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Living to the Glory of God Thanksgiving: A Way of Life

"...glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." - 1 Corinthians 6:20

Disciples of Christ and children of God are admonished to let their light shine. By so doing, their lives glorify their Father in heaven. This is not only advice from Jesus, but also from the apostles: *"...whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"* (1 Cor. 10:31). In our theme text we are instructed to regard our bodies as temples -- dwelling places -- for the Lord. These are strong appeals to all who name the name of our Lord that we might live to the glory of God.

Those who bear the Lord's name are called upon to walk as children of the light (Eph. 5:8). Does this not mean that we ought to think, speak, and act as those who have the light of heaven, the light of God in their hearts and lives? Those who are burning and shining lights in the world serve and please God in the highest sense.

The divine object in creation is that any living creature ought to please and honor God. Jehovah is not selfish in requiring all his creatures to work and act so as to please and glorify him. By obeying his laws we are ennobled, uplifted, and made happy. It is to our eternal good that we follow the counsel of God's Word.

As Christ Dwells Within

We are incapable of thinking God's thoughts and of walking in right ways. We can only achieve these ends with help from God. Infinitely gracious, our heavenly Father provides instruction for all who approach him and who enter into his fellowship and service.

Early in our Christian experience we find that it is *"...Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit..."* (Zech 3:4) that a man makes progress in piety and godliness. St. Paul was a fine example of the man of God. He was strong in the Lord. By the power of God's might Paul assured the brethren in the early church that he prayed for them and he described his prayers on their behalf: that they might be strengthened by the Lord's spirit in the inner man (Eph. 3:16). This would be, he says, their indication

that Christ was dwelling in their hearts (by faith) and that they would be able (along with all other saints) to comprehend the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge (Eph. 3:17-19).

Early in Jesus' ministry he taught his followers important lessons. The Master laid a foundation for them upon which they would later assemble his more intricate teachings. Anticipating their needs, their longings, and the disagreements among them, Jesus taught them to fall back upon God's unfailing resources. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened (Matt. 7:7,8).

The Inspiration of Gratitude

Was not one of Jesus' first instructions to those who would live to his pleasure and glory that they should be grateful? Did he not teach that by heartily surrendering themselves they would know true service? Gratitude (or appreciation) is all important! When Paul begs his brethren to offer themselves to God as living sacrifices is it not to a sense of gratitude that he appeals? This is the reasonable course for them to take in light of the unspeakable mercies which had been extended to them. And those who respond to the voice of the Lord, the Word of his grace, and who are made partakers of the gifts of heaven and the Spirit from above should expend the spiritual power granted to them to increase their appreciation and to grow sympathetic in the Lord's love.

We are debtors beyond all reckoning. Our debts notwithstanding, God's love and mercy is extended toward us. Having benefited by the Lord's grace and spirit, should we not have so broad and generous a spirit toward all men that we would pay off our obligations (of whatever kind) and "*...owe no man anything, but to love one another*" (Rom. 13:8).

One might think that such actions would discharge our duty. We find rather that instead of summing up our indebtedness these are but a preface to our real debt. We recognize a debt and obligation to our creator -- not only for life, its blessings, its privileges, its opportunities, and liberties but still more, for the redemptive work wrought for us through the blood of Jesus. We are indebted for this knowledge, for our call to joint-heirship with our Lord, for the begetting of the holy Spirit, for the assistance and encouragement of the Word of God and its exceeding great and precious promises (2 Pet. 1:4) which direct us.

True, there are arguments to be offered on the other side of the question. These, however, we find are not for us. We had no claims until we had life from God, hence we had no riches; we had nothing. Nor could we purchase these gifts from God; we owe him for everything. There is only room for gratitude! There are only thoughts of thanksgiving! No matter how we view our existence, all has proceeded from the operation of Providence toward us. The poet says it best:

O how can words with equal warmth The gratitude declare

That glows within my inmost heart? But thou canst read it there.

Our Debt of Love

Have we ever wished that our life might have been different? Our parents might have been wiser. We might have been smarter, more moral, stronger. Our nation might be more advanced or civilized; its laws might be more uniform or less oppressive. Our creator might have blessed us with still more than we -- now possess. Are such thoughts wise? Should we not be appreciative for all that we do possess. Should we not do all we can for others and assist, encourage, and bless them? Being debtors, already, have we grounds to claim more?

A review of our standing before the Lord prior to our acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Savior would seem ample cause for God's children to grow more considerate, more submissive, yes, and more appreciative for his mercies, spiritual and physical. Can we withhold anything from him who has given to us so freely?

Should we do anything which would increase our debt? What about our lives and actions? Should we not walk carefully, so as not to injure any of the world or of the church. Should we not tell them of our appreciation, directly or indirectly, by being a help to those whom we meet.

Imitating Jesus

The Scriptures clearly teach that we may go beyond merely discharging our duty to God. As we appreciate his grace, to that degree we will be prompted to give of ourselves. We will lay down our own preferences; we will give up our lives in self denial in such a way that the Lord's name might be honored and his cause furthered. We will try to bless and comfort our fellows, and especially the household of faith.

Our search of the Scriptures leads us to some basic principles from God's revelation to man:

God is love.

He is thoughtful, considerate of and patient toward his children here on earth.

He would have us imitate his example.

With these points in mind, there can be no more honorable pursuit and no task more glorifying to God than that our lives exhibit the thoughts and words and actions which are born of his inherent principle of love. It is no wonder that the apostle says that the end (or real intent) of the Law was love and that love is the fulfilling of the divine law (or purpose) toward man. He that loves others in such a way that he is seeking to do them good is following the holy law, the perfect will of God.

We are not perfect however. Having inherited imperfection from our forefather Adam, we find ourselves (and our brethren in Christ) somewhat confused respecting various scriptural principles.

For example, we are instructed that love is the fulfilling of the divine law. Further, we learn that love of the brethren is one of the evidences of having passed from death to life. We learn that if we do not love our brother (whom we can see with our eyes) we can not love God (whom we have never seen). But, in practice, men take these lessons to opposite extremes. Some neglect the teaching. Others, attempting to measure up to the requirements, manifest a brotherly love where it should be withheld (where it would be unwise, inappropriate, or not in the interest of the brother). Let us note the love which God manifests.

Degrees of Love

The first degree is love for humanity. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16).

The second, is love in a higher and special sense, *"...for the Father himself loveth you..."* (John 16:27) -- you, who have accepted Jesus Christ as your redeemer and have consecrated yourselves to him -- you who are seeking to walk after the spirit and not after the flesh.

