

THE FATHER'S WILL

"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:38-40.

God has a will. The scriptures repeatedly ascribe this attribute to Him. "Born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:13. "That good and acceptable and perfect will of God." I Corinthians 1:1. God's will determines His actions. His will was clearly revealed in His outward activities in creation. He willed and it was done. Creation is the manifestation of God's will. But for His will, creation would not have taken place. The universe presents the imprint of His will. The will of God is also manifested in His providential government of the universe. But it is exhibited most distinctively in the work of redemption.

God exercises His will in connection with man. What a glorious truth that insignificant man engages the mind and heart of God. To make His will known and get it accomplished has always been the biggest undertaking of God.

To do the will of God was the biggest business of Christ when He was here on earth. Satan wanted Him to do something else. He offered Him pay and power to substitute something else--sense, sentiment, sensation or something. But, God's will came first in His life. He wanted God's will to be done regardless of what it might be. Christ said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." It is encouraging to us to learn that Christ was not here to do His own will. To the Father He prayed, "Not My will, but Thine be done." He was obedient to God's will in everything. The highest end of life is to do the will of God whatever it may be.

In heaven the angels find their highest blessedness in doing God's will. For the doing of God's will man was created. He was created with a free will, in order that he might have the power to choose and of his own accord do God's will. And, lo, deceived by the devil, man committed the great sin of doing his own will rather than what God wanted him to do. Man would rather do his own will than to comply with God's will. That is the very root of sin.

In His life on earth Christ showed us what it is to live only for the purpose of doing the will of God. In His death and resurrection He won for us the power to live and to do the will of God. At Nazareth in the carpenter's shop, at the Jordan with John the Baptist, in the wilderness with Satan, in public with the multitude, in living and dying, it was this that inspired and gladdened Him--the glorious will of the Father was to be accomplished in Him and by Him. Let us never imagine that this did not cost Him anything. Repeatedly He remarked, "Not my will, but the will of the Father," to let us understand that there was in reality a denial of His own will. When the will of His Father was once known to Him, then He was always ready to give up His own will and do the will of the Father. He had once for all surrendered Himself to live only in accordance with the Father's will and was, therefore, always ready, even to the sacrifice of Gethsemane and Calvary, to do that will perfectly.

It was from the will of God that the very thought of salvation first arose. No man originated the idea of salvation; God Himself willed it, and it is from the purpose of His grace that all our hopes begin, and the will which originated salvation shaped and formed it. It is His will that has brought those of us who are saved into the knowledge of the truth.

Note these majestic words--"This is the Father's will." That is the will which called creation out of nothing, the will which cannot be thwarted. It is a fixed will, for God is not fickle as we are. He doth not will this today and that tomorrow. He said, "I am

God and change not." He is "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of a turning." He has a fixed will; it is not subject to change. "This is the Father's will." How grand those words are!

Following the current of this testimony, we are introduced to the obedient servant of that will. "This is the Father's will which hath sent me." Christ, then, is the sent and obedient servant of His Father's will. When Christ forgives a sinner it is His Father's will; when He receives a rebel to His bosom, it is His Father's will. All that He is engaged to bring about is according to the will of the Father.

God was pleased to give to Christ, His obedient Son, a number of the human family who were to become His. Is not that the plain meaning of the passage, "This is the will of him that sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing"? The Father gave to the Son a certain number whom He Himself had chosen before the foundation of the world, and these became the property of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were placed under the mediatorial sway of the Son of God. They became Christians, not by their own natural inclination, but by His gracious calling. God's eternal and electing purpose severed from the mass of mankind a people who were to belong to Christ. The Holy Spirit opened their eyes that they might see, not merely their sin and helplessness, but Christ, His righteousness, grace, salvation, forgiveness and peace. All of these persons Christ undertook to keep. It was the Father's will that of all who were given to Christ He should not lose any.

Whether you look at the divine or the human side of salvation, it is all of Christ. If God looks down on men it is through His Anointed, or if men look up to God it is through His Christ Whom He has sent. What are we to understand by these words, "Every one which seeth the Son"? We cannot see Christ now with our natural eyes, for He has gone up to heaven. With our natural eyes we cannot scan His features or perceive His presence. But, when we read of Him in the gospels and hear of Him through the mouths of His servants, in effect we see Him set forth before us. The eyes of our understanding discern Him. The sense of faith recognizes Him. Now, if by that sight and knowledge we are led to believe on Him, then we have everlasting life. "Every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him," comes in for the same privilege. It includes the man with little faith and the one with great faith. It includes the man of reputable character and the one whose character thus far has been disreputable. Every child of man who believeth on the Son will receive eternal life. Every person who trusts his soul with the Son of God receives everlasting life. As soon as people believe on Him they have everlasting life, they are made alive unto God, and they receive a spiritual life which they never had before.

