

UNDERSTANDING THE WILL OF GOD.

Joseph H. Smith

According to Ephesians 5:17, this is the true and necessary wisdom of the Christian. It reads thus: "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

There is an outstanding instance or grammatical apposition in Scripture where a key to this may be found, where Christ says in Matt. 7:26, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Enforcing and illustrating this point by a man's now building his soul's future abode, he likens him that built successfully for eternity, as the one who "heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them." As this was at the conclusion of his Sermon on the Mount, and as this expression, "these sayings of mine," is in apposition with the former expression, "He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven," it follows that this sermon (including the Beatitudes) is the Constitution of Christianity in this present era, and is mandatory upon us now, where there are enemies to persecute and to say all manner of evil against us falsely, and where the world is seeking to allure and discourage us, and Satan himself is threatening and soliciting us with his wiles and deceptions.

Besides this Sermon there are three other sources for our understanding what the will of the Lord is. First, the Exemplary Life of the Man of Galilee. For while our Lord was truly divine, he was also really human. "Touched with the feeling of our infirmities." "Tempted in all points like as we are." Subject to the Civil Laws, even to the requiting of the last penny; and the payment of tribute and taxes, though some of which were manifestly unjust. Despite the light flaming in his soul on his "Father's business" as early as at twelve years of age, he was ready to leave the temple and the Doctors of Law and go with his mother to their home, and Joseph to his shop, till he would reach his maturity.

Thus as he set examples of fulfilling the Law of Moses and keeping the law of the land, which God instituted for remanding the wickedness of men, and the supporting of the institutions of government; likewise, in meek and humble submission to the Home rule and the industry of the Carpenter's bench.

Third, God's will is to be understood by the place and part he assigns to good and holy men in the sufferings and sorrows that are common to mankind, and his overruling design and administration that are peculiar to believers through men's hatred of Christ and rejectors of Christianity. Evidently, it is not God's will to exempt us from these tests and trials, for he has told us that, "In the world we shall have tribulation." But he did not stop there. There are two gracious suffixes to this. (1) "We have peace with God. (2) "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

And to all these, one further treatise on the understanding of the will of God, is found in the opening of Chapter 2 in the Apostle Paul's Epistle to Titus—"The things which become sound doctrine." Practical Christianity thus explained and enforced by inspired apostles is manifestly the will of

God. Thus he forewarns and predestinates that, "All things work together for good to them that are called of God."

"HE GOETH BEFORE"

Jesus never sends a man ahead alone. He blazes a clear way through every thicket and woods, and then softly calls, "Follow Me. Let's go on together, you and I." He has been everywhere that we are called to go. His feet have trodden down smooth a path through every experience that comes to us. He knows each road, and knows it well—the valley road of disappointment, with its dark shadows; the steep path of temptation, down through the rocky ravines and slippery gullies; the narrow path of pain, with the brambly thorn-bushes, so close on each side, with their slash and sting; the dizzy road along the heights of victory, and the old beaten road of commonplace daily routine. Everyday paths He has trodden and glorified, and will walk anew with each of us. The only safe way to travel is with Him alongside and in control. This was the original Eden plan. God was the host in Eden. Man was His house guest. That is still the plan. God plans thoughtfully for everything that concerns us. And we need to exercise the guest's thoughtful care that no shadow of misunderstanding be allowed to come in to disturb the rare intimacy between host and guest.—S. D. Gordon.

HOLINESS WILL NEVER DIE

Let no one despair at the outlook for holiness. It shall never cease from the earth. God is with it. He is more interested in it than anything else in this world. It is the object and end of the atonement, for He died to "destroy the works of the devil." No, holiness will never die out from this world. God has promised that the day shall come when it will be universal in its sway over this sin-cursed world; when it shall be written on the bells of the horses, "Holiness unto the Lord." Nothing else can reach the deep needs of humanity. The only thing that ails mankind is sin, and nothing but holiness is the remedy for sin. Hence all other systems of religion will be weighed in the balances and found wanting. The human heart is unsatisfied without it and the religions that can not satisfy its needs must go down. Holiness will be rejected by those who want to keep their sins. It will be unpopular with worldly and formal religionists, but it will never die out for God always has and always will have a people on earth who are holy. Holiness, like its Author, is eternal.—G. A. McLaughlin.

WITHOUT WHICH, NOTHING

After His long, hard Sabbath day in Capernaum, Jesus needed some short, deep sleep to restore His physical power. But He also needed solitary prayer to restore the spiritual. And so, early the next morning, we find Him stealing out from the slumbering town and seeking the loneliness of the hills behind Capernaum to hold converse with God.

The harder we work, the more we need solitude and prayer. Without it, our work becomes mechanical and insincere.

Preachers, revivalists and all those whose Christian calling requires them to be much in public, and to handle sacred things for the good of others, must live much alone with God, and secure many an hour of still communion. Otherwise their words will be no-

thing better than sounding brass or tinkling cymbals.

For want of this holy communion, many a man has talked away his religion, and never found out how much his words to others represented his real, indifferent self. Hence comes all sorts of unrealities, vehement efforts to pretend to an earnestness which is not genuine. A Christian worker must either pray much or deteriorate into an actor. What Jesus needed, we cannot do without!—Thoughts gleaned from Alexander McLaren.

"O Thou, to whose all-searching sight
The darkness shineth as the light,
Search, prove my heart, it pants for Thee;
O burst these bonds, and set it free!"

"If rough and thorny be the way,
My strength proportion to my day;
Till toil, and grief, and pain shall cease,
Where all is calm, and joy, and peace."

MISSIONARIES OF THE CROSS

Nearly all the disciples were missionaries. The beloved John was finally banished upon a foreign island. Matthias continued preaching after being driven out of Jerusalem, taking Africa for his field of labor, travelling far into Abyssinia where he faithfully preached until he was honored with a martyr's crown. Mark also went to Africa, finally suffering martyrdom in Alexandria, Egypt; he was dragged through the streets by a cruel mob until he died. Matthew also spent his life proclaiming the Gospel in Africa, and was killed by the enemies of the Gospel in an Ethiopian city. Luke was hanged from an olive tree in Greece. Peter was crucified outside Rome, head downward, not considering himself worthy to die in the same posture as did his Lord. Andrew was nailed to a cross in Asia Minor. Bartholomew was flayed alive in Phrygia. Jude, the brother of Jesus, went far into north-western Asia, preaching in Tartary, and possibly in China, until put to death by the enemies making of him a human fagot. James, the son of Zebedee, and brother of John, was beheaded by Herod Antipas. James, the son of Alphaeus, was thrown from a pinnacle of the Temple in Jerusalem. Thomas, the one who had doubted, after he had tarried in the upper room and received the Holy Ghost, packed his knapsack and started afoot across the deserts and mountains eastward, and finally arrived at the foot of the great Himalaya Mountains. He scorned these giants, and through deep snows and over dizzy heights, made his way into India. He crossed India, and preached faithfully until somewhere, south of Bombay, the haughty Brahmans, having become enraged, rushed upon him and thrust an iron through his body; then hanging him to a tree in the hot tropical sun, his body was destroyed by vultures—his soul had gone to be with Jesus.

"O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train." —Selected

A visitor was once watching a group of slaves, slouching and shuffling off to their work. One tall, broad-shouldered fellow strode on, head erect and with the gait of a man.

"How's that?" the visitor asked.

"Oh, he's the son of an African king," was the reply. "He never forgets that."

Alas! we forget amid the drudgeries of earth, that we are sons and daughters of the King of kings, and in training for thrones in his empire!—Exchange.