

# Acknowledging the Lord

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*Readings:* Psalm 100; Revelation 4

For thousands of years, good men and women have set aside a certain day to give thanks to the Lord for all the wonderful things He has provided for their health and happiness. This day of thanksgiving usually comes in the fall, when the grain has been cut and stored, and the fruits and vegetables gathered in before winter's frosts. When harvesting is over, and the storehouses are full of food for the cold winter days to come, those who work on the land rest from their labors. Looking back over the long summer days in which they worked so hard to sow the seeds and cultivate the tender plants, they rejoice that their toil has produced such rich and bountiful crops; and those in the cities who depend on them for food rejoice with them.

But people who think more deeply do more than this. Wise people know that the Lord alone causes the seeds to grow. He makes the rain to fall and the sun to shine each day. And is it not He who makes the seeds? Does not He create the soil in which the seeds are planted? You know, the more we think about it, the more we come to see that it is actually the Lord who enables us to do all the things that we think we do by ourselves! Instead of rejoicing over what we have done, we should rejoice that the Lord has done such things through us.

It is for this reason that wise people do three things on Thanksgiving Day. They give thanks for the fruit of their diligent work. They confess, or acknowledge, that the Lord alone has given them this fruit. And they celebrate their thankfulness by worshipping the Lord, by feasting with their loved ones, and by doing their very best to make it a happy day for others.

But there are other things that the Lord gives us that are far more important than the yearly harvest. Think of the life He gives us, the life which He allows us to feel as our very own. First the Lord creates our bodies and puts life in them, and then He lets us use this life as we wish. Yet, so that we may use it wisely He gives us His holy Word, and from the Word we may learn how to love what is true and to do what is good. And the Lord gives us His Word so that we may be happy. For He knows that we can be truly happy only when we do the things which He tells us in His Word.

And just think of all the other things the Lord gives us to add to our happiness—the doctrines of our church, the church itself, the countries in which we live, our comfortable homes, our families, and our friends. Through all of these, the Lord gives us happiness; and if we are grateful to Him for these many blessings we will give thanks with the most tender love.

How will we do this? The Heavenly Doctrines for the New Church tell us that if we love someone we will give of ourselves to him. How much more, then, will we give something of ourselves to the Lord if we truly love Him? We will give Him of our time by reading His holy Word and thinking about the things He tells us in it. We will give of our playtime by entering into our games fairly and cheerfully and by being thoughtful of the feelings of others, as we know the Lord wants us to be. And we will give Him of our labor by doing our tasks and our school work faithfully.

In all the things we do and say and think we must give something of ourselves to the Lord. And let us remember that to give of ourselves is to give the love of our hearts as well as the thoughts of our minds. It is not enough just to think about what the Lord wants us to do. We must also want to do what He asks of us. If necessary, we must force ourselves to do His will. For only in this way can we be truly happy. In this way alone we can really give our love and our thanks to the Lord for all that He does for us. And it is this that the Lord asks of us in His first and great commandment: that we love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength.