for in the memorable chapter in Corinthians he speaks of those who are in Adam, and then he talks of a second Adam.

Adam is the father of all living. He federally stood for us in the garden, and federally fell and ruined us all. He was the representative man by whose obedience we should have

been blessed, but through whose disobedience we have been made sinners. The curse of the Fall comes upon us because Adam stood in a relation towards us in which none of us stand towards our fellows. He was the representative head for us—and what a fall was there when he fell—every one of us in his loins fell in him. "In Adam all die."

Since his day there has been but one other here to the human race federally. It is true, Noah was the father of the present race of men, for we have all sprung from him, but there was no covenant with Noah in which he represented his posterity. There was no condition of obedience by which he might have obtained a reward for us, and no condition of disobedience for the breach of which we are called to smart. The only other man who is a representative man before God is the second Adam, the man Christ Jesus, the Lord from Heaven! Brothers and Sisters, we mournfully call Adam father, for we are cast out of Eden by him—and we till the ground with the sweat of our face—in sorrow did our mothers bring us forth, and to the grave in sorrow must we go.

But we who have believed in Jesus call another man Father, namely, the Lord Jesus! And we speak this not sorrowfully but joyfully, for He has opened the gates of a better Paradise. He has taken away the sweat of toil from our faces spiritually, for we who have believed do "enter into rest." He has borne Himself the pangs which were brought upon us by sin. He took our sicknesses and bore our sorrows, while death itself, the heaviest affliction, He has overcome, so that he that lives and believe in Him shall never die, but pass out of this world into the life celestial!

The grand question for us is this, Are we still under the Old Covenant of works? If so, we have Adam as our father, and under that Adam we died. But are we under the Covenant of Grace? If so, we have Christ as our Father, and in Christ shall we be made alive! Generation makes us the sons of Adam. Regeneration acknowledges us as the sons of Christ. In our first birth we come under the fatherhood of the fallen one. In our second birth we enter into the fatherhood of the innocent and perfect One. In our first fatherhood we wear the image of the earthy. In the second we receive the image of the heavenly.

Through our relation to Adam we become corrupt and weak, and the body is put into the grave in dishonor, in corruption, in weakness, in shame. But when we come under the dominion of the second Adam we receive strength, and quickening, and inward spiritual life—and therefore our body rises again like seed sown which rises to a glorious harvest in the image of the heavenly—with honor, and power, and happiness, and eternal life! In this sense, then, Christ is called Father, and inasmuch as the Covenant of Grace is older than the Covenant of Works, Christ is, while Adam is not, "the Everlasting Father." And inasmuch as the Covenant of Works, as far as we are concerned, passes away, being fulfilled in Jesus, and the Covenant of Grace never passes but abides forever, Christ, as the Head of the New Covenant, the federal representative of the great economy of Grace, is "the Everlasting Father."

Secondly, Christ is a Father in the sense of a Founder. You know, perhaps, or at least you readily remember when I remind you, that the Hebrews are in the habit of calling a man a father of a thing which he invents. For instance, in the fourth chapter of Genesis, Jubal is called the father of such as handle the harp and organ. Jabal was the father of such as dwell in tents and have cattle—not that these were literally the fathers of such persons—but the inventors of their occupations. Jabal first took upon himself a nomadic tent life and set the example of wandering about with flocks and herds. Jubal first put his fingers to musical strings, and his lips to pipes from which the wind is breathed melodiously.

The Lord Jesus Christ is in this sense the Father of a wonderful system. Now, our Lord Jesus Christ, who brought life and immortality to light, and introduced a new phase of worship to this world is, in that respect, a Father. He is the Father of all Christians—the Father of Christianity—the Father of the entire system under which Divine Grace reigns through righteousness. Jesus is the Father of a great doctrinal system. All the great Truths of God which we are in the habit of delivering in your hearing as the precious Truths sent down from Heaven, fell first, clearly and powerfully, from the lips of Jesus.

