

May 15th, 2022

# That God May Be All in All

1 Corinthians 15:26-28

## The church calendar

One of the great benefits of taking our time going through 1 Corinthians 15 is that we have been able to linger on the doctrine of Christ's resurrection. For most of us, Easter is far in the rearview mirror. Yet if we consider where we are at in the Church calendar, Jesus hadn't even ascended to heaven by this time. That's still a week and a half out (May 26). So we are still in the resurrection season as we go through 1 Corinthians 15.

## Resurrection and the transformation of everything

So let's consider what we have seen in this chapter thus far. Starting in **v.1** Paul began teaching about the gospel, and the central work of the gospel namely, the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. His central point is that to believe in a resurrection-less gospel is to believe in vain. That faith cannot save. Paul demonstrated that the resurrection of Christ is proven by **prophecy**, the Scripture said this would happen (**v.4**); **by history**, all the apostles and 500 witnesses saw the risen Christ (**v.5-7**); and by **the miracle of conversion**, Paul and every other believer are made spiritual alive precisely because Jesus rose from the dead (**v.8-11**). Thus making the resurrection of Christ "the best authenticated event in the history of the world."<sup>1</sup> Paul then argued in **v.12-19** against those denied a resurrection because they adopted the gnostic idea that the material world is bad and the spiritual world is good. They reasoned that if we were to be resurrected in our physical bodies then we would be return to bondage and slavery. But if there is no physical resurrection then not even Christ was raised, and our preaching is in vain, our faith is in vain, God is a liar, we are still in our sins, and those who have died have everlastingly

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2018), pg. 314

perished. In short the denial of a physical bodily resurrection is the ruin of all humanity. But in fact Christ was raised! (v.20) Therefore even though "... everyone born from Adam dies, so in Christ everyone who believes is made alive"<sup>2</sup> (v.22). And we will be raised up when He returns (v.23). Paul then takes a slight detour in v.24-25 to show what Christ's resurrection will accomplish *in history*. "He must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet." This morning we arrive at v.26-28 where we are told what Christ's resurrection accomplishes *in eternity*.

### *The Big Idea...*

When Christ defeats the last enemy and restores all Adam lost, He will subject Himself to God *in order* that God may be all in all

Charles Hodge calls this *the radical principle of the Bible*, that God is all in all.<sup>3</sup> Christ's resurrection has/is/and will set the world to rights. Not since the Garden of Eden was God all in all. But when Jesus rose from the dead, He set history on a collision course with the God who made all things. On that bright morning, the saints will everlastingly feast on the abundance of God's house, and drink everlastingly from the river of His delights.

☆ Our Doctrine

☆ Our Duty

☆ Our Delight

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<sup>2</sup> Augustine

<sup>3</sup> Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on Romans: Geneva Series of Commentaries*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2020), pg. 381

## I. Our Doctrine

### The pilgrim's last enemy

Let's begin in **v.26**. We've already seen in **v.25** that Christ is currently putting all enemies under His. Paul says in **v.26** "The last enemy to be destroyed is death." Now if you've been a Christian for any length of time you know that every time the resurrection of Christ is preached on, it is rightly declared that death has been defeated. That is 100% true. **2 Timothy 1:10** says that our "... Savior Christ Jesus...*abolished death* and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." How can both these things be true? That Christ abolished death at the resurrection *and* that He will destroy death at the end of this age? The answer is that Christ abolished death so that it can never harm one of God's elect. Every believer is already exempt from the true sting of death. Yes believers die today, and tomorrow, and up until the moment Christ returns. But death cannot harm us! Rather death is the passage to true life. At death we will shed ourselves of this mortal life like a snake sheds its old scaly skin. We will put on immortality, we will enter an endless kingdom and "the Owner of that place will wipe all tears from our eyes."<sup>4</sup> We will be more alive at death than we ever were in this life. So yes, the sting of death was abolished at the resurrection. We who have been born again have an incorruptible and invincible life. But we still have to pass through death in this age, and it is often a frightful and sorrowful thing. Paul's doctrine here is that *after* Christ has conquered all His enemies, He will *finally* conquer death. **Revelation 20:14** tells us that on that day Christ will throw "Death and Hades...into the lake of fire" and God's people will *never* experience the pains of death again.