This second love may be lost -- in whole or in part. The Scriptures plainly teach this point. *"Keep yourselves in the love of God..."* (Jude 21). If one has tasted the love of God, the powers to come, and has been made a partaker of the holy Spirit only to turn against the Almighty, if such lose their love for God and persist in their course, they may ultimately be "none of his." God's word to those who prefer evil and disobedience is clear. He says he is *"...angry with the wicked..."* (Ps. 7:11), and that *"...all the wicked will he destroy"* (Ps. 145:20).

We may actively seek to honor God, to be like him and the copy which he has set before our eyes, his own dear son.

We should have sympathy for the world. This mercy love should enjoy doing what it can for its uplifting (according to the divine plan and times). As we imitate the character of our Father and our Lord we will love a brethren *"...with a pure heart fervently..."* (1 Pet. 1:22) -- sincerely.

This love for the brethren is different from love of the world. This love is not pity. Nor is it mere generosity. This is brotherly love. All of God's children are brethren. They share a new life; they have new hopes, ambitions, interests, and promises; they are linked with the Lord Jesus in the heavenly kingdom and hope to share in it. Such brethren are joint (or fellow) heirs with each other and with the Lord. They are partners. Their interests are mutual and coordinating.

Mutual Love

These brethren also have a mutual sympathy. As new creatures they are rich in divine favor, but that does not mean that they are perfect. Rather, they are imperfect and share mutual and serious weaknesses. Fortunately, the Lord does not deal with them according to their failures, but according to their spirit -- their intentions, their desires. All these brethren share this condition. Their trials may vary from individual to individual but they endure experiences which enable them to groan sympathetically for their fellows. The apostle says, we also, *"...which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body"* (Rom. 8:23) -- the complete church.

It can thus be seen that the sons of God have a mutual sympathy, love, and care for each other. This mutual helpfulness is beyond the feelings which the world might appreciate because the world has no conflict between new and old methods of thinking and living. The world knows no covenant of sacrifice, it knows no acceptance in the Beloved, hence there is no union of heart with others. The exhortation of brotherly love is aimed at God's people and we own it as our own.

It is not possible that our love for the brethren be equal and identical. There is a regulating force which acts within all of God's people. What force is this?

We love God. We love his principles of righteousness. These are parts of his character. We love our Lord Jesus in the same way, as the personification of all we see in God. Our love for our brethren, then, must be proportionate to the image and glory of God (or our present, imperfect idea of him) which we see in them. We do not refer to physical similarity. We look from a spiritual perspective and focus our gaze upon the spirit, the heart, the motives, the intentions, and the zeal of our brethren for righteousness and truth. As we grow in love for God and in the love of Christ and the principles which they represent we also grow in our love for all men and our brethren.

We cannot help but appreciate those who most manifest a likeness to our Savior. This is not partiality. Nor are we doing to others what we would not have done to us. Such an attitude is merely following Jesus' example. Jesus had three among the twelve whom he loved specially. Of these three one is mentioned separately as being *"...that disciple whom Jesus loved..."* (John 20:2). This man was loved because he was lovable; and so it is among us. We love all brethren warmly and fervently, but our fervor toward individuals should increase as they grow in their likeness to our Lord and our Father.

Love Makes a Difference

To ignore the differences in attitude among us is to ignore the blessing which the Lord intended should belong to those who walk after the Spirit, and goes even further by rewarding those who walk contrary to his Word. It is as much our duty to withhold fellowship from those who are unworthy as it is our duty to grant fellowship to those who are footstep followers of Jesus. If we find ourselves encouraging wrong-doers, let us not deceive ourselves; to do so is not love, but ignorance on our part. God's remedy for ignorance is knowledge: to learn of his Son, to learn from God's Word, and in learning to manifest obedience to what we have mastered.

Paul calls attention to our duty to brethren, urging that we esteem faithful brethren on account of their works, and that others who are unruly be warned. Similarly, he suggests that those who are weak should be supported and we should exercise patience toward all.

How are the "unruly" to be cautioned? Certainly, this could not be done in the same ways as we show our favor to those who are walking after the spirit. The evidences of our regard (our love and esteem) must be sincere; "...let *love be without dissimulation...*" (Rom. 12:9); it must be in proportion to the wholesome desires which we see evidenced in the lives of our fellow-brethren.

Love Thinks No Evil

The apostle did not mean that brethren should find occasion for fault-finding. On the contrary, we should be so full of love for one another that trivial matters would be passed over. These, after all, are weaknesses of the flesh. They do not display our intentions, nor do they indicate a course of willful action.

We find from Paul's examples that those activities in which we engage must be so open and manifest that there is no room to question whether the matter is displeasing to the Lord or injurious to our brethren. For example, some behavior clearly calls for correction according to God's word: drunkenness, profanity, fornication.

We cannot suppose that Paul intended to include other matters, those of personal discretion, under these circumstances. The use of time, the expenditure of money, these are personal stewardships. No one should interfere with another's liberty of conscience and conduct. These are God's gift and are his alone to judge.

The apostle's criteria are stringent because when brother interferes in the affairs of brother there is room for bitterness, misunderstanding, and intolerance. These are forms of spiritual leaven which we are to purge from our lives.

How does the apostle regard those who disobey the Word of God? "*Count him not an enemy, but admonish as a brother...*" (2 Thess. 3:15). Brotherly admonishing is not severe and denunciatory. It is gentle, meek, patient admonishing such as seeks to see the faults corrected and which does not suppose evil which does not exist.

Fundamental Differences Matter

The Apostle John explains that discrimination applies to Christian living and to doctrine. We may be sure, however, that John would not sanction disfellowshipping our brethren for differences on nonessential matters.

How many problems arise on the basis of definition. What are "non-essential" matters. We may be certain of those matters which are essential: faith in God, faith in Jesus as our Redeemer, faith in the promises of the divine Word. These are marks of a brother if they are supported by Christian conduct, walking after the spirit of the truth.

For those who are recognized to be doctrinally astray from the foundation principles of Christ, the apostle indicates that positive action should be taken. Paul, however, cautions that our course must be as blameless as the course which we would condemn must be blamable. We are not to persecute or denounce. We dare not entertain disputes. We ought not to hate -- openly or in secret. Our disapproval must be shown for the false teachings taught by such, but not in a way

that our denials might uphold another's wrong course. *"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine [confessing Christ to have come into the world, in the flesh, to redeem our race, etc.], receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed: For he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds"* (2 John 10).

The apostle encourages us to seek the spirit and guidance of the Lord so we might be discerning -- *"...and of some have compassion, making a difference"* (Jude 22). Some have been trapped by the Adversary in their beliefs: either in sin or in false doctrine. These may not act willfully or intelligently. While maintaining firmness, we must feel compassion toward them. We should express our confidence and trust that they are temporarily wrong. Sincere efforts should be made to assist them, doctrinally or otherwise, to see the correct course and to return to fellowship in Christ.

