

WHEN GOD IS ALL IN ALL

1 Corinthians 15 :20-28

“THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL.” Could clearer or better words be found to set forth the climax of God’s purpose for His vast creation? It is an all-embracing phrase, closing paragraphs of Scripture completely satisfying to the intelligent mind. And it surely expresses, especially to the believer, all that the heart and mind could desire, bringing to perfection the divine ultimate.

How anyone could voice dissent is difficult to imagine. What other speech or writing could replace it, with a consummation of greater wisdom, love and grace? May we not truly think and say that for beings to be entirely subject to their Creator is at last proven to be their highest blessing? For such subjection is surely the end of introspection, and, maybe, proud self-life on the part of multitudes. It would also be the end of fear and strife, and the heart-searing dissatisfaction with life which is the bane of so many.

We do well to remember, however, that towards so desirable a consummation there are many stages, innumerable processes, all of which serve to carry our Father’s purpose forward to the rare climax He has in view. But time and space fail us to minutely detail all these steps and stages in so vast a purpose. Let it suffice, then, to believe that such a noble end crowns all. And that the marvelous conclusion so wonderfully depicted by the apostle Paul is alone worthy of God, and alone sufficiently rewarding for the sacrifice of the Son of His love.

Now, it may be of interest here to quote the rare inscription which moved the writer to an unforgettable acceptance of such a lofty truth. A friend had pointed out the significance of Paul's wonderful statement in the first chapter of Colossians (verses 15-20). Wonderful it is, for it shows us, not only the preeminence of the Christ of God, but the might and power vested in Him by the Father of glory. All creation created *in Him* and *for Him*. Stupendous thought! And with what involvement! A wondrous, unassailable peace, every part of which is *through Him, through the blood of His cross*. And for the reconciliation of all to God, even the Father.

That it is *for Him* should indeed evoke our praise. He is so eminently worthy of so complete a reward. How seemly, that to Him all creation should be drawn, and for so supreme an end—that God may be All in all. For this lofty climax were the eons framed, that stage upon stage God's purpose in Christ might attain fruition. They are the ground whereon God effects His rare design of love, even in Christ, the appointed Heir of the universe.

We see then, how unspeakably precious to God was the sacrifice of Christ, and how excellent its efficacy, when the end to which it points is of such an exalted character. Its effect is seen not only in the immediate of the life which now is, but also in that perfect ultimate when God is everything to everyone. For creation, at first so beautiful and perfect, is at last even more beautiful and perfect, and all because Christ makes it so.

It is well to bear in mind that so lofty a goal is not the fruition of an afterthought. Rather is it the joyous outcome of God's wise and wondrous forethought. Even so, God will do all His pleasure. And what other conclusion could set forth so well the supremacy of God, and the fullhearted satisfaction of the creatures of His hand?

Was it not for this Christ suffered and bled and died? And as the corn of wheat which falls into the earth, and, dying, brings forth much fruit, so the Victor of Golgotha, in the plentitude of regal grace, will present much fruit to God the Father. But so rich a harvest is cumulative. There is first the exultant gathering of those whose citizenship belongs to the heavens. These, transfigured in conformity to the exalted Christ, are the exponents of God's grace in the celestial realms. Below, in terrestrial habitations, are those on the new earth. But all, above and below, rejoice in God. Enjoyers of His grace, they live, move, and have their being in Him. For, at long last, all are reconciled to God.

God's rare design is now in perfect completion, for there has come to all, a gladsome peace and satisfaction. Buoyant life and immortality have become the experience of all. The glory will be wholeheartedly ascribed to God, and as truly attained in the Son of His love.

In view of this august consummation so clearly taught in God's Word, why then the doubt and reticence, even on the part of believers, with regard to so sublime a truth? Why are they not able to believe that God's purpose is of so ideal a character? Is not God the Father of glory well able through the Son of His love, to become All in all?

Disbelief that God's purpose is of such a lofty character can but lead to an unworthy conception of the Father of glory. How can we think that the dogma of endless torment is honoring to God? How could it be the climax of divine purpose? It denies that Christ will draw *all* to Himself, thus ignoring the fullness and grandeur of His sacrificial life and death. Moreover, it ascribes victory to man's will in conflict with God's, in spite of the fact that many wills have been changed by the experience of salvation, not by man's initiative, but by influences brought to bear upon him, as in the case of Paul.

God, Who is love, may be thought of in many ways, and by varying phrases, but His great, far-reaching love cannot be better expressed than by the term "reconciliation." Surely here is a word charged with precious ideas. Reconciliation clearly describes the atmosphere of accord where previous estrangement has existed. Christ has truly made peace "through the blood of His cross." But the clear potency of it is yet to be seen when the ministry of reconciliation has accomplished its beneficent purpose. Then will Paul's great words be perceived in their highest light. "We are beseeching, 'For Christ's sake be conciliated to God!' For the One not knowing sin, He makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him" (2 Cor. 5:20, 21).

Because love will be the all-pervasive element in the great day of God, all discord will vanish. And nearer, ever nearer, draws the glorious consummation of God's purpose.

The salvation of all is at last a wondrous reality. The tendency we see in God's great stream of the eons has widened and enlarged until all are richly blessed by its satisfying power. Its noble volume, now freed of all obstacles, attains a majestic flow. And so, by seemingly strange and inexplicable ways, the God of all grace accomplishes His purpose. For "Grace not in rills, but cataracts rolls." How glorious the stream, and how salutary its miraculous power! Sin has affected all, all but one glorious, sinless Being, and He in marvelous grace triumphs completely over it.

There will be not a single creature, then, above or below, who is not "lost in wonder, love and praise." A scene truly to inspire, and continuously impel to grateful thanks. Transcendent grace indeed, in fullest flow!

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