

THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL

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*Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith, all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all-*

1 CORINTHIANS 15:24-28.

**T**Hese last words are my text. What a mystery there is in the context! We are accustomed to speak of the two great acts of humiliation on the part of the Lord Jesus—His descending from the throne and becoming Man upon earth, a Servant among men; and His descent through the Cross into the grave, the depth of humiliation under the curse. But, oh, what a mystery there is here—that there is a time coming in the everlasting glory when the Son of Man Himself shall be subjected unto the Father, and shall give the kingdom into the Father's hands, and God shall be *all in all*. I cannot understand this; it passes knowledge. But I worship Christ in the glory of His subjection to the Father.

And here I learn one precious lesson, and that is what I want to point you to—that the whole aim of Christ's coming, and the whole aim of redemption, and the whole aim of Christ's work in our hearts, is summed up in that one thought—"that God may be all in all." And if that is true, of what infinite consequence it is that you and I should take the thought as our life-motto, and live it out. If we do not know that this is Christ's object, we never can understand what He expects of us, and will work in us. But if we realise where it is all tending to—that everything must be subordinated to that—then we have a principle to rule our life, which was the very principle of the life of Christ. Let us meditate for a little while upon it, with the earnest prayer: "O God, we hope to be present on that wondrous day, when Christ shall give up the kingdom, and when Thou shalt be all in all. We hope to

be there to see it, and to experience it, and to rejoice in it throughout eternity. O God, give us to know something of it here this very night. Lord God, do take Thy place, the place Thou hast a right to take, and reveal Thy glory, that every heart may be bowed in the dust, and have but one song and one hope—that *God may be all in all*. O God, hear us, and may every heart be subjected to Thee to-night in full reality. Amen.

I said that this is what Jesus came into the world for. This is the object of redemption. This is what we must try to understand. And I want to point you to two thoughts: First, see how Christ, in His own life, realised and worked out this—"that God may be all in all." Second, see how we, in our lives, can realise it too.

If you look at the life of the Lord Jesus, then, you see that there are five great steps in it. An old authority uses the very significant expression, "The process of Jesus Christ." There is first, His *birth*, then His *life*, and His *death*, and His *resurrection*, and His *ascension*. In all these things you will see how God is all.

Look at His *birth*. He received it from God. It was by an act of God's Omnipotence that He was born of the Virgin Mary. It was from God that He had His mission, and He continually spoke of Himself as being sent from God. Christ had His life from the Father, and He ever acknowledged it. And it is the first thing that a Christian must learn from Christ. We do not want to look at our conversion, and say, "I did this," and "I did that," and, perhaps, to put between, "God did that for me"; but we want to take time in God's presence to say, "As truly as it was the work of Almighty God to give His Son here upon earth, through the Virgin Mary, His life in human flesh, so truly and really has God given His life into my heart." We have our life from God.

Look at the next step. *The life Christ had, as Man, to maintain*, He had to maintain it in the path that God gave Him. How did He do it? He tells: "I can do nothing of myself." He tells us that He did not speak one word till the Father had told Him. He just lived every moment of the day with this one thought: God is absolutely all, and I am nothing but a vessel in which God reveals His glory. That was the life of Christ—entire, unbroken, continuous dependence upon God; and God really was, in His life, every hour *all in all*. That was what Christ came to prove.

And notice that this was what man was created for—to be a vessel into which God could pour His wisdom and goodness and beauty and power. That is the nobility of the Christian. It is God that makes seraphim and cherubim flames of fire. The glory of God passes through them, and they have nothing in themselves. They are just vessels prepared by God, come from God, that they might let God's glory shine through them.

And so it was with the Son. Sin came in, the terrible sin, first, of the fallen angels, and then of man. They exalted themselves against God, and would not receive the glory of God, and they fell into the "outer darkness"; first the devils, and then man. And Christ came to restore man; and so Christ lived among us, and day by day He just depended upon the Father for everything. Notice, He would not touch a bit of bread until the Father gave it to Him. He had the power, and He was very hungry, but He would not make a stone into bread, though He could have done it, until the Father said, My Son, eat this. Christ lived a life of absolute dependence upon God, waiting for God day and night; and that is the Man who is one day, in glory, to effect it that God shall be *all in all*.