Solemn Days

We are living in peculiar days. Many of our brethren are caught up in disagreements. There are conflicting views and teachings. The spirit of the brotherhood of Christ seems sadly lacking.

Amidst mixed signals we may yet know that the Lord knows his own. His purpose is moving forward.

Our considerations of these strange times awaken renewed personal devotion to the Lord and toward the members of his body. If we see uncertainly, should we not be more cautious about our actions so that we do not fall into the same trap. Should we not strive to edify our brethren, to help them along in the way of holiness, in faith, and assist them in taking a calm, reasonable, and conservative view of the problems that arise and with which they must deal.

We have great opportunities to glorify our Father in heaven. Since God places a premium upon the quality of love, there is no more effective way of glorifying God than by an abundant display of forbearance, kindness, and tolerance toward all. We must appeal to the spirit of the Lord, to the work of the holy Spirit in the believer, to the spirit of love and of a sound mind at all times. Only thus will we maintain true fellowship with our brethren in Christ. A personal touch, and a close walk with the Lord will smooth the way of the disciple of Christ. By heartily surrendering, the trials that beset him become bearable and lead him to glorious triumph -- to the praise of the glory of his grace.

Then I'll see what thou hast wrought;
Then I'll love thee, love thee as I ought.
Looking back, I'll praise the way
Thou hast led me, led me day by day

- Contributed

What shall be our attitude?

As disciples of Christ whose lives are pledged to his service and who desire above all else to learn and do his will, there must often come to our minds a realization that the whole life and outlook of our fellowship is changing. It is not just that the forms of words which express our articles of faith are remolded and expressed anew; not just that in many matters of doctrinal belief there are doubts expressed and objections raised. These things have always been a feature of our fellowship and must be while free and healthy research into the fountain of all truth continues.

Beside all this there is the indisputable fact that various features of "Present Truth" have permeated the structure of today's Christian thought. This has borne fruitage in the shape of many separate schools, each holding to some peculiarity of belief, yet manifesting a very definite appreciation of the basic truth that God *will* in due time bless all the families of the earth, and the dispensational features of the divine plan.

One hundred years ago that understanding of the "two salvations" and the "ransom for all" which then came to light was confined to virtually one movement Directed by one master-mind, the witnessing to these "harvest truths" (which was then carried on for forty years) has born fruit a hundred ways. Today, one may find numerous movements outside the scope of "Present Truth" as we know it which manifest aspects of truth which we ourselves consider to be of prime importance at this time.

What is the right attitude to adopt toward this development? Is it right to follow the example of those disciples who *"...forbad him, because he followeth not with us"* (Luke 9:49). Or should we acclaim the truths we find expressed in such movements, ignoring the error, and join with them in their work? These are not idle questions. In many places our brethren find that, perhaps with the breakdown of their local group, the opportunity for worship and fellowship with adherents of such enterprises offers a satisfaction to the heart that yearns for Christian fellowship. Thus, to an increasing degree, the lines of demarcation between ourselves and movements of this nature are breaking down.

How To Answer the Question?

Not by ruling out of the purposes of God those whose studies in his Word have led them to other conclusions than our own. That implies the denial of the principles for which we should stand. And decidedly not by concluding that in our service of Christ it does not matter through what organization we serve him -- or what message we proclaim.

The future may yet hold new developments. Tomorrow, the divine revelation may come to man in new ways. But the knowledge of God's plan which is our inheritance carries with it a responsibility which cannot be ignored if we would continue to be: the title of ambassadors for Christ.

The Answer to Our Question

As a company of Christians we have a clear outline of the divine plan and the fundamentals of Christian teaching. It is our duty to keep these alive in our midst. Without impugning the sincerity of any, it remains true that (unless we are grievously mistaken) that which is called "Present Truth" is far in advance of today's general Christian thought.

If this is so, then we are in the position of the watchers in Zion, and our place is on the watchtower looking for further signs of the day of *"He that shall come."* Let those in the city go about their business. Let them serve as seems good to them. Those who are the Lord's remembrancers (Isa. 62:6, margin) have a higher calling and a sterner duty to perform. Let us continue as a separated people, no in the spirit of the man who thanked God that he was not as other men but in an attitude of sober realization that in this great day, we who have received the grace of God in revelation of his plan are called to be like John the Baptist. He was a voice crying in the wilderness to be sure, but crying nevertheless in the certainty of imminent fulfillment -- *"The kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

- Bible Study Monthly, England

Blessed Bearers of Peace

"And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, peace be to this house." - Luke 10:5

When the Lord's people come together, they do so to meet each other and to meet Jesus in the spirit. How beautiful it would be, if when they did, they could heartily greet each other with the thought -- "Peace be unto you!" Uttered *in* the right spirit it should imply that our hearts were in a peaceable condition and that we desired the peace and welfare of our brethren -- instead of strife and argument. This quiet meekness would also effect others who attended such a meeting who might possess less of this godly spirit.

The spirit of peace is just as contagious as the spirit of anger. But the fruit of peace is far more desirable. *"...Peace I give unto you..."* (John 14:27) said our Lord. Whoever lacks this spirit lacks an important evidence of discipleship. The apostle classes the contentious with those who are disobedient to the truth (Rom. 2:8). And yet, he also allows for the weakness of the flesh in this, as well as in other respects. We are admonished to contend earnestly (Jude 3) for the truth (in a spirit of love). Whatever our inclinations, the indwelling of the Lord's spirit will be manifest in the peaceable fruits of righteousness (Heb. 12:11).

"Peace I give unto you..." Those were Jesus' words on the night of his betrayal. *'Peace be unto you'* (Luke 24:36) were his words when he first met the disciples together after his resurrection. He is the Prince of Peace, and the peace which he gives to his faithful disciples is a blessing beyond all measure, which the world can neither give nor take away. This peace is conditional upon: faith (trust in God) and obedience (attempting to do those things which please God). Heavenly peace comes only to such. That peace will flee in proportion to our loss of faith or our lack of obedience.

If we are trusting Jesus, have consecrated our lives to the Lord's service, and seek to walk in his footsteps we may trust that we are God's child. All such children should expect the Lord's peace to rule in their hearts. He gives rest, no matter what our circumstances, and if we do not receive rest we ought to look within -- to repair the breach within ourselves: our lack of faith or obedience. With the revival of these the dove of peace will surely return.

