

## "NAUGHT THAT I HAVE MY OWN I CALL"

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." – Job 1:21.

ALL that we have should be regarded as a gift from God, whether it be much or little. God's gift to our first parents was a very munificent one – perfection of life. They were made in the image and likeness of God in the flesh – only "a little lower than the angels." Because of disobedience this perfection was forfeited. Obedience was the condition on which Adam would be permitted to remain in the Garden of Eden. If he was obedient he might live and enjoy it, might fill the earth with posterity and gradually bring the whole world to the blessed conditions which he himself found in the Garden.

It was when Adam sinned that God rejected him from being a son. After that time no man was ever called a son of God until Jesus came. And no man since Jesus has been called a son of God, except those who have come to God through Jesus, and have been accepted by Him. Adam was cast out of his Eden home for the very purpose of bringing upon him the penalty of sin – death. The angel of the Lord drove Adam out. We remember God's expression on this: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:17.) The dying process began at once and continued until completed after 930 years.

Since the penalty of sin was *death*, it was of God's mercy that He allowed our first parents to live at all after their disobedience. While it was a curse He inflicted on our race when He drove Adam and Eve out of Eden, nevertheless there was a blessing connected with that curse. When God drove them out of the Garden, He said, "Cursed is the ground *for thy sake*. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,

till thou return to the ground whence thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Here was the *curse*. They were to die by gradual processes.

## ALL OUR BLESSINGS OF GOD'S MERCY

Adam and Eve might do all in their power to prolong their lives, but it was not possible for them to live out the full thousand years, which constitute one of the Lord's Days. Adam lived out nearly an entire Day, but [R5418 : page 76] he was gradually going down to the tomb all the while. His mental, moral and physical powers were waning. And so all of his race are a groaning creation.

It was not an unjust sentence, nor an unfair sentence. It is a favor from God that we have life at all. The privilege He gives us of living even a few years is a great boon. And so it is true of all of us, as described by the Prophet Job in relating his experience, that naked came we into the world. We have nothing that is really our own. It is of God's providence that we enjoy the privileges that we have.

It was true of Job that it was of God's permission and mercy that he had his flocks and herds and children. Then fire came down from heaven and burned up his sheep and the attending servants. Enemies killed his camels and oxen and asses, and still other servants. The hurricane came and killed his children. But Job said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!" Job had no *claim* on everlasting life, although he had a *hope* of it. He realized that all he had possessed belonged to God; they were not his own.

Life and immortality were not brought to light until Jesus came. (2 Tim. 1:10.) The great Message of salvation which before was only hinted at was in due time clearly stated by Jesus. He came to give His life a Ransom-price, to give a life that corresponded to the life that Adam lost. We see the beauty of the whole

arrangement, that as by a man came death, by a man also should come the resurrection of the dead. Whereas "by one man's *disobedience* many were made sinners, even so by the *obedience* of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19) – made free from the death penalty – and ultimately shall have a resurrection.

Those who get the first benefit of this provision in Christ are the Church. The Apostle says that we are risen with Him to walk in newness of life. And we have faith that God is able to fully complete this resurrection as He has promised. We do not claim that we do not die, which is contrary to all the facts and to the Scriptures. We, on the contrary, admit that we die. But we believe that He who raised up Jesus from the dead will raise us up also by Him. Jesus has effected an atonement for the sins of the whole world, upon the basis of which those who believe *now* may have reconciliation with God. And by and by the world will have the benefit of Christ's atoning work, and opportunity for reconciliation.

### **LIFE RIGHTS LOST TO MANKIND**

The hope of the Church is that she shall reign with Christ for a thousand years, bind Satan, uplift mankind from sin and pain and death, and, as the Scriptures declare, "wipe away the tears from off all faces." (Isaiah 25:8.) And this is the *work of God* in that He planned, designed, the whole matter. It is the *work of Christ* in **[R5418 : page 77]** that He purchased the race and is the Father's Agent – who is "the Beginning of the creation of God," "the Beginning, the First-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence," not pre-eminence over the *Father*, but above all others. – Rev. 3:14; Col. 1:18.

We can see more clearly than did Job, that all our blessings are of God, not of ourselves. We can see more clearly because we are *spirit-begotten*. We know that we have no rights whatever. All

we can do is to call upon God's mercy. But all are not able as yet to hear the Message of mercy. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." – 2 Corinthians 4:4.

And so only those whose eyes are especially anointed can see. As Jesus said in His day, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear" (Matt. 13:16.) And so St. Peter confirms the same thought of blindness, respecting those who crucified the Lord: "Brethren, I wot that through *ignorance* ye did it, as did also your rulers." – Acts 3:17.

So then from our favored vantage ground we, still more than Job, can take in perfect submission whatever experiences God in His wisdom and love sees fit to allow to come upon us. If we are His children, we are bound to accept all our experiences as being of His providence and order and arrangement.

"Naught that I have my own I call,  
I hold it for the Giver;  
My heart, my strength, my life, my *all*  
Are His and His forever."

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