These things were dimly hinted at in the ceremonies of the Law, but Christ first of all put them into plain letter so that he who runs may read them. Practically it is Jesus who teaches us the doctrine of electing love. It is Christ who reveals to us redemption by blood. It is Christ that reveals regeneration by the work of the Spirit, saying plainly, "You must be born-again." It is Christ that reveals the perseverance of the saints. In fact, there is no doctrine of the Christian system which is not so clearly set in the light of His own glorious Spirit by His teaching that we may not fairly call Him the Father of it.

Our great Master is also the Father of a great practical system. If there are any in the world who "love their neighbors as themselves," the Man of Nazareth is their Father, for, albeit that the Law signified all that, yet men had not discovered it, but had misread the Law. "Eye for eye and tooth for tooth" was their version of Law. But Christ comes and says, "I say unto you, Resist not evil. If any man smite you on the one cheek, turn to him the other also." If any man can suffer with patience and can return good for evil, heaping coals of fire upon the head of his foes, this man is a child of Christ!

If men worship God in the spirit and have no confidence in the flesh. If they know no holy place but recognize every place as holy where a holy man is found, such are the true children of Christ, for He said, "They that worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth." He is the Father of spiritual worship. It has been common to call Socrates the "father of philosophy." Jesus is Father of the philosophy of salvation! Galen may be the "father of medicine," Jesus is Father of the medicine of souls! Herodotus is credited as the "father of history," but Jesus is the Father of Heaven on earth! He is the Father of disinterested living, of true love to men! He is the Father of forgiving one's enemies, the Father, in fact, of the Divine system of Christian life!

The system of salvation claims Christ to be its Father. Whoever said, "By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God"? Who but the Apostle of this Man, Christ Jesus? Who told men that it was not by works of righteousness which they had done, but by the merit of His passion and His life that they were saved? Who revealed the way of faith to men but Christ, the great doctrine of, "Believe and live"? And those who receive it may claim Christ as Father. He is the Father of the Christian faith—a faith, my Brothers and Sisters, which has done much already for the world.

For in old Rome it put down the fights in the Coliseum, threw down the bestial gods of heathendom, and albeit that it is doing much for the world even now, and helping to purge the vast Augean stable of humanity, it is to do more still! It is to cast out war. It is to destroy error. It is to regenerate the human race. The Father of this purifying system which is doctrinal and practical, and which has already worked the best results for men, is the Lord Jesus! And since it was devised of old, and will be prolonged as long as the world stands, He is called "the Everlasting Father."

Now, there is a third meaning. The Prophet may not so have understood it, but we so receive it, that Jesus is, in the third place, a Father in the great sense of a Life-Giver. That is the main sense of "father" to the common mind. Through our fathers we are called into this world. Now it is by Christ that there is a communication of Divine energy to the soul. It is through Him, through His teaching—through the Spirit that He has given, through the blood that He has shed—that life is given to those who were dead in trespasses and sins. He that sits upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new."

"This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." "For as the Father raises up the dead, and quickens them, even so the Son quickens whom He will. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that hear shall live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself." We know that through Jesus Christ the Divine life is given to us. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." He gives the living water, and then it is in us "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

He is that living grain of wheat which was cast into the ground to die, that it might not abide alone, but become a root that brings forth fruit, which fruit we now are, receiving life from Him as the stem receives life from the seed from which it sprang. Jesus is our Father in that sense. It is the Spirit of God who operatively quickens the soul and makes us live, but Jesus Christ's Gospel is the channel through which the Spirit works, and Jesus Christ is the true life to us. Receiving Christ we receive life, and without Him we cannot have life. "He that has the Son has life. He that has not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

As through the energy of Adam this vast world is peopled till hill and dale are covered with a teeming population, so through the life-energy of our Lord Jesus Christ the plains of Heaven and the celestial hills shall be peopled with a throng that no man can number. Out of every realm, a people, speaking every language—having been bronzed by the heats of the torrid zone, or frozen amidst the frosts of the frigid north—Christ shall find a people into whom His quickening shall come, and they shall live through the energy of His Spirit, and He shall be their everlasting Father. It is in this sense, because that life is everlasting and can never die out, that Jesus Christ is called "the Everlasting Father."

Everything in us calls Christ, "Father." He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. If we love Him, it is because He first loved us. If we patiently endure, it is by considering "Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself." He it is who waters and sustains all our graces. We may say of Him, "All my fresh springs are in You." The Spirit brings us the water from this well of Bethlehem, but Jesus is the Well itself. Spring up, O Well! Spring up, O Well! Divine Father, blessed Jesus, prove Your Fatherhood by re-quickening our souls this morning according to Your Word!

Fourthly, I do not think that we have yet come to the bottom of this title of "Everlasting Father." The term implies that Jesus Christ is to be in the future, the Patriarch of an age. Many translators render the passage, "the Father of the future age." So Pope in his famous Poem of the Messiah understands it, and calls Him, "The promised Father of the future age." It has been the custom with men to speak of ages as "the age of brass or iron," and "the age of gold."

This age of gold we are always looking for! The world's face is constantly turned to it—so much so that quacks play upon the simplicity of men and tell them when this golden age is coming and fleece them of their pence—and sometimes of their pounds under the notion that they can tell them somewhat about the good times which are coming. They know nothing about it whatever. They are blind leaders of the blind. But this one thing is clear to everyone who cares to see it, namely, that such an age of gold shall come—that a period far brighter than fancy paints will dawn upon this poor, darkened, enslaved world.

I am always jealous with a godly jealousy lest you should forget this doctrine, or throw it up in disgust because of the shameful way in which it is made merchandize of by others. Brethren, calculate no dates! Sit down to devise no charts, but in your heart be satisfied with this—that there will be a kingdom and a reign—and that in that kingdom there shall be no strife to vex the nations. There shall be no affliction to grieve the people. In that kingdom, Jesus, the King, shall be conspicuous and His refulgent glory shall be the light of all the inhabitants. It shall be a New Jerusalem coming down from Heaven, prepared by God, as a bride is prepared for her husband, worthy of her Lord and a meet recompense for the crown of thorns, for the flagellation of His shoulders, for the shame, the spitting, and the Cross!

Lift high the Cross, my Brothers and Sisters, for it shall be lifted high! Speak not of Christ with bated breath, for He comes to be a King. You Christians, think not yourselves, though despised and rejected of men, to be men of a mean birth, for "it does not yet appear what you shall be. But we know that when He shall appear you shall be like He, for you shall see Him as He is." Joyfully drink the cup of bitterness, for you shall soon drink the wines on the lees well refined! Cheerfully pass through the darkness, for the morning breaks, and the day dawns, and the shadows flee away. Be content to have the offscouring of all things, for one day, when kings shall bow down before Him, and all nations shall call Him blessed, you shall partake in His honor, and shall be as princes upon the throne with Him!

Yes, He is to be the Father of a future age. Men have called certain great patriots the fathers of their country. Today let us call Christ the Father of our world. O Jesus, You have given to earth far better than a creation. You have formed it from chaos into order and then brought it from darkness into light! You have brought it from death into warm life and beauty! You have recovered it from worse than pristine chaos and saved it from a darkness worse than the primeval gloom. You have saved it from a death more horrible than the primeval shades.

You have descended into the depths into which this pearl, the world, was cast! Like a mighty diver all the waves and billows have gone over You. But You have come up again bringing this pearl with You, and it shall glisten in Your crown forever when You shall be admired of angels and adored of all created spirits. This shall be the sweetest part of their admiration and their adoration—You were slain and have redeemed us unto God by Your blood, and therefore unto You be glory forever and ever. He shall be in this sense, then, the Father of an everlasting age.

Once more—for the text is very prolific—Christ may be called a Father in the loving and tender sense of a Father's office. Here is a text to show what I mean. God is called the Father of the fatherless, and Job, I think, says of himself that he became a father to the poor. You know what it means, of course, at once. It means that he exercised a father's part. Now, albeit that the Spirit of adoption teaches us to call God our Father, yet it is not straining truth to say that our Lord Jesus Christ exercises to all His people a Father's part.