Another lesson remains. However much contention Jesus' message stirs up among men, our Lord was always peaceable, and the peacemaker among others. So should his disciples be. *"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God"* (Matt. 5:9). We may be touched by strife and contention, but we are not to cultivate them. When we speak the truth (Luke 12:3), we ought to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), meekly, gently, with patient longsuffering rather than in strife. -- Contributed

Antecedents of Sanctification

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification...." - 1 Thessalonians 4:3

A law of growth permeates every animal or vegetable life form. Seeds ripen into fruit and grain. Infants grow to mature adults. The progression is the same for all: *"...first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear"* (Mark 4:28). What amazing mysteries lie hidden in nature!

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Matt. 6:28,29). Solomon could afford the most expensive clothing that money could buy or human ingenuity could produce but the prairie flower possesses real charm of which Solomon was but a poor imitation.

There is a spiritual law of growth. It is *"...as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how"* (Mark 5:26,27). Just as science has not yet mastered the laws of natural growth, so the mystery of godliness continues undiscovered. We know many details about spiritual growth, but we will never comprehend the breadth of God's *"...workmanship created in Christ Jesus..."* (Eph. 2:10).

Sacrifice Without Sanctification

How conscious we should be that we too are growing. The scriptures, using such phrases as growing in grace (2 Pet. 3:18), and putting on the new man (Eph. 4:15) which God creates in righteousness and holiness (vs. 24), urge us to be concerned about our growth.

Our theme text describes the ultimate will of God for us: spiritual growth and maturity. Through the exercise of faith we gradually learn the possibilities of such a mature relationship. Indeed, the grace which we have received is wasted if we do not grow. But, with such a premium placed upon growth, it is tempting to deceive ourselves (Jer. 17:9) into thinking that our growth is real and our position secure. One example of such deception is to assume that an initial response to God is all that he requires.

It is possible to be consecrated to God but not to be lawfully sacrificing our lives; to be zealous but not sanctified. Such lives have been seen in every period of the church's history and are still found today. We fear no contradiction when we state that there are relatively few *fully* consecrated lives that are *actually* passing through the progressive stages of sanctification. Many consider consecration to right living (the pursuit of good and proper behavior) to be the sum of Christian attainment. To such, any suggestion to sacrifice (Rom. 12:1) and the completed work of sanctification falls on unreceptive ears.

From Consecration To Clearer Light

The word consecration is not a common New Testament term. It is, perhaps, never used in connection with direct admonitions of the higher spiritual life. We find it twice in Hebrews, but in each case it is derived from a different word. Neither usage relates directly to the inner life. *Teteleiomēnon*, (Heb. 7:28) which means "finished," "completed," is rendered "consecrated" and asserts the perfection of Christ's priestly office. *Enekainisen* (Heb. 10:20) is also translated "consecrated." This word means "dedicated," "to institute", "to renovate", and refers to the newly consecrated approach to God through the sacrifice of Christ.

In the Old Testament the word often sets apart things or persons to sacred uses. As a Christian duty it means the gift of ourselves to him entirely and forever. It does not mean the devotion of *some* things or *some* men.

Full and particular consecration is essential to approach God for the purposes of salvation from sin. There is no merit in consecration. It is a condition which precedes the attainment of holiness. Consecration is the attitude of mind which puts us in an attitude *to receive*. It is emptying of selves so that we may be filled. It is ungrasping every thing so that God may have us entirely at his disposal. It is the assignment to him of all our possession, so that our moral bankruptcy may be acknowledged and his rights in us recognized

Consecration is our attitude toward Christ which is represented in the upward turned cup of a flower. The flower's duty is to respond to the sun and to drink. They do not make the elements of their nourishment. Nor do they merit those elements. They simply adjust themselves so as to drink the light, the rain, and the dew. Without these there would be no vegetable life or floral bloom. It is receptivity into which the Christian places himself by the act of consecration.

How unfortunate that the work represented by consecration have been misunderstood. For some it is synonymous with the terms that describe the "higher life." This is a mistake. Consecration is not sanctification. It is conducive to sanctification; it assists in sanctification.

Consecration is to salvation what springtime is to harvest. Without a bloom these is no fruit. Without a touch there is no sensation. One is antecedent to the other but inseparable. Consecration is no cleansing but coming to the blood to be cleansed. It is not the fire that consumes sin and refines the heart, but a disposition which invites the fire upon the altar and awaits the consummation of our sacrifice. Consecration is voluntary, unreserved, and irrevocable dedication of ourselves to God -- along with all that we control.

Multiple Presentations

It is akin to our surrender when we first approached God for justification, only more enlightened and comprehensive. The penitent sinner gives himself to God in order to obtain pardon, the cancellation of guilt and deliverance from a burden which crushes his conscience. Such rightfully expect the peace that follows justification, but their desire is for pardon: the suppression of fear, the inspiration of hope.

Such may see the penalty of sin but not its depravity. A sinner may mourn his sins, but not the defilement which sin has shot through his character. He seeks forgiveness. He prays that his sins may be blotted from God's records. Such have not yet risen to the concept of being personally cleansed from *all* sin.

The Spirit Searches Our Heart

The Lord gives the sinner what he asks: to the degree that he asks; to the degree of his belief. But the spirit of regeneration which witnesses to our forgiveness and adoption brings with it light -- searching light. The Spirit leads us into all truth. By it we see our depravity: the remains of sin. The Spirit unveils our mind's eye until we see our deformities; it cuts away the fleshy membrane that blinds us to our own vileness. The Spirit analyzes our character (breaking it into components that we can recognize) until we see the continuous thread of sin which runs through our personality.

Once we turn from the practice of sin the Spirit continues to reveal our experiences. Even then, we are a mixture of sin and holiness. We continue this way until we understand the potential of grace. It is our privilege to be redeemed from Adam's sin and our responsibility to be saved: redeemed from iniquity and purified unto Christ.

At this point many discover that they have never given themselves to Christ so that he would destroy the works of the Devil in them (1 John 3:8) and cleanse them from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). For some, perhaps many, the entire work of our consecration (when they sought forgiveness) was initial and limited. At that time such were concerned with their change in relationship to God. They may never have understood the primary work of God: the change in personality which involves a thorough holiness.

As a rule, the penitent Christian's presentation of himself to God is indefinite and confused. This vagueness is not intentional. It results from uncertainty in our approach to God. Penitence is twilight; our eyes are still covered with scales. Such give the Lord all that they understand him to require. Here is the cause of partial surrender. A lack of knowledge creates a partial consecration. Not understanding God's requirement of holiness the believer does not put himself in an attitude to receive it.

Forever Dedicated to His Use

It is this half-hearted surrender to God that necessitates repeated efforts to perfect our consecration. A neglected ability here, a misused talent there, one by one, we place the components of our lives in Jesus' hand. Our dedication of energy and resources should be as detailed as possible.

