

Thy Will Be Done

(Andrew Murray)

Chapter 23

The Salvation of All

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men....

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved."

—1 Timothy 2:1, 3-4

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing

that any should perish, but that all should

come to repentance."

—2 Peter 3:9

After Paul urged that supplications, prayers, and intercessions would "be made for all men," he reminded us that we may do so in confident assurance that it is good and acceptable to God. He wills that all men would be saved. The knowledge and faith of God's will for all is to be the motivation and the measure of our prayer for all. What God in heaven wills and works for His children on earth, we are to will and work for too. As we enter into His will for all, we will know what we are to do to fulfill that will. And as we pray and labor for all, the faith in His will for all will inspire us with confidence and love.

Perhaps the question arises—If God wills the salvation of all why is it not happening? What about the doctrine of election, as

Scripture teaches us? And what about the omnipotence of God, which is surely equal to His love that wills the salvation of all. As to election, remember that there are mysteries in God and in Scripture that are beyond our reach. If there are apparently conflicting truths that we cannot reconcile, we know that Scripture was not written, like a book of science, to satisfy the intellect. It is the revelation of the hidden wisdom of God, which tests and strengthens faith and submission and awakens love and childlike teachableness.

If we cannot understand why His power does not work what His will has purposed, we will find that all that God does or does not do is decided by conditions far beyond our human comprehension. It requires a divine wisdom to grasp and to order God's ways. We will learn that God's will is as much beyond our comprehension as God's being. And it is our wisdom, safety, and happiness to accept every revealed truth with the simplicity and the faith of little children. We must yield ourselves to it to prove its living power within our hearts. Let us not fear to yield ourselves to the utmost to this blessed word: "God ... will have all men to be saved."

God is love. His will is love. As He makes His sun to shine on the good and the evil, so His

love rests on all. However little we can understand why His love is so long-suffering and patient, we can believe in and be assured of the love that God gives to us—love whose measure in heaven is the gift of His Son and on earth every child of man. His love is nothing but His will in its divine energy doing its very utmost in accordance with the divine law. Thus, His relationship to mankind is regulated to make men partakers of His blessedness. His will is nothing but His love in its infinite patience and tenderness delighting to win and bless every heart into which it can gain access.

If we only knew God and His love, how we would look on every man we see as one upon whom that love rests and for whom it longs. We would begin to wonder about the mystery of grace that has taken up the church—making it the body of Christ and a partner in the great work of showing God's love—a grace that is dependent upon the church's faithfulness. And we would see that all who live to do God's will must believe this to be its central glory: Our doing the will that wills that all men would be saved.

"God ... will have all men to be saved." This truth is a supernatural mystery. It can only be understood by a spiritual mind through the teaching of the Holy Spirit. It is in itself so divine and beyond our apprehension—the difficulties that surround it are so many and so real—that it needs so much time and sacrifice to master its teaching. To very many who do not possess a humble, loving heart, the words carry little meaning.

To the believer, who in very deed seeks to know and to do all God's will, God's words give a new meaning to life. He begins to see that this call to love and to save his fellowmen is not something accidental or additional. He begins to realize that, along with the other things that make up his life, he can devote as much time and thought to this as he sees fit. He learns that just as this loving, saving will of God is the secret source of all his will and rules it all, so this loving, saving will is to be the chief thing that he lives for too. I have been redeemed, organically united to, and made a member of the saving Christ, who came to do this will of the Father.

I have been chosen and set apart and fitted for this as the one object of my being in the world. I begin to see that the prayer, "Thy will be done" (Matthew 6:10) means, above everything else, that I give myself for this loving, saving will of God to possess, inspire, use, and if need be, consume me. And I feel the need of spelling out the words of the sentence until my heart can call them its own: "God"—my God, who lives in me—"will have"—with His whole heart, in that will that He has revealed to His people that they may carry it into effect—"all men"—here around me, and to the ends of the earth—"to be saved"—to have everlasting life.

Paul wrote these words in connection with a call to prayer for all men. Our faith in the truth of God's loving, saving will must be put into practice. It must stir us to prayer. And prayer will most certainly stir us to work. We must not only seek to believe and feel the truth of these words, but we must also act. This will of God must be done. Let us look upon those around us as the objects of God's love, whom His saving will is seeking to reach. Let us, as we yield ourselves to this will, go and speak to those around us about God's love in Christ.

It is possible that we are not succeeding in doing God's will in our personal lives because we neglect the chief thing. As we pray to be possessed and filled with the knowledge of God's will, let us seek, in all things, to have our hearts filled with this love. Let us have tongues that speak of Jesus and His salvation, and a will that finds its strength in God's own will—that all men be saved. So will our life, our love, our work, and our will in some measure be like that of Jesus Christ—a doing of the Father's will, that none of these little ones should perish.

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