Then, next, He not only received His life from God, and lived it in dependence on God, but *He gave it up to God*. He did it in obedience. What is obedience? Giving up my will to the will of another. When a soldier bows to his general, or a scholar to his teacher, he gives up his will—and my will is my life—he gives up himself to the rule and mastery and the power of another. And Christ did that. "I came not to do mine own will." "Lo, I come to do Thy will." In Gethsemane He said, "Not my will, but Thine be done." Then He went further, and on the cross He carried out what had been settled in Gethsemane, and gave up His life to God, and He thereby taught us that the only thing that life is worth living for is *to give it back to God even unto death*. If you take your life and spend it on yourself, even partly, you are abusing it, you are taking it away from its noblest use. Oh, Christian, learn from Christ that the beauty of having life and will and body is that you can give it to God, and that then God will fill it for His glory. Yes, the Lord Jesus came and gave up His life unto the very death.

We have been talking about crucifixion and death more than once during these days. Just let me say this in passing—we must not always look at crucifixion and death as necessary only from the side of sin. That is only half the truth—the negative side. But we must look at it on the other side, the side of the Lord Jesus. Why did He give up that life unto death, and what did He get by it? He gave up His earthly life, and God gave Him a heavenly life. He gave up the life of humiliation, and God gave Him a life of fellowship and glory. Christian, do you want a life of fellowship with God, and of glory and power and joy, even here upon earth? Remember, then, that there is but one way to secure it. Give your life up to God. That is the only way. That is what Christ did. He gave up His life unto the very death, into the hands of God. Oh, do not you see that in the life of Christ, God was every-

thing, God all in all? Christ worked it out, and proved most gloriously that God can be, and God must be, all in all.

Take the next step. *He was raised again from the dead.* What does the resurrection mean? If you want to understand that, ask first, what does the *cross* mean? Jesus parted with His life, and what does that say to us? He gave Himself up into utter helplessness and impotence to wait upon God, to see what God would do. He said, I cannot seize the heavenly life for myself; I wait till my Father gives it to me. The grave was His humiliation. "My flesh shall rest in hope." There He waited, until God the Father raised Him up in everlasting glory. The time of Jesus in the grave was a very short time—only a portion of three days; but if there is one lesson we need to learn from Jesus, it is the lesson of the cross. Give up yourself in utter dependence upon God, unto death. Lose everything, and God will raise you up in glory. Christ could never have ascended to sit upon the throne, never could have accomplished His work of preparing the kingdom that He could give to the Father, if He had not begun by giving up *Himself* and let God do all.

And it was even so, too, with His *ascension* to heaven, and His entering into glory.

Well then, the five steps we have been considering are these: Christ had His life from God; He lived it in dependence upon God; He gave it up in death to God; He received it in the resurrection from God; and He ascended to God and was glorified in it with God for ever.

And so, remember that the throne in heaven is not the throne of the Lamb of God alone; it is the throne of God and the Lamb. Jesus went to share the throne with the Father, and the Father was always the first, and Jesus second, Even on the throne of heaven our glorified Lord Jesus honours the Father as Father, and honours God as God. It is a deep mystery, but it is the blessed subordination of the Son to the Father. Let us meditate until our souls get full of the thought and the blessed truth. The one thing that God must have He gets, even from His own Son—subordination, subjection; and it is because Christ sits in this spirit on the throne of glory, that one day He can give up the kingdom to the Father.

Let us now take in this—which I said was my first great thought. The Lord Jesus came to remove the terrible curse that sin had wrought, the terrible ruin that had come by man's pride and self-exaltation; and He came to live out, during thirty-three years, *that God must be all in all.* And let me ask, in passing, did God disappoint Him? I tell you, no. God lifted Him to the throne of the everlasting glory, and to equality on the throne with Himself,

because He had humbled Himself to honour His God. And if we want God to bless us, it is down in the place of dependence and humility that the blessing will be found.

But now we come to the second thought, and it is this: *Are we called to live, just as much as Christ did, that God may be all in all?* Is there any greater obligation on Christ to let God be all in all, than on us? Most people think so, but the Bible does not. The obligation ought to be greater on us, for He is the Son of the Father and God with God; but we are creatures of the dust. Oh, there can be no thought of our existence having been given for anything but just for the blessed object that God may be all in all in us and to us. But have we understood that, and have we expected it, and have we sought for it, and have we ever learned to say with Christ, "It is worth giving up everything, that God may have His place and be all in all"?

But how can we attain to such a life? All our teaching about consecration will be moonshine, unless it come to this—that God must be *all*. What is the meaning of our talking about giving ourselves as a living sacrifice? It cannot be, unless it is actually true that in our life God is *all*. What is the reason of so much complaint of feebleness, of failure, of lost blessing, of walking in the dark? It is nothing but this: God does not get His place among us. I do not say that of the unsanctified, and half-sanctified, but I say it of the best among us. God does not get his place. And I ask you to-night, O saints of God, to pray with your whole heart, that God would take His place in the life of every one of us, and that the inconceivable majesty of God and His claim upon us might be so revealed that we may sink as atoms in the dust, and say, "God, be Thou all, and take all, and have all." God help us to do so.