Our acceptance by the Lord is not dependent upon an itemized count: such is impossible. But, we must be committed to the idea of a whole (entire) burnt offering. By consciously committing these things to him we assure ourselves that nothing is intentionally withheld.

Like a deed, our transfer of ourselves must convey the reality, "with all the appurtenances thereunto belonging." What was previously accomplished in bulk must now be done specifically. This is an act of inventory and transfer. As in the case of a legal contract, every article must be cataloged and assigned:

the body (in all its parts),
the mind (with all its abilities),
our heart (with all the affections, appetites, and tastes),
our possessions (with all their gains and uses, including business, social relations, recreation, education, thought, reading, natural and acquired advantages),
our life (with our death, our grave, and memory).

All must be given to Christ. They are counted as contributions for his glory.

"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14:8). What a thought! Living, dying, or dead, we are Jesus' property, given to him, accepted and sealed by him, dedicated forever to his use.

Like a flower, we bloom for the benefit of another. Like a paint brush, the lines we trace are not for our sake, but for the artist whose property it is. In a truly consecrated state we recognize that

we are no longer in control of our lives. We are obligated to glorify him in body and spirit. And so we say to you the reader: We beg you, based upon God's own mercies extended to you, present your body to him as a living sacrifice which is holy and acceptable to God! This is merely your reasonable response for what he has already done for you (Rom. 12:1)!

On To Perfection

Any man who does not desire Christian perfection, and who does not constantly make it his aim to attain it, may set it down as demonstrably certain that he has no true religion (Albert Barnes).

Such a person has certainly lost the impulse to grow, and growth is essential to all life: physical or spiritual.

It is advisable to guard against self pity. We may easily begin to tally up those things which we sacrifice. This is not the same as consciously consigning our all to God. While this advice may seem opposed to what has already been said it is not. By emphasizing our "giving-up" we may overlook the reality of consecration, which is that we place ourselves in a condition to receive a thousand times more than we ever give.

This is an essential reminder because the end of our faith is not the fullness of our sacrifice. We remind the reader of our theme text: *"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification...."* God desires our greatest good: our sanctification.

Continue to Draw Nigh

If consecration is a forerunner of sanctification, what is sanctification? Sanctification is God's work! *"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly..."* (1 Thess. 5:23). Jesus stated this when he prayed,

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). It begins with action on our part. *"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8).* But, without our continual effort we can not go on to read the end of this verse, *"Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."* Continual drawing near to God will accomplish this:

"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord..." (2 Cor. 3:18).

The end -- the completion of all of God's purposes for us -- of God's dealings with us, through his Spirit working in our hearts is consistently taught in Scripture.

"...who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness" (Mal 3:23, ASV).

Similarly, Paul pointed to Jesus' sanctification of himself. He revealed his love of God in the sacrifice of his life so that he might *"...purify unto himself a peculiar people..." (Titus 2:14).*

"... Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27).

What happens if we avoid this transforming power of God? If we content ourselves with the benefits pictured by the outer court of the tabernacle and its ceremonial washings we will never advance beyond a theoretical understanding of those experiences which take place in the Holy, hidden from view. We will live up on the milk of the word because the light of the seven-branched candlestick will not enlighten our minds. We will abide in the basics of our faith -- those which can be understood by the natural mind. The shewbread, too, will be ineffectual for us.

We will have no strength.

What is sadder is that we will have no desire to grow. Such a simple failure, by refusing to draw nigh to God, will mean the absence (not the loss of something, but something we never acquired) of the longings for the perfections of our heavenly Father. These are indispensable to proving the "...good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

Through Christ

How does sanctification operate? God describes the procedure simply. The written Word fills our mind. It becomes both our motivating spirit and our cause for living. If it is fully accepted our lives change because of it. This is the indwelling of the holy Spirit. This is how his Spirit controls our lives.

We begin simply. "*For me to live is Christ*" (Phil. 1:21). "*..I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me...*" (Gal. 2:20). Every successive step is the same, but with each our experience increases. Habitual renewing of our mind expands our spiritual horizon. The work progresses as surely as God promised. If we make a practice of repeating God's thoughts after him in this way he stands ready to make his Word and Spirit effective in cleansing us of "...all *filthiness of the flesh and spirit...*" (2 Cor. 7:1).

What does it mean to submit to the God's workmanship? Does it mean passiveness? No. Confidence in our ultimate victory -- because of God's power working in us -- does not supersede our struggles -- against sin. Nor does it reduce the intensity of our personal efforts to yield to Christ the devotion he claims. The new life is divine in its source and human in its development. Indeed, it is psychologically impossible to believe that God will save us from our sin unless we resolutely set ourselves against it.

Nor can we expect Christ to live in us (John 14:13) unless we develop his state of mind. With such attitudes as he manifested we will gladly lay our all upon the altar which he consecrated with his own blood. Just as the faith which justifies is impossible without repentance, so a sanctifying faith is impossible without our unreserved consecration to God.

If we work with God, then the power which clothes the lily will work in us. God's good, perfect, and acceptable will worked out in us will make possible a "...far more *exceeding and eternal weight of glory. . .*" (2 Cor. 4:17) for us. And then we shall live "*to the praise of the glory of is grace...*" (Eph. 1:6) and shall be a royal diadem in the hand of our God (Isa. 62:3).

Finis, Lord, thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Show us all thy great salvation --
Thine shall all the glory be.
Changed from glory into glory,
Till we see thine own dear face;
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost wonder, love and praise.
- Contributed

Shalom -- Peace on Earth

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." - Isaiah 9:2; ARV

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has visited and redeemed his people,
and has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David
(Luke 1:68,69; RSV).

It seems fitting that the Evangel story should begin within the sanctuary and at the time, as is supposed, of the morning sacrifice. One day, while Zacharias the priest (his name signifies *"he who remembers Jehovah"*) was burning incense in the temple, the angel of the Lord appeared to him. *"And when he came out he could not speak to the people: and they perceived that he had seen a vision..."* (Luke 1:22).

Israel had waited for nearly four hundred years for a message from heaven. Every Israelite who believed God's Word eagerly hoped that his next message to them would announce the coming of a king who was, as foretold, to deliver them from bondage. These were eager that they should be among those to welcome the king.

In quick succession there followed the angel visit to Mary, the prophecies of Elizabeth, Zacharias, and Mary, the heavenly messengers to the shepherds on the fields near Bethlehem, and the prophecies of Simeon and Anna. But then a profound silence fell upon Israel which lasted for about thirty years.

