

THE OFFERING OF A GLAD MIND

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The Lord gives us everything that we have—our life, our friends and family, homes and food, and most importantly, His Word. If we use these things rightly, He can give us all these things again in our spiritual life in another world later on. Everything that the Lord gives us in our natural life is a free gift from Him. But for all of these wonderful and grand things that the Lord gives us, He asks us to say thank you to Him, not just with our mouth but also with our heart. He requires us to come before Him with an offering of thanksgiving. We are to acknowledge the good things that our heavenly Father gives us.

It may seem as if the Lord wants thanks for His own sake. But the truth is that the thanks we render to Him is really for *our* sakes, so that He can go on giving us many more blessings, especially those for our spirit, mind, and heart—the real us. The Lord does not need thanks for Himself; really, all thanksgiving to the Lord is for our own sakes, because it opens us up to Him. When we thoughtfully and humbly agree that everything good is from Him, then the Lord can give us more good things from heaven. All of us have many Divine blessings, although we do not always recognize them. And when we are truly grateful to the Lord, He can begin to separate us from our selfish loves and the evil spirits that go with them.

The idea of keeping a feast of thanksgiving to the Lord began in ancient times. The Children of Israel were commanded to hold three feasts of thanksgiving for their harvest. These were the feast of unleavened bread (also called the Passover), the feast of harvest (also called the feast of weeks), and the feast of ingathering (also called the feast of tabernacles). What do these three feasts mean for us today? The Passover represents the truth that the Lord made it possible for us to be freed from the clutches of evil spirits from hell by being born into our world and fighting them Himself. The feast of harvest means that the Lord tries to plant things of truth that we are willing to learn into our minds. The feast of ingathering shows that the Lord can implant more of what is good from His love in us and more of what is true from His Word in us if we come to worship Him with a glad mind.

What is this glad mind that we should bring before the Lord? A glad mind is one that has fought hard against the evil spirits that wish to distract us from what is right. It is a mind that has tried to allow the Lord to build useful ideas about making others happy. A glad mind is also one that rejoices at the privilege of being able to partake of the wonderful things of the Lord's Word. And a glad mind is one that beams with genuine gratitude for all of the many blessings that the Lord heaps upon us. People who have a glad mind are really those who believe in the Lord's heaven and in the good things that He sends to people in this world, and who have a feeling of thanksgiving in their hearts and souls.

The real harvest, then, is our bearing the fruit of a good life, from having the Lord implant His Word in us. Our part is doing what is necessary to get rid of the weeds in our mind, and then being eager to be useful and to learn more whenever we can. This is the offering that the Lord wants us to present to Him when He judges us with righteousness and justice after we have passed over to the other world where the real in-gathering takes place. Let us seek to have the Lord create within us a meaningful and loving heart and an understanding and glad mind, so that like the four and twenty elders we also may say, "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created" (Revelation 4:11).