According to the old Jewish custom the elder brother was the father of the family in the absence of the father. The firstborn took precedence of all, and took upon him the father's position. So the Lord Jesus, the First-Born among many Brethren, exercises to us a Father's office. Is it not so? Has He not succored us in all time of our need as a father succors his child? Has He not supplied us with more than heavenly bread as a father gives bread unto his children? Does He not daily protect us? No, did He not yield up His life that we, His little ones, might be preserved? Will He not say at the last, "Here am I, and the children that You have given Me. I have lost none"?

Does He not chastise us by hiding Himself from us, as a father chastens his children? Do we not find Him instructing us by His Spirit and leading us into all Truth? Has He not told us to call no man father upon earth in the sense that He is to be our true Guide and Instructor? And are we not to sit at His feet and make Him our Rabbi and our authoritative Teacher? Is He not the Head in the household to us on earth, abiding with us, and has He not said, "I will not leave you orphans (that is the Greek word), I will come unto you"?

As if His coming were the coming of a Father, if He is a Father, will we not give Him honor? If He is the Head of the household, will we not give Him obedience, and say in our hearts, "Other lords have had dominion over us, but from now on, Everlasting Father, we will give You reverence"? If He is, in all these senses, "the Everlasting Father"—

"Then let us adore and give Him His right, All glory and power, and wisdom and might, All honor and blessing, with angels above, And thanks never-ceasing, for infinite love."

III. Lastly, we weigh the words, "EVERLASTING FATHER." I have already explained what this means. Christ is called, "the Everlasting Father" because He does not, Himself, as a Father, die or vacate His office. He is still the Federal Head and Father of His people. He is still the Founder of Gospel Truth and of the Christian system—not allowing archbishops and popes to be His vicars and to take His place. He is still the true Life-Giver from whose wounds and by whose death we are quickened. He reigns, even now, as the patriarchal King. He is still the loving family Head. And so, in every sense, He lives as Father.

But here is a sweet thought. He neither Himself dies, nor becomes childless! He does not lose His children! If His Church could perish He would not be a Father. A Father without a son? And this is the best of all, that He is "an Everlasting Father" to all those to whom He is a Father at all. If you have entered into this relationship so as to be in union with Christ, and to be covered with the hem of His garment, you are His child and you shall forever be! There is no unfathering Christ, and there is no unchilding us! He is everlastingly a Father to those who trust in Him, and He never does, at any one moment, cease to be Father to any one of these.

This morning you may have come here in trouble, but Christ is still your Father. This day you may be much depressed in spirit and full of doubts and fears. A true father never ceases, if he is a father, to exercise his kindness to a child. Nor does Jesus cease to love and pity you. He will help you. Go to Him, and you shall find that loving Friend to be as tender as in the days of His flesh. He is the Author of an eternal system. As I glanced at the words, "Everlasting Father," and thought of Him as the Founder of an ever-living system, I said to myself, "Ah then, the Christian religion will never die out!" It is not possible that the Truth as it is in Jesus should ever be put away if He is "the Everlasting Father"!

I feel as if I should quote again Master Hugh Latimer, when, standing back to back with Ridley—"Courage, Master Ridley," he said, "we shall this day light such a candle in England as shall never be put out." Look yonder at Christ on the Cross! He did that day light such a

candle as never can be put out! He is "the Everlasting Father." He set rolling that day, as it were, a snowflake of Truth as He died upon the Cross.

And you know what the snowflake does upon the high Alps—a bird's wing, perhaps, sets it rolling, and it gathers another and another and another, till, as it descends, it becomes a mass of snow! And by-and-by, as it leaps from crag to crag, it grows larger and larger and larger until ponderous masses of ice and snow cohere together. And at the last, with an awful thundering crash, the avalanche rolls down, fills the valley and sweeps all before it! Even so this Everlasting Father on the Cross set in motion a mighty force which has gone on swelling and increasing, gathering to be a ponderous mass of mighty teaching! And the day shall come when, like an irresistible avalanche, it shall fall upon the palaces of the Vatican and upon the towers of Rome! There shall come a day when the mosques of Mohammed and the temples of the gods shall be crushed beneath its stupendous weight—and the Everlasting Father shall have done the deed!