Heavenly Testimony

The angel revealed to Zacharias that his son (John, later to be known as John the baptist), although he was to be great, was only a messenger who would go before the face of the Lord to convert the hearts of the people, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:12-17). Gabriel visited Mary six months later. He told her that a greater one would sit on the throne of his father David (vss. 2833). Upon hearing the message, the mother of our Lord hastened to the home of Zacharias and Elizabeth, and

"Elizabeth was filled with the holy spirit and she lifted up her voice with a loud cry and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.... And blessed is she that believed for there shall be a fulfillment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord." (Luke 1:41,42,45, ARV).

The speed of Elizabeth's message contrasts with Mary's equally inspired words which follow immediately. She spoke calmly and simply, echoing the lyrical Old Testament poetry. Mary's words demonstrate that she had absorbed and retained the phraseology of the Scriptures as she heard them in the synagogue service since the days of her youth. By this we recognize that the spirit which inspired the messengers of old now moved her. Note the poetic form of her words:

My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior
For he hath looked upon the low estate of his bond-maiden:
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath done to me great things;
And holy is his name,
And his mercy is unto generations and generations
On them that fear him.
He hath shewed strength with his arm;
He hath scattered the proud by the imagination of their heart.
He hath put down princes from their thrones,
And hath exalted them of low degree.
The hungry he hath filled with good things;
And the rich he hath sent empty away,
He hath holpen Israel his servant,
That he might remember mercy (As he spake unto our fathers)
Toward Abraham and his seed for ever (ARV).

Minds which are as submissive to the influence of the holy Spirit as were the minds of these mothers must have had precious communion during the months that followed -- months during which, doubtless, they meditated on the hope of Israel and on the part which their offspring would play in it.

Zacharias may be representative of all that was good and true in the Jewish priesthood of that day, *"...righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless"* (Luke 1:6, RSV). And so also the holy family of Nazareth may be considered as a typical Israelitish household. The particulars of their lives are few. We believe that the Gospels intentionally prevented human interests from overshadowing the central fact to which man's attention was to be directed.

The Gospels were manifestly not intended to furnish a biography of Jesus the Messiah, but, together with the Old Testament they were to tell the history of the long-promised establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth.

The object was: *"That you may know the truth concerning those things of which you have been informed"* (Luke 1:4; RSV), and these *"...things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name"* (John 20:31; RSV). Is there not a lesson here for us? Our natural inclinations are to give those details that satisfy human interest but which add nothing to the spiritual.

An Important Miracle

John was circumcised eight days after his birth. Without this rite, (which introduced him to Jewish citizenship) no one has ever been accepted of the Lord as a member of that favored people. On this occasion God miraculously displayed that he was dealing with their nation.

Zacharias had been mute since his vision nine months earlier. But now, *"... his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, blessing God"* (Luke 1:64; RSV). The holy Spirit, as it had done through Mary, used Zacharias' loosened tongue to speak assurance to the people. The blessings of the Abrahamic covenant would now be realized:

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;
For he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people,
and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David
(As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been of old),
Salvation from our enemies,
and from the hand of all that hate us;
To show mercy towards our fathers,
And to remember his holy covenant,
The oath which he swore to Abraham our father

.....

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High:
For thou shalt go before the Lord to prepare his ways. (Luke 1:68-73,76; ARV)

Six months passed. He whom these lines described visited them. Jesus of Nazareth was born in Bethlehem, the city of David, six miles from their beloved Jerusalem.

"And it came to pass, while [Mary and Joseph] were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn [translated "guest chamber" in Luke 22:11]" (Luke 2:6,7).}

This lowly birth was not inappropriate to one who was to labor and dwell in the humblest of places for the next thirty years. During his last years he had "...no *place to lay his head...*" (Matt 8:20), and his death was a thousand times more pitiable than his beginning.

In the country where Abraham had pastured his flocks and David had tended his sheep,

"...there were shepherds in the field, keeping watch by night over their flock. And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,"

"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace,
Which comes of God's good pleasure, Is among men."
(Luke 2:8-14; Variorum Bible, marginal reading).

Not Many Great, Not Many Wise

The shepherds hastened to the City of David and "... *found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger*" (Luke 2:16; RSV) and "...*returned, glorifying and praising God*" (Luke 2:20).

"The associations of our Lord's nativity were all of the humblest character, and the very scenery of his birthplace was connected with memories of poverty and toil. On that night, indeed, it seemed as though the heavens must burst to disclose their radiant minstrels; and the stars, and the feeding sheep, and the "light and sound in the darkness and stillness," and the rapture of faithful hearts, combine to furnish us with a picture painted in the colors of heaven. But in the brief and thrilling verses of the Evangelist we are not told that those angels songs were heard by any except the wakeful shepherds of an obscure village."

Forty-eight days later this babe was presented in the temple for the required rite of purification. The offering which his parents brought was probably two pigeons or doves, for this was permitted by the law to those who were too poor to bring a lamb. The law also required that five shekels should be paid into the temple treasury. By this payment their firstborn son was to be redeemed from the Aaronic priesthood. Oh, yes, this child was yet to become a high priest! But his priesthood would be of God for all mankind and after the order of Melchizedek.

"When the parents brought in the child Jesus ...[Simeon] received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,"

Now lettest thou thy servant depart, O Lord,
According to thy word, in peace;
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples;
A light for revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of thy people Israel
And then directing his prophecy to Mary, he continued:

"Behold, this child is set for the falling and rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:27-32,34-35; ARV).

Through the prophetess Anna, the spirit spoke once more "*to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem*" (Luke 2:38), the consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25), and then began the thirty years of silence.

Jesus would come to them again as a man, legally and actually. He would offer to remove the desolation that had fallen upon their nation centuries before. But the nation of Israel rejected him and fitly forecasted the short sightedness of spiritual Israel as well.

After the three and a half years of Jesus' ministry. Mary learned what it meant to have a "*sword pierce her soul*" (Luke 2:35). Jerusalem was "*left desolate*" (Luke 13:35), without a king, as it remains today. "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto her* (Luke 13:34) "*...if thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto thy Shalom [thy peace - ARV]*" (Luke 9:42). Again peace.

The Christmas message must wait. The Prince of Peace lay three days in the tomb. Darkness covered the earth. He entered death's door, but "The three sad days are quickly sped; He rises glorious from the dead."

Angels, roll the rock away!
Death yield up the mighty prey!
See, the Savior quits the tomb,
Glowing with immortal bloom,
Alleluia, Alleluia.

The first word from the risen Savior when he came into the upper room that evening was the Christmas message, "*Shalom*," peace. The fulfillment of the angelic prophecy spoken to the shepherds years before began to take place; not a peace of earthly prosperity, taxes paid, food and clothing provided, but the peace that nothing can disturb, the peace of one who had nowhere to lay his head, the peace of the one who promised, "...my *peace* give unto you, *not as the world giveth give I unto you*" (John 14:27). Peace on earth, good will toward men (Luke 2:4).