### All things are in subjection to Christ

Why is it that Christ, the God-man, is the one who destroys death? This is *not*, strictly speaking a Trinitarian work, *but an Incarnational work*. It is

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<sup>4</sup> John Bunyan, *The Works of John Bunyan Vol. 3*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2009), pg. 91

specifically Jesus—the Word made flesh—who destroys death. Why? Paul tells us in **v.27** “For God has put all things in subjection under his [Christ’s] feet.” Notice the quotation marks around that sentence. Paul is quoting **Psalm 8:6**. **Psalm 8** is that famous Psalm where the Psalmist is in awe over how God has been mindful of man. God made the great heavens. He made the mighty army of angels. Then He makes man and has crowned him—of all creatures—as having dominion over the earth. Then in **v.6**, he says this of man, “You have put all things under his feet.” The Psalmist is reflecting back on Genesis 1 how God put all things under the dominion of Adam and his posterity. Here Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit unlocks the hidden meaning of **Psalm 8:6**. At the resurrection, God made Christ *the second Adam* and transferred all authority and dominion to Him.

### What Daniel saw...

Please turn with me to **Daniel 7**.<sup>5</sup> Consider this vision that the prophet Daniel saw. Look at **v.13**

“I saw in the night visions,  
and behold, with the clouds of heaven  
there came one like a son of man,  
and he came to the Ancient of Days  
and was presented before him.”

It’s a common assumption since the rise of Dispensationalism that Daniel’s vision here is the 2nd Coming of Christ at the end of the age. But it’s not. This vision is of Christ’s ascension into Heaven after His resurrection. Look at the specific language of **v.13**. **First**, Christ is *coming to* God’s throne in order to be “presented before him.” He’s *not leaving* God’s throne to return to the earth. **Second**, “He is

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<sup>5</sup> As we have seen in past weeks this is a very prophetic book, specifically about Christ’s Kingdom. In v.1-8 Daniel has a vision similar to his vision in chapter 2 about the great earthly monarchies. But here instead of seeing a statue with a gold head, silver chest etc., he sees 4 terrible beasts. These beasts represent those same four kingdoms—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. They kingdom destroyers. But then Daniel sees something greater than these earthly kingdoms.

not *descending* in clouds to the earth, but *ascending* in clouds<sup>6</sup> to His Father.”<sup>7</sup> This is not describing the 2nd Coming but Jesus’s ascension into Heaven after the resurrection.<sup>8</sup> And what happened when Christ approached the throne? **v.14**

And to him was given dominion  
and glory and a kingdom,  
that all peoples, nations, and languages  
should serve him;  
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
which shall not pass away,  
and his kingdom one  
that shall not be destroyed.”

This is easy to miss. Because you might say “Didn’t Jesus already have authority over all the earth before this moment?” As the Son of God yes. As the God-man no.<sup>9</sup> Look at the specific language of **v.14** “And to him was *given* dominion...” As Charles Hodge says here: “[Dominion] was given to him *then*, and therefore [was] not possessed *before*.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, a whole new epoch began when Christ rose from the dead. The Godhead formally transferred all dominion over this world to Him. That’s precisely what Paul means in our verse when he says

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<sup>6</sup> Recall that’s precisely how He left earth. We read in **Acts 1:9**, “...as [the disciples] were looking on, [Jesus] was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.”

<sup>7</sup> David Chilton, *Paradise Restored: A Biblical Theology of Dominion*, (Horn Lake, MS.,: Dominion Press, 2007), pg. 67

<sup>8</sup> “It is noteworthy too that Daniel used the term *Son of Man*, the expression Jesus later adopted to describe Himself. Clearly, we should understand *Son of Man* to mean simply *Son of Adam*—in other words, the *Second Adam*. Christ came as the Son of Man, the Second Man (1 Cor. 15:47), to accomplish the task assigned to the First Man. He came to be the King.” *Ibid*

<sup>9</sup> As the Second Person of Trinity, the Son has everlasting unbroken dominion. As Christ the only Mediator between God and man, He was given dominion after His resurrection.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2018), pg. 335