"The Everlasting Father," last of all, because He is the Father, in all His people, of eternal life. Adam, you are a father, but where are your sons? If you could return to earth, O Mother Eve, where would you find your children? I think I see her as she paces round the earth and finds nothing but little grassy mounds, heaps of turf, and sometimes a valley sodden blood-red where her children have been slain in battle. I hear her weeping for her children. She will not be comforted because they are not!

But hush, Mother Eve, what life did you give them? What life was that which Father Adam conferred upon your sons and daughters? Why, only life terrestrial, a bubble life that melted and disappeared! But Jesus, as He comes again, will find none of His children dead! None of His sons and daughters lost! Because He lives, they live also, for He is the Everlasting Father and makes those to have everlasting life who live and breathe through Him. Thrice happy they who have an interest in the truth of our text!

Now, dear Hearers, may I ask you whether Christ is Everlasting Father to you? There are other fathers. The Jew said, "We have Abraham as our father," and to this day certain divines teach that we have covenant rights because of our earthly fathers. They believe in the Abrahamic Covenant much after the manner of the Jews. "We have Abraham as our father"—therefore we have a right to baptism. Therefore we are church members—"born into the church." Yes, I have heard it said, "born into the church."

Let no man deceive you! This is not Christ's teaching! "You must be born-again." If not, though your mother were a saint in Heaven, and your father an undoubted Apostle of God, you should derive no advantage but a world of solemn responsibility from the fact—unless you are yourself born-again! Do not, then, say unto yourself, "we have Abraham as our father," for God is able of the very stones to raise up children unto Abraham! We had a very remarkable instance not very long ago in this Tabernacle of how God does sometimes bless

the outcasts and leaves some of you, the children of godly parents, in the hardness of your heart to perish.

There was a man known in the village where he lives by the name of Satan because of his being so thoroughly depraved. He was a sailor, and as another sailor in that town had been the means of the conversion of all the sailors in a vessel that left the town, this man desired to sail with him to try and beat his religion out of him. He did his best, but he signally failed, and as they happened to be coming to London, his friend asked him whether he would come to the Tabernacle. He did not mind coming to hear me, for, as it happened, I was brought up near the place where he lived.

This Satan came here on the Lord's Day morning, when the text was upon soul murder, [Sermon #713, Volume 12] and he sat (some of you noticed him that day), and sobbed and cried under the sermon at such a broken-hearted rate that he could only say, "People are noticing me, I had better go out." But his companion would not let him go out, and that man from that day forth was begotten by the Everlasting Father and is living and walking in the Truth of God, an earnest Believer, doing all that he can for the spread of the kingdom, and singularly clear in his doctrinal knowledge!

Here is a man who had been everything that was possible in the way of evil, yet God met with him! And some of you who have Abraham as your father, and are related to godly people, are just all the more hardened for all the preaching you have heard! May God have pity upon you and save you yet! Do not be content with fleshly fatherhood! Get the spiritual fatherhood which comes from Christ. Others of you are this day perhaps saying, "Well, we can trust in our good works." Well, then, Adam is your father, and you know what will come of you!

Adam was driven out of Paradise, and you will never be admitted there! Adam lost all his hopes and you will lose yours. On the ground of the Law shall no flesh living be justified! Alas, I fear that many here have another father. How does Christ put it? "You are of your father, the devil," says He, "for his works you do." Not works merely of open sin in the form of adultery, uncleanness, theft, and such like, but opposition to Christ is peculiarly a work of the devil! And unbelief in Christ is the devil's masterpiece! If you do not, then, trust the Lord Jesus, do not say tonight when you kneel at the bedside, "Our Father, which are in Heaven," for your father is not in Heaven—your father is in Hell!

Go to the blood of Jesus and ask that you may be cleansed from all iniquity, and then may you say through the Everlasting Father, "O God, You have made me Your child, and I love and bless Your name." May God be pleased to give you all His blessing for Jesus' sake. Amen.