Let Heaven and Earth Rejoice

The message to the shepherds becomes more precious as the child of God grows in grace and knowledge. That message epitomizes the entire Gospel and we cannot be reminded too frequently of the foundation of that Gospel -- the Savior's birth.

The angel prophesied good to both the church and the world during the Millennial Age. The church is the first to be blessed. The first resurrection is composed of those holy ones who shall live and reign with Christ during his kingdom. Satan shall then be bound. Truth and righteousness shall enlighten the entire earth (Rev. 20:1-6). The church will be delivered in the morning of the Millennial day, as the prophet declares, God will help her early in the morning (Ps. 46:5).

Although we rejoice in the hopes set before us, we also appreciate the breadth of divine mercy and love. He holds a blessing for all of mankind: every member of Adam's race has been bought back from death through the love and the blood of his precious Son.

Our understanding of the divine plan for salvation, which began with Jesus' birth, compels us to join with the angel choir singing praises to the God of heaven with thankfulness for his mercy to the children of men! It did not matter that the babe of Bethlehem was but the prospective Savior, or that he could not be anointed to his work until he reached manhood thirty years later. Nor did it matter that he would gradually lay down his life for three and a half years or that he would be crucified. It did not matter that his resurrection would follow his death by three days or that he would ascend forty days later or that the general time of blessing would be deferred for nineteen centuries.

No! The angels sang at the first impulse; they rejoiced at the first budding of the divine plan of salvation! We who have faith in the ultimate outcome can also rejoice with joy unspeakable. We praise God in the highest and we praise his Son our Lord.

Joy to the world!
the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king:
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heav'n and nature sing.
- P.E. Thomson

The Word of Truth

The Word of truth is like a stained-glass window rare,
We stand *outside* and gaze, but see no beauty there,
No fair design, naught but confusion we behold;
'Tis only from *within* the glory will unfold,
And he who would drink in the rapture of the view
Must climb the winding stair, the portal enter through.

The sacred door of truth's cathedral is most low,
And all who fain would enter there the knee must bow
In deep humility. But once inside, the light
Of day streams through and makes each color heavenly bright,
The Master's great design we see, our hands we raise
In reverent ecstasy of wonder, love, and praise!

Entered Into Rest

James C. Jordan, Cheswick PA
Louella Naill, Grand Rapids MI

To Jesus Always

I always go to Jesus,
When troubled or distressed;
I always find a refuge
When I with him can rest.
I tell him all my trials,
I tell him all my grief;
And while my lips are speaking
He gives my heart relief.

When full of dread forebodings,
And flowing o'er with tears,
He calms away my sorrows,
And hushes all my fears.
He comprehends my weakness,
The peril I am in,
And he supplies the armor
I need to vanquish sin.

When those are cold and faithless,
Who once were fond and true,
With careless hearts forsaking
The old friends for the new,
I turn to him whose friendship
Knows neither change nor end:
I always find in Jesus
An ever faithful friend.

I always go to Jesus;
No matter when or where
I seek his gracious presence,
I'm sure to find him there.
In times of joy or sorrow,
Whate'er my need may be,
I always go to Jesus,
And Jesus comforts me.

Many Shall Be Made Righteous

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." - Romans 5:19

Question: Is there a scripture text which tells us plainly that the unsaved will be resurrected and given an opportunity to accept Christ?

Answer: Frankly, I know of none. There are, however, numerous scriptures which do teach this. By researching them and arranging them in order we see evidence which is impressive and in fact seems quite undeniable. If this teaching can be thoroughly proved by the Bible, how welcome this news should be to just and loving minded persons.

Logic indicates that the word "many," as used in our theme text, could hardly carry the thought of only a "few." Yet, this is the concept of most people: that only a few will be saved. In the light of such a generally widespread understanding of this verse we are led to question: Was the Apostle Paul in error when he said that "many" would be made righteous?

The following scriptures clearly demonstrate that the word, "many", as used in our theme text, carries with it the value of "all":

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Ro. 5:12).

"...There is none righteous, no, not one" (Ro. 3:10).

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Ro. 3:23).

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22).

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18).

Sound logic would indicate that in the same sentence, any subsequent usage of the word "many" could hardly carry a value of only a "few."

The most profound of all the scriptural promises are not those which promise a place in heaven only to a select few. The truly profound promises in the Bible are those which, as in our theme text, provide for the salvation of "many" -- even the vast majority of mankind.

One of these outstanding promises is Jesus' prophecy: *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"* (John 12:32, author's emphasis). He did not say that he would save all men. That would conflict with God's Word as elsewhere spoken.

Q: What does this tremendous promise mean? Can it refer only to those living since Christ came to earth? -- Can it refer to those who have never heard of Jesus, the only name under heaven whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12)? And, will the promise fail? Did Jesus, the son of God, err in making this statement? And do these words stand alone, unconfirmed by Scripture?

A: That Jesus should be in error or that his promised should fail would be unthinkable. Because he didn't fulfill the promise immediately (even over a period that now spans some nineteen hundred years) cannot negate the promise. He will prove himself correct and able to perform his word.

Q: How can he literally draw all men to him? Millions died before he came to earth. And how, in turn, can many be saved? Indeed, Jesus said: "...*Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*" (Matt. 7:14). Is this inconsistent? Or is there a dependable, biblical answer?

A: The answer is discernible, I believe. Scriptures which apply to the Grace Age (from Pentecost to the gathering home of Jesus' joint-heirs) may not apply to the world before The Flood. Also, Scriptures which apply to the one thousand years of peace and righteousness under Christ's rulership do not necessarily apply today.

We find that Jesus' statement that "few" will find this way to life refers to this Grace Age. How great are the rewards of those who do find this way and walk in it -- faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). Faithful unto the end.

When Christ comes in his glory and his saints with him (Matt. 16:27), to complete the work he has begun at Pentecost -- then he will, most assuredly, draw all men to him as promised.

Q: But how could this come about?

A: The resurrection of Lazarus, who had been dead, his body deteriorating in the tomb for four days, seems unbelievable to us. But this resurrection is eclipsed when compared to the future resurrection of billions. The bringing back of those who have died during the past sixty centuries will completely eclipse even that marvelous illustration of God's power. God, and Jesus (who purchased all of mankind with the costliest of prices) have a transcending purpose in the resurrection of all mankind. Their's is a motive which exceeds at mere rehearsal of human rewards and penalties which many understand the resurrection to import. The true purpose of the resurrection of all men is to draw all men unto Jesus!