“God has *put* all things in subjection under his feet.”<sup>11</sup> Now we shouldn’t think that the Godhead ceased to rule when He gave this dominion to Christ. Rather God is exercising His rule *specifically* through the God-man Jesus Christ.<sup>12</sup> And this Jesus is not King *merely* over the spiritual realm but over the physical as well; not *merely* over the individual but over every nation. Christ’s universal Lordship is not a message for the private individual only, it is a message for

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<sup>11</sup> It was the belief in this theology that got many Christians martyred in the first century. Why? Because it directly challenged the social structures of Roman society. In ancient Rome, the Caesars were worshipped as Gods. Caesar Octavian (B.C 63 - A.D. 14), who changed his name to *Augustus* (great or magnificent) was proclaimed at to be the Savior of the World. The Romans inscribed their coins to read “...salvation is to be found in none other save Augustus, and there is no name given to men in which they can be saved.”[see fn.]. This is *why* Rome persecuted the Christians. Christians were not persecuted because they worshipped Jesus. Rome was a pluralistic society—Roman citizens worshiped a multiplicity of gods all over the empire. Just read the book of Acts. Christians were persecuted because Rome required that all her citizens give ultimate fealty—ultimate loyalty—to the State. Caesar is Lord! This is why Paul’s words here were understood as nothing less than a declaration of war against Rome in the 1st century. In the eyes of Rome, the apostles were preaching a subversive political message. When Peter declared before the council “...and there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven [Jesus Christ] given among men by which we must be save” it was treason. [fn. David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, (Tyler, TX.: Dominion Press, 2011), pg. 7] Also see Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto*, (Wheaton, IL.: Crossway Revised Edition, 1982), pg. 92ff.

<sup>12</sup> “We acknowledge, it is true, God as the ruler, but it is in the face of the man Christ.” John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries, Vol. XX* (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 32

every tongue and tribe, every epoch and age.<sup>13</sup> Jesus is not merely occupying the office of a King, but He is asserting His authority “...against the disobedient and rebellious powers of this present age.”<sup>14</sup>

### **The problem with authority**

Perhaps you are here this morning and you’re saying “that’s why I’m not a Christian, because it’s Christianity is all about authority.” Dear friend, don’t you see? You can’t escape authority. You’ve simply chosen to be under your own authority. But dear friend how is that working out for you? Don’t you see how cruel you’ve have been to yourself? You keep on accumulating guilt and shame. And that cruel task master keep lying to you, saying things will get better, that you’ll get better. But you won’t. Haman was hung on the gallows that he built. Goliath was killed by his own sword. If you remain your own master, you will be undone by yourself. If you have to drink the cup of damnation, it will be because you put it in your own hand. In the end, you will lead yourself to the slaughter. But dear friend, to be under the authority of Jesus is to be under the

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<sup>13</sup> That’s precisely how our Reformed forefathers understood Paul’s words. When John Calvin wrote to King Francis of France (1536) he said this:

“Your duty, most serene Prince, is...a cause involving such mighty interests as these: how the glory of God is to be maintained on the earth...how the truth of God is to preserve its [honor], [and] how the kingdom of Christ is to continue among us...”(see fn)

Calvin didn’t *merely* plead with Francis to stop the persecution of the Protestants by the Catholics. He declared that as a king, Francis was under the King of kings Jesus Christ. God has put all things under his subjection. And King Francis was one of those things. So loved ones, don’t leave this verse without letting it impact you as it has impacted me. Jesus Christ has *all* authority *now*. He currently reigns over all Heaven and all earth and expects that every realm: individual, familial, ecclesiastical, political, ethical, social, cultural, financial, legislation, judicial come under His subjection. All the universe has been commanded to kiss the Son (**Psalm 2:12**). To fail to come under His subjection will result in both individual and national ruin. But blessing follows the individual, family, church, and nation whose God is the Lord (**Psalm 33:12**). [fn. He continues: “The characteristic of a true sovereign is, to acknowledge that, in the administration of his kingdom, he is a minister of God. He who does not make his reign subservient to the divine glory, acts the part not of a king, but a robber.”John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Trans. Henry Beveridge, (Peabody, MA.,: Hendrickson Publishing, 2008), pg. XXI-XXII]