Now what are the steps by which the soul can be brought, in some measure, to live like Christ every day, so that God may be all in all? My answer is, first, *Take time and trouble to give God His place*. Study your God, meditate more upon your God than you have done, and try to find out what is the place that God desires to take, and do not be content with a sort of vague conception. Yes, of course there is the throne in the heavens, and God is there. For, remember, God is not only an outward Being, so to speak. There is a locality and a throne where the glory of God is specially revealed; but God<sup>o</sup> has an inward being. He dwells even in nature, and how much more in the heart of His redeemed ones and saints! I want to get some conception of what is the place of God, and words can hardly tell. I can only say this: God is the fountain of all life. Every bit of life in the universe is the work of God. If you really give God His place then you will get, oh, such a

humbling conviction, that there is nothing but what must come from God, that God fills all things. The Bible says He works all in all, and so you will begin to say, If God is everywhere and in everything, I ought to see Him in Nature, and in Providence, and in everything; I ought always to be seeing my God. The believer can come to that when he sees God everywhere, and then he begins to give God His place. He cannot rise in the morning without giving God His place, and saying: Lord God, Thou glorious Being, Thou art all in all. And then he begins to say to his fellow believers: My brothers, I am afraid that in our prayer meetings we do not let God take His place. We pray because we have a God to pray to, and we know something about God; but how little we in our souls realise the everlasting God! In our little prayer meetings the everlasting God of heaven is present, and if He gets His place He will take charge of the prayer meetings, and He will give blessing and He will work by His mighty power.

Oh, just think of it! Take our chairman, for instance. He guides our meeting, he calls on one to pray, and another to speak, and he tells us what to sing, and gives orders what is to be done. He has a little kingdom in this tent, and he manages it, and you are grateful for it. But God!—people do not allow Him to manage the convention, or the prayer meeting. Do not we thank God for the chairman and the speaker, and for every earthly gift? But, oh, that we might each learn to understand, in the convention, in the church every Sunday, in the prayer meeting, in the closet—I must give time to let my God take His place.

Will God do it? God is waiting to do it. *God longs to do it.* And then, not only in the closet and the prayer meeting, and the convention and the church, but just as one of you takes the place of master or mistress in your house, and you sit at the head of the table, and you order the servant, and you manage everything, so God is willing in my heart and in yours to take the place of Master and of God. Brethren, have we given this glorious God the place He ought to have? Let us in our heart say, "No." And God forgive us if we have taken the place that Christ's redemption has given Him, and that Christ wants to give Him in us. Let us come to-night, ere we part, and say, "God shall have His place."

I might speak still further, in this connection, of the church of Christ. Has God His place there? Alas! No. May God humble us and stir in us an unquenchable longing, that God may be all in all. That is my first lesson. Give God His place, but take time and take trouble to do it. Take heed and be quiet. The prophet says, "Be silent of all flesh before the Lord." Let the flesh be kept down. Wait, and give God time to reveal Himself.

Then the second point is, *How am I in my life to attain this, "That God may be all in all," and to work it out and prove it? Accept God's will in everything.* Where do I find God's will? I find God's will in His Word. I have often heard it reported that people have said, "I believe every word within these two covers has come from God," and I have sometimes heard it said, "I want to believe every promise between these two covers"; but I have not often heard it said, "I accept every commandment within these two covers." But let us say it. If you like, write in the front page of your Bible what I once wrote in the front page of a young man's: "Every promise of God in this Book I desire to believe, every command of God in this Book I desire to accept." That is one step in the way to let God be all in all. Give up your life to be the embodiment, and expression, and incarnation of the will of God.

Then, further, *accept the will of God, not only in the Bible, but especially in Providence.* I find thousands of Christians who have never learned that lesson. Do you know what that means? When Joseph's brethren sold him, he accepted God's hand in that, and it is written that when he went to Potiphar as a slave, "God was with him." He was not parted from God when he had to part from his home. I read of David that when Shimei cursed him, he said, in effect, "That is God." He saw God in that; he met God there in that cursing of Shimei. God was there all in all, because God allowed it. When Judas came to kiss Christ and betray Him, and when the soldiers bound Him, and when Peter denied Him, and when Caiaphas condemned Him, and when Pilate gave Him over, Christ saw God in everything. God was all in all; and so Christ could drink the cup, for He saw the hand of the Father holding it. Oh, let us learn, in every trial, in every trouble, great and little, to see God at once. Meet your God there, and let God be all in all. There does not a hair of your head fall without the will of your Father. Meet the will of your Father in every trial, in the deepest trial and the heaviest; the Son of God walks there. Oh, let God be all in all. And in the smallest trials—the servant who torments you, the child who hinders you, the friend who has hurt you by slight neglect, the enemy who has reproached you, who has spoken evil of you and robbed you of your good name, the difficulty that worries you—oh, why do not you say, "God is all in all. It is my God who comes to me in every difficulty. I will meet Him, and honour Him, and give myself to Him, and may He keep me!"