Most of Christianity believes that all are lost if they do not hear and accept (in this life) the one name under heaven whereby we must be saved. This dogma does not accord with plain scriptural teaching:

"...*In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed*" (Gen. 28:14). In this, God made a promise to Jacob which must include all those families who died before Jacob, as well as those who have died in ignorance since never having heard the name Jesus, much less having received him into their hearts."

"Who gave himself [Christ Jesus] a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2:6). True, not all men will accept. But in the resurrection many will hear for the first time and accept -- those who have not heard as yet God has promised this. He will not default.

"Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10). On that lovely, holy night when Jesus was born at Bethlehem, the angel pronounced an equally broad and all encompassing promise. To fulfill this promise, God provides a resurrection of all -- ALL who abide in darkness. This darkness was our abode too, before our conversion, and God will bring all into the light of his glorious Gospel.

"And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all shall know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them" (Jer. 31:34). This promise certainly is not true today. But it will yet come to pass.

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9). Isaiah's description of the coverage of God's word over the earth is complete. Again, this is not true today. We must, therefore, look to the next age for the fulfillment of this promise.

"That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). Here, John the Baptist adds his testimony. Billions have died prior to Christ's advent, but the promise is that Christ lightens EVERY MAN.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:17; cp. Joel 2:28). Although commonly considered fulfilled (first at Pentecost and finally at Cornelius' home) this partial interpretation misses the breadth of God's promise as seen from the preceding scriptures. The outpouring of his Spirit upon ALL FLESH will literally take place in the thousand year era of peace which is to come. The holy Spirit will be the essential aid to men after the consummation of the great tribulation, the binding of Satan, and the coming of the Christ (Jesus and his resurrected saints) to judge the world in righteousness (Ps. 25:9). The Spirit is the all essential help. Without it the completion of God's purpose would be impossible. Without the Spirit the resurrected saints would be unable to perform their tasks and the people would be unable to receive and understand the good news. "...For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9).

Q: How can such miracles take place?

A. We are not left to grope for human answers. The time during which these things take place is described in the twentieth chapter of Revelation. It is a thousand years long. The saints will all have been resurrected. They will reign along with Christ. Satan's influence will be ended by his binding. The twelve apostles will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:30). The saints will inherit all things and judge the world in the same manner as the apostles judge Israel -- not so much as the issuing of decrees but as God's advocates among men. The book of Judges presents such a "theocratic" system -- a government under and by God. The saints -- overcomers -- will rule the nations with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:27), and judge them (1 Cor. 6:2).

Q: Does Jesus statement, *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him..."* (John 6:44) preclude the drawing of all men suggested in the verse already considered (John 12:32).

A: We answer no. The words here apply to the age of grace and they cannot hinder the greater promise that Jesus would yet draw all to him.

Q: What about the words of Revelation, chapter 20, verse 5 (Rev. 20:5)? Don't these words stand in the way of the world wide vision of God's saving most of mankind.

A: A casual reading of this verse leaves some Bible students confused. *"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."* -- What John describes here is not the first resurrection but the second. Our temporary confusion is resolved by looking to the oldest Greek manuscripts; to those which are available today, but which were not available at the time the King James Version was translated. The Siniaticus text omits the words *"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."* Numerous other of the older manuscripts concur in this omission.

On such authority alone we would be justified in abandoning this erroneous view. We note, however, that this interpolated thought (the addition of those words already quoted) is also out of harmony with two other scriptures. Jesus said, *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth..."* (John 5:28-29). Similarly, Daniel says that *"...many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt"* (Dan. 12:2).

In conclusion, the scriptures illustrate that Jesus does not make statements which he does not intend to, or is unable to fulfill. He said that he would draw ALL MEN unto himself, we can depend upon his promise. If he intended to draw only a few (those living during or after his advent, or only those who were privileged to hear and understand him) he would have said he would draw a few. But, just as MANY were made' sinners (and this many includes us all), so MANY will be made righteous. Bless his holy name.

"Oh Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches" (Ps. 104:24).

-P. Archer

Show Me Thy Face

Show me thy face -- one transient gleam of loveliness divine,
And I shall never think or dream of other love than thine;
All lesser lights will darken quite, all lower glories wane,
The beautiful of earth will scarce seem beautiful again.

Show me thy face -- my faith and love shall henceforth fixed be,
And nothing here have power to move my soul's serenity.
My life shall seem a trance, a dream, and all I feel and see
Illusive, visionary -- Thou the one reality.

Show me thy face -- I shall forget the weary days of yore;
The fretting ghosts of vain regret shall haunt my soul no more.
All doubts and fears for future years in quiet trust subside;
And naught but blest content and calm within my breast abide.

Show my thy face -- the heaviest cross will then seem light to bear;
There will be gain in every loss, and peace with every care.
With such light feet the years will fleet, life will seem brief as blest,
'Till I have laid my burden down and entered into rest

That Your Joy May Be Full

Our Lord concluded the lesson on the Vine and its fruit by an illustration of why He gave it, saying, *"These things have I spoken unto you that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be filled full This is My commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you"* (John 15:11,12).

These are wonderful words of life that have come down to us through the centuries. They have cheered and encouraged many of the Lord's followers in the Narrow Way.

We now enter into those joys through faith, anticipation, and through rest of heart, but in time we shall actually enter into them. Meantime, the world has not submitted itself to the Lord, has no appreciation for the joys of the Lord, and is full of selfishness, ambition, strife and envy. The world knoweth us not even as it knew Him not; it knows not our joys in the Master's service even as it never appreciated the joys of our Lord in doing the Father's will, to the sacrifice of His life.

We stand amazed at the thought in these words, *"...As I have loved you."* How can we love one another with the same love which the Lord has for us? Such love is impossible at first. But as the Spirit of the Lord fills us, we approach this standard of perfect love for all that are His; a love that would not only refuse to injure a brother, but a love which would delight to do good, yea, to do good at the expense of one's own time and convenience. Thus Jesus loved us and redeemed us with His own precious blood.

To the extent that we grow in grace, knowledge, and love for His, in that proportion we are Christlike and have a Christlike love. This love is the fulfilling of the Law. Whoever has such love for the brethren will undoubtedly have a full, sympathetic love for the groaning creation, and will be glad to do what is possible on their behalf. Moreover, they will be doubly glad, for the Lord in His good time; and pleasure has a great and wonderful blessing for every member of Adam's race.

- Contributed

We Thank Thee

We thank thee, O Father of all, for the power
Of aiding each other in life's darkest hour;
The generous heart and the bountiful hand,
And all the soul -- help that sad souls understand.

We thank thee, O Father, for days yet to be --
For hopes that our future will call us to thee;
That all our eternity form, through thy love,
One thanksgiving day in the mansions above.