<sup>14</sup> Roy E. Ciampa & Brian S. Rosner, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The First Letter to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), pg. 777.

best of all Masters. He a friend to sinners. He has an authority that you don't have. Jesus has the authority to make you new. **2 Corinthians 5:17** says "...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." Jesus has the authority to forgive your sins, and to give you everlasting life. He said "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die."<sup>15</sup> Which authority are you going to trust? Your own authority which will lead to everlasting shame? Or Christ's authority which leads to eternal life with the Prince of Peace? Friend, Christ rose from the dead. He's the only one to have done it. You can trust Him. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Come to the Savior. He will give rest to your soul.

### **The Godhead is not in subjection**

Let's turn back to 1 Corinthians 15. Again look at v.27 "For 'God has put all things in subjection under his feet.' *But* when it says, "all things are put in subjection," *it is plain* that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him."<sup>16</sup> The NIV translation makes it really plain what Paul means. It says: "Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ." Look at v.28 "When all things are subjected to him [Christ], then the Son himself will also be subjected to him [God] who put all things in subjection under him, *that God may be all in all.*"

### **Not Arianism**

This verse has been the subject of much controversy. Jehovah's Witnesses point to this verse to demonstrate that Jesus is inferior to the Father and *therefore*

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<sup>15</sup> John 11:25-26

<sup>16</sup> This qualifier presses home the extensiveness of Christ's rule. Christ really has all things in subjection to Himself. No earthly exceptions. There is only one Heavenly exception: God Himself.

not God. This is the ancient heresy of Arianism. But this is easy to refute.<sup>17</sup> Scripture teaches us that in one sense the Son is lesser than God, in another sense the Son is equal with God.<sup>18</sup> Whenever the Scripture is speaking about the Son as being lesser than God, it's referring to His role as the God-man, the Christ, the Mediator. But whenever Scripture asserts that the Son is equal with God, it's clearly speaking of His being the Second Person of the Trinity.<sup>19</sup> So when Jesus says "the Father is *greater* than I" (**John 14:28**), He is referring to His office as the God-man—the Redeemer. On the other hand, when Jesus says "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, *I am*" (**John 8:58**) He's clearly referring to His absolute equality with God.

### **An analogy**

In **v.28** Paul is referring to the Son in His office as the God-man. God gave Him all authority at His ascension. At the end of this age when Christ brings everything under His rule, then He will bring Himself and all things back under the rule of the Godhead. He will deliver up the kingdom to the Father as **v.24** says. One commentator offered this helpful analogy: Consider "...[a Great King] who sends out his top military general to quash a rebellion in the empire...While the general is out executing the war...it is he who serves as the

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<sup>17</sup> "When it says the Son is subject or inferior to the Father, we know that it is consistent with their equality, as certainly as we know that saying that man is immortal is consistent with saying that he is mortal. We know that both of the last-mentioned propositions are true; because mortality is predicated of man in one aspect, and immortality in another aspect. In one sense he is mortal, in another sense he is immortal. In like manner we know that the verbally inconsistent propositions, the Son is subject to the Father, and, the Son is equal with the Father are both true. In one sense he is subject, in other sense he is equal." Hodge, 333

<sup>18</sup> "...in different respects the Son is both equal to the Father and lesser than the Father: he is equal to him with respect to the form of God, or with respect to his essence; he is lesser not only with respect to his human nature, but also with respect to his economic office, insofar as in the eternal counsel of peace, by acting as expromissor [a person who agrees to undertake the debt of another person] he took upon himself all the guilt and all the cause of the sinner, and in that was made subject to the Father, as a debtor and slave." Petrus Van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology Vol. 2: Faith in the Triune God*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), pg. 560

<sup>19</sup> Paraphrased from Augustine: "The rule of [our] faith is this: when the Scriptures say of the Son that he is less than the Father the Scriptures mean in respect to to assumption of humanity. But when the Scriptures point out that He is equal, they are understood in respect to his deity." Ciampa & Rosner, pg. 777.