There are two great-privileges of meeting God in a difficulty, and knowing Him. The first is that, even though the difficulty come through my own fault, if I confess it, then I can say, "God

has allowed me to come into this fault, to come into this difficulty, in order to teach me a lesson. My God allowed me to come into it, and He must teach me to glorify Him in it." If a father takes his child to a distant place to school, the child trusts the father to provide for him there. It is not willingly that the father sends the child away from under his eyes. And if God brings you into a difficulty by an act of your own, then you can count upon it that God will give you grace to be humble and patient, and be perfected through the suffering and chastisement, that in everything He may take His place. You will be able to look at Him with double confidence when you can say, "It is Thou who hast brought me here, and not man, and Thou alone canst take me out of it." Oh, if you would only allow God to be all in all, in every Providence, what a blessed life you would be living! Nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus. You have a wonderful place provided for you in His love. Oh! learn to take this as the key out of every difficulty—God *is all in all*. And in prayer, day by day, make it your earnest supplication that God may be all in all.

Then the third point. The first was, Give God His place; the second, Accept His will. The third is, *Trust His almighty power*. Trust Him every day. I wish I could tell you rightly what, in this convention, I see a glimpse of; and that is, that the whole of our Christian life every day is to be the work of God Himself. Paul speaks of it so often. "It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do." The will and the desire to obey—that is God's work in you, and that is only half of it. But He will work *to do*, as well as *to will*, if you will own Him practically in your life as *all in all*. In Hebrews 13: 20, 21 we read: "The God of peace . . . make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ." Here is my watch. Now, as surely as the watch-maker has made that watch, and worked at it, and cut it, and cleaned it, and polished it, and put in every little wheel and every little spring—just so the living God is actually and actively engaged in the work of perfecting your life every moment. God is willing to work in our meeting, from half-past six to half-past eight, every moment; and why does He not work more powerfully? Simply because you do not prove His power, you do not fully give Him His place, you do not wait upon Him to do it. Tell Him: My God, here I am now. I give Thee Thy right place.

Now suppose a canvas could move about, and that when a painter came into his studio to paint an unfinished picture, it always removed to some other part of the room; of course then the painter could not paint a single idea. But suppose the canvas

began to say, Oh, painter, I will be still; come and do thy work and paint thy beautiful picture—then the painter would come and do it. And if you say to God, Thou art the mighty Workman, the wondrous Workman. I am still. Here I am. I trust Thy power—oh, believe it, God will then work wonders with you. God never works anything but wonders. That is His nature, even in what we call the laws of nature. Take the simplest thing, a blade of grass, or a little worm, or a flower. What wonders men of science tell us about them! And will not God work wonders in my heart, and yours? He will. And why does not He do it more? Because we do not let Him. Oh, learn to give Him His place, to accept His will, and then to trust His mighty work.

In Thy strength may I lie still,  
The clay within the Potter's hand,  
Moulded by Thy gentle will,  
Mightier than all command;  
Shaped and moulded by Thee alone,  
Now and ever more Thine own.

Is that true of you? God is willing to mould you as really as the potter moulds his clay. He will do it. Let us believe it, and trust His mighty power; and let us trust His power especially to do things above our conception, or above what we could ask or think. Oh, that I could give every brother and sister before they leave Keswick a shake of the hand and tell them—but without it I tell them—*God is waiting to do for you more than you can even conceive.* I pray you, every yearning of your heart, every message that you have heard, of which you have said, I wish I had that; every prayer you have sent up—oh! just believe that God is willing to work it all in you, and that He is waiting to do it; that in every difficulty, in every circumstance God is there to work in you. Trust Him and honour Him, and let Him be all in all.