As the executor and trustee of the Father's will, Christ is most gracious. To meet the needs of those who were in such a miserable condition required the greatest self-sacrifice possible. Before He could pay their debt, He had to lay down His life as a ransom. He was divinely appointed for the task. He was willing to undertake the trust. While it is true that He was sent, it is just as true that He came. "I am come down from heaven." There was no coercion. His mission was as acceptable to Him as it was pleasing to the Father. He was thoroughly acquainted with the Father's will and took great delight in doing it. Being thoroughly competent for the task, He was enthusiastically devoted to the Testator and the legatees. He merged His own will with the perfect will of the Father and thereby triumphed gloriously.

What does the fact that God has a will have to say to us? In His will there is the guidance which each of us needs in life. This fact holds good for all our needs. Take our long-range needs first. Of the three major decisions which every person has to make--Master, mate and mission--probably the most difficult is the latter. A lot of people have great difficulty in making up their minds as to what they are going to do with their lives.

In the light of this fact, is there any source from which we might expect guidance in such an important matter? I believe there is, and our text gives us a cue to that. "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." John 6:38. In other words, Christ regarded His life's work as something which had been chosen for

Him by the will of His Father. The very same thing can apply to every one of us. In the will of God there is a plan for your life and for mine, and we will reach our greatest happiness and highest usefulness only as we discover and follow that plan.

There is also a short-range guidance which we can receive from the will of God. The most difficult thing you have to do is to make decisions. To go or not to go, to buy or not to buy, to accept this new job or to decline it? As long as you are undecided you are miserable. Sometimes after you have made your decision you ruin your happiness by worrying about whether or not it was the right one.

In making your decisions you need some test, some yardstick or some rule to go by. You can do no better than to make the will of God that rule. When you have some question to answer or some problem to solve, put the matter up to Christ. Then give Him time to speak. When you are convinced that the leading is unmistakable, then go ahead. One of the big advantages in making the will of God the rule for your life is that, once you get your answer, you know it is the right one, and you will never have to waste any time in regretting your decision.

God's will for us is always best. He wills only good for you both in this life and in the hereafter. His will is that all who believe "should not perish, but have everlasting life."

When Hannibal was born, his father, pagan though he was, took the baby to the shrine of his god and, holding him up in his hands, prayed to the heathen god, "O god, make him a better man than his father was."

Many parents have prayed for their children in much the same way. When your child was born you had certain hopes for him. When he was a mere babe you lifted your heart to God in prayer for his future well-being. All during those happy years when as a toddler he played about the house and climbed on your knees you dreamed your dreams for his future. When you looked at him you saw, not the child that he was, but the man you wanted him to become, taking his place in the life of the world and making his contribution to the happiness of mankind.

Then, perhaps, when he went away to college you sat down and wrote him a letter, and you said something like this: "My son, ever since you were born, your mother and I have had our hopes for you. We desire, of course, that you find happiness, and be useful. We want you to choose your vocation, prepare yourself for it, and achieve whatever success hard work will bring. But, above all, we want you to be a real Christian, a man who puts the doing of the will of God above all else. Your mother and I want you to know that we are your best friends, and will always stand by to give whatever help we can in the achievement of this purpose for your life."

If, as a child, you were conscious of such a purpose on the part of your parents, you know what it meant to you. It set you going in a certain direction. It helped you to hold your course when you were tempted to stray from the right path. Above all, it gave you the sense of backing, the feeling that there were others beside yourself who had your best interests at heart and were pulling for you.

It is well to think of God from the point of view of a Father. The name by which we know Him best is Father. We are told that when we think of the best human father there is that God is far better than he. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" Matthew 7:11. Not until you can think of yourself as desiring something less than the best for your child have you any right to suppose that the will of God desires less than the best for you. If you miss the good purpose which God the Father has for you, either in time or in eternity, it is not the fault of anybody except yourself. In the eternal will of the Heavenly Father there is a place prepared for every person who walks

on this earth. Are you willing to see to it that your life conforms to God's will for it? It is His will that you shall be saved and become a faithful, obedient, victorious and useful Christian.