physical expression of the power of the [King] in his battles against the rebellion.<sup>20</sup> Once he has accomplished his mission, however, he is expected to return...and acknowledge that he is in submission to the [King] He does not cease to be a general...but the mission for which he was commissioned has been accomplished, and in a sense he becomes somewhat like a sword which has been returned to its sheath.”<sup>21</sup> Likewise after Christ has defeated all rebellion, He will hand over the authority the Father gave Him so that Godhead will be supreme. It will be Christ’s greatest joy and to subject Himself and all things to God, for that is what He was sent for. Someone might say here: “But I thought Christ’s Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom.”<sup>22</sup> That’s true. Christ is forever our Prophet, Priest and King. Christ is forever the Head of the Church. “But” as Edwards says “...with respect to government, God will be respected as [the] Supreme Orderer.”<sup>23</sup>

### Not Universalism

And that’s how v.28 ends “*that God may be all in all.*” Some have taken this to mean that in the end, God will save *all* people.<sup>24</sup> This is *clearly* not teaching universalism as some suppose. Throughout this letter Paul has repeatedly contrasted those who are perishing with those who are being saved.

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<sup>20</sup> This battle is most illustratively displayed in Revelation 19:11-16

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 776

<sup>22</sup> Daniel 7:14; 27; Luke 1:33; 2 Peter 1:11. Francis Turretin says here: "The work of salvation having been finished and consummated, there is no further need of the economical mediation (which relates to the acquisition and application of salvation); but the truth of our union with Christ, the head, always remains, by which the benefits once bestowed are conserved forever." And "Nothing hinders the kingdom of Christ from being called at the same time both temporal and eternal; the former with respect to the mode of government which obtains in this life among enemies; the latter properly and by itself because it will never have an end, either as to the King himself or as to his subjects or as to his glorious administration (Dan. 7:14; Luke 1:33; Rev. 21, 22)." pg. 494

<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 2*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), pg. 800. See A.A. Hodge where he specifically answers the question: “In what sense is Christ to return his kingdom to his Father, and in what sense will his mediatorial headship continue forever.” *Outlines of Theology*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 1999), pg. 437. Also see Calvin, pg. 31

<sup>24</sup> A couple of the early Church Fathers even taught this—namely Origen and Gregory of Nyssa.

**1:17** “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are *perishing*, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

**6:9** “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?”

If universalists can interpret this phrase however they wish, then anybody can. If this phrase “that God may be all in all” can be ripped out of its context to teach that *God will save everyone* (universalism), then certainly it can mean *everyone is God* (pantheism). But that is not how we are to handle God’s Word. We cannot put whatever meaning into the words we want. It’s clear from the context that this phrase simply means that God will have *all* authority—that He will reign supreme by Himself—over *all* the universe. God will be the final end, the final terminus, the final cause of all things. That all things in Heaven and Earth will wholly cleave to Him. That He will be the portion and inheritance of all His Church, of all the angels, and that He will ever-increasingly reveal Himself to them for His everlasting glory and their everlasting joy.

### **The radical principle**

Beloved, this is, bar none, the most fundamental truth of the Bible. If there is one thing the Bible teaches it is this. For God to be God, He must not only be the origin of all things, but He must be the end for which all things find their fulfillment, consummation, and perfection.

**Isaiah 44:6** “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.”

**Revelation 1:8** “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

**Romans 11:36** “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”

**Acts 17:28** “In him we live and move and have our being”

Beloved this is the *main reason* Jesus Christ came into the world, so that *God would be all in all*. So that at the end of this age, we would be brought to God, to see God, adore God, magnify God, cherish God, honor God, praise God, sing to God. That we would forever exalt His Name, celebrate His worth, gaze upon His beauty, be dumbfounded by His grace. That all of our thirst would finally be quenched by Him, all our hunger satisfied by Him, all our of longings gratified in Him.<sup>25</sup> That’s what the resurrection purchased. Yes our forgiveness. Yes our justification. But those were but the necessary *means* to the greatest gift of the gospel: *namely* God Himself. That’s **our doctrine**: At the end of this age, after Christ defeats the last enemy, He will subject Himself to God in order *that God may be all in all*.