And then, once again, if you would honour God, *sacrifice everything for His kingdom and glory.* If God is to be all in all, it must not be so much, I must be happy, and I must be holy, and I must have God's approval. No. The root principle of Christ's life was self-sacrifice unto God for man. That is what He came for, and it is a principle that every redeemed soul carries within him as unquenchable; but, alas! it can be smothered. But understand that your God longs to rule the world, and your Christ is upon the throne, leading you on as His soldiers, and wanting to bless you with victory upon victory. Have you given yourselves up to God's glory? Alas, alas! The soldier upon earth says, Anything for my king and country, anything when my general leads me on to victory. My home I leave, and my comforts;

I give my life. And are earthly kings to have such devotion, and you and I merely *talk* about the glory of God and His being all in all, when there is a call that we should help to prepare the kingdom for Christ to give up to the Father, and when Christ tells us He is waiting for our help and depending upon it?

Shall we not each say, God must be all in all; I will sacrifice everything for Him? May God help us to-night to make a consecration afresh of our whole being to the furtherance of Christ's kingdom. And whether it be in mission work far away, or in Christian work near at home, or whether it be that we do not know how to work, that we are poor weak worms—whatever it be, let everyone yield himself a willing sacrifice, and then Christ can and will use the very weakest for the glory of God.

If you want to take a word as your motto and watchword, let it be, "Sacrifice everything and anything for the glory of your God." And if you do not know what to sacrifice, ask Him. Be honest, be earnest, be simple, be childlike, and say, "Lord, every penny I have is Thine, and every comfort is Thine. If Thou needest it for Thy kingdom, I offer it to Thee." Oh, in eternity, will a man grudge having made himself poor for the bringing about of that majestic spectacle, when the Son shall say, in a new sense, "It is finished," and give the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all? Do you hope to be there? Do you hope to have a share in the glory of that august scene, and are you unwilling tonight to say, "Anything that I can do for that glory, Lord, here I am"? Give yourself up to Him.

And now, the last thought, and that is, *wait on God*. I have been speaking, and you have been thinking about God; that is one thing. But oh, to know God, in His glory, within our souls; that is another thing. I told you what you ought to do—that you ought to meditate and study, and try to form a right conception of the place God should occupy in your life. But that is not enough. You must do something else. I said, give yourselves up to the will of God, prove the power of God, and seek the glory of God throughout the earth. But the chief thing is, wait upon God.

And why must we do that? Because it is only God who can reveal Himself. Remember that when God came to Adam, or Noah, or Abraham, or Moses, it was God who came forth out of heaven and met them, and showed Himself in some form or other. That was under the old dispensation. And it depends to-day on the good pleasure of God to reveal Himself. Not an arbitrary good pleasure. No. It all depends upon whether He has found a heart hungering for Him. Oh, that God would give us that hunger, and teach us to cry like David, "My soul thirsteth for God." Wait upon God. Make that in your closet a part of

your life more and more systematically. Do not be afraid if people say, Do you want to make Quakers of us? Let us remember that every portion of Christ's body has a lesson for us. I do not think one of you will suffer if you learn the lesson, in your closet, of keeping silence before God, just with one prayer: Lord God, reveal Thyself in the depth of my heart. And though you do not expect a vision, though you do not get a manifestation—that is not what *should* be sought; it is that the soul should open itself to God, and wait upon Him that He may come in. "Verily, Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." You cannot see Him always, but He will come in and take possession of you, if you are ready for His incomming, and will reveal Himself; and work mightily in you.

Wait upon God. In your prayer meetings let that be the first thing. It is the mischief of our prayer in our closet and prayer meetings, that we begin to pray at once, as if it was all right. "Oh yes," we say, "God will do it"; and we do not take trouble to let our souls worship in holy awe and reverence and childlike trust. We do not take time to say, Father, let it please Thee to come near, and to meet me.

Some have said of the convention—I think many—"Oh! if we could have more time for waiting upon God!" I think so, too. I am a stanger. I do not want to be presumptuous, or to take unwarrantable liberty, but I do want to say that if next year it were so ordered by God that those people who wished it could wait upon God in prayer, others being at liberty to hear the speakers if they so desired, then I believe the result would be one of wonderful blessing. The responsibility resting upon this body of believers is tremendous. We confess that many of us have got a secret which other Christians have not got perhaps. We do not judge, but we confess that God has taught us something wonderful. Let us confess it boldly. But then, if that is true, we must get still nearer God, and have more of God, in order to teach other Christians how they can find God. You cannot find God without waiting upon Him. "Wait, I say, on the Lord."

Those are the steps by which we can come to have it in our hearts and lives, that God is all in all; and the steps by which we can be prepared for taking part in that glorious company who shall be present on that magnificent occasion when Christ shall give up the kingdom to the Father, "that God may be all in all."