## II. Our Duty

4 duties...

### 1. Informatory Use

Our **first duty** is to *consider* carefully how we think of the next age. The most acceptable heresy in Christianity today is a man-centered Christianity. The easiest way to detect it is how we think about Heaven. Mitch Albom wrote a book in 2003 entitled *The Five People You Meet In Heaven*. It’s central character was a lonely man named Eddie who felt like he lived a wasted life. He dies in this accident at the beginning and then goes to Heaven where he meets five people

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<sup>25</sup> Christ came into the world to bring us to God. **1 Peter 3:18** “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, *that he might bring us to God*.”

who teach him that his life wasn't a waste. All of our lives are connected in some way and we have an eternal impact on the lives of others. He even experiences those Christian virtues of forgiveness and acceptance. Lots of character development, real tear jerker. What's the problem? It portrays Heaven as a place that's all about us. God is not all in all. Our story is what matters, man is at the center. God plays the smallest character. Heaven, it turns, out is really about us—our story, our importance, our healing, our impact. No wonder this book was a #1 New York Times Bestseller. It's so appealing to the natural man.

### **Jonathan Edwards beatific vision**

Now contrast that vision of Heaven to how Jonathan Edwards spoke about it:

“God himself is the great good which [the saints] are brought to the possession and enjoyment of *by redemption*. He is the highest good, and the sum of all that good which Christ purchased. God is the inheritance of the saints; he is the portion of their souls. God is their wealth and treasure, their food, their life, their dwelling-place, their ornament and [crown], and their everlasting honor and glory. They have none in heaven but *God*; he is the great good with the redeemed are received to at death, and which they are to rise to at the end of the world. The Lord God is the light of the heavenly Jerusalem; and is the “river of the water of life” that runs, and “the tree of life that grows, in the midst of the paradise of God.” The glorious excellencies and beauty of God will be what will for ever entertain the minds of the saints, and the love of God will be their everlasting feast.

The redeemed will indeed enjoy other things; they will enjoy the angels, and will enjoy one another: *but* that which they shall enjoy in the

angels, or each other, or in anything else whatsoever that will yield them delight and happiness, will be what shall be seen *of God* in them.”<sup>26</sup>

Now which vision of Heaven sounds like what Paul is describing here? Which vision fulfills Paul’s words “that God may be all in all?”

## 2. Experimental Use

That brings us to our **second duty** we must *examine* ourselves. If you could gain Heaven in a way where you are made much of, where you are healed, where your shame is gone, all your personal pleasures are at your fingertips, you could enjoy every taste, smell, sight, sound, possess untold riches, have the most loyal friends, live in luxury and ease, with no more anxiety, no more pain, no more conflict—would that fulfill you if God played just a small role? In other words, if Heaven was about you rather than God being all in all, would that be Heaven to you? Is it God or just His gifts that you day dream about? Do you desire and long after the Master, or just what’s on the Master’s table?

## 3. Admonitory Use

That brings us to our **third duty**: *rebuke*. Beloved if you are living for yourself, aiming for yourself, if self is at the center of your life, then rebuke yourself. Don’t you know that God has sent terrible judgments against those who have self at the center of their moral universe? Remember the story Jesus told of the man who interpreted life as being all about his comforts, his concerns? He used all his resources to make sure that he could “relax, eat, drink and be merry.” He worshipped the god of self. Self was all in all. And then God visited him and said “Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?” (**Luke 12:20**). Living for yourself is a cancer that will destroy your soul. God did not make us to live for

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<sup>26</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 2*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2009), pg. 5

ourselves but for Him. God is meant to be your portion. Rebuke yourself if you have made self your all in all.

#### 4. Hortatory Use

That brings us to our **fourth duty: exhortation**. Beloved I exhort you, strive to make God your all in all. Follow the example of your elder brother Jesus, put yourself into subjection to God. Pray those scary prayers: “Lord may I decrease so that you increase.” “Lord do whatever it takes so that you would my all in all.” Beloved don’t be satisfied with anything less than God. Take hold of him as Jacob of old did and tell Him that you won’t let go of Him until He blesses you. Pray that you would have a greater portion of Him, more of His grace, more of His Word, more of His Spirit. And then seek to make God all in all in every nook and cranny of your life. In your diaper changing, in your lawn mowing, in your bill paying, in your gospel witnessing, in your parenting, in your eating, in your vacationing, bring God with you in whatever activity you are involved in and ask Him to be the center of it.

Those are our duties. 1) Consider carefully your vision of eternity, is it about you or God? 2) Examine yourself to see if you would be satisfied with Heaven if God wasn’t there. 3) Rebuke yourself if you are living with yourself at the center. 4) Follow the example of Christ and put God at the center of every activity in your life.

### III. Our Delight

#### The happiness of Heaven

The Puritan Thomas Manton explained this phrase “...that God may be all in all” to mean that the happiness of Heaven is to possess God without the

intervention of means.<sup>27</sup> Children, boys and girls, do you know what that means? I remember when I was just a little boy and my dad was away on a long trip in California. This was before cell phones or Facetime. So if I wanted to talk with him it had to be on our home phone, but I couldn't see his face. We were separated for several months and by several hundred miles. I couldn't hug him, sit with him, or see his face. I had to depend upon a phone—what Manton called the invention of means—in order to commune with Him. But oh how insufficient that felt. But when I finally saw him again, the means disappeared and I had immediate access to my dad again. Beloved while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We depend upon means to commune with Him. But very soon, all the invention of means will evaporate, and we will have direct access to our Heavenly Father. God will be all in all.<sup>28</sup>

### **Delights that eye has not seen & etc.**

Oh beloved consider the three unimaginable delights this will be to your soul.

#### **1. You will experience the fullest presence of God.<sup>29</sup>**

In this age, even the greatest saints possess but a small portion of God. But in Heaven, we will have a complete, abundant, overflowing presence of God such that “nothing can be added to it to make it more complete.”<sup>30</sup> **1 Corinthians 13:12** “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then *face to face*. Now I know in part; *then I shall know fully*, even as I have been fully known.” Beloved you will very shortly be in the full presence of the God who created the Heavens and the Earth, who knit your soul to your body, who wrote you in the Lamb’s

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<sup>27</sup> Thomas Manton, *The Works of Thomas Manton Vol. 15*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2020), pg. 132.

<sup>28</sup> [AMP] "...so that God may be all in all [be everything to everyone, supreme, the indwelling and controlling factor of life]."

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Brooks, *The Works of Thomas Brooks Vol. 1*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 1980), pg. 422

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*

book of life before the foundation of the world. For God to be all in all means that you will be in the fulness of His presence.

## 2. You will experience the full satisfaction of God

In this life, we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good. Great saints of the past have even testified to revivals in which they felt like they were transported into Heaven. But the best is reserved for last. The Puritan Thomas Brooks says that on that day we will proclaim: “We have enough, we have all [in Thy Presence]...all light, all life, all love, all heaven, all happiness, all comforts, all contents.”<sup>31</sup> We will miss nothing in this life. We will echo what Mephibosheth said to David when He returned to Jerusalem safely “Oh let him take it all, since my lord the king has come safely home.”<sup>32</sup> We will feel as if we had never had happiness or joy in our lives when compared to that day. **Psalm 16:11** “...in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” For God to be all in all means that our satisfaction in Him will be overflowing and ever-increasing.

## 3. You will experience the permanent presence of God

What is the hardest thing that the saints experience down here? It’s when we feel as if God has hidden his face from us. The Psalmist cries out “How long, O Lord?...How long will you hide your face from me?”<sup>33</sup> But when God is all in all, we will be in the permanent, immutable, eternal presence of God without any interruption. **1 Thessalonians 4:17-18** “Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so *we will always be with the Lord.*” You and I will always be with the Lord. He will be all in all, and we will forever feast on the abundance of His house, and drink from the river of His delights.

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>32</sup> 2 Samuel 19:30

<sup>33</sup> Psalm 13:1

Beloved this is what the risen Christ brings us to at the end of this age. This is why He suffered. **1 Peter 3:18** “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, *that he might bring us to God*,” This is the best news of the gospel that God would be all in all.