

The Mystery of God's Will

by H.J. Vine

The sermon explores the profound nature of God's will as revealed through Christ and the call for believers to understand and live it out in their lives.

Scripture: Colossians 1:9

Topics: "Gods Will", "Sanctification"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches about the profound understanding of God's will, emphasizing the importance of aligning our desires with His good pleasure. The sermon delves into the eternal purpose of God, the sanctification and eternal life found in Christ, and the ultimate glorification in Him. It highlights the need to prove and practice God's will, showing gratitude and obedience in all circumstances, ultimately leading to the fulfillment of His divine plan in Christ.

Transcript

We live in the day when this has been made known to those who are the subjects of God's redeeming grace, who have heard and believed the Gospel, and who are saved and are sealed by the Spirit.

It centres in Christ, but it concerns us. It is according to God's good pleasure, but it for us to find pleasure in it also. It is for the blessing of all in heaven and on earth eventually, but it will be through Christ and the assembly in the unction and power of the Spirit. It is according to eternal purpose purposed before times began, but it will be seen in resultant splendour when "the fullness of times" shall have come.

"Then all shall see with wondering gaze,

And fill the heavens with endless praise."

God's Will

Much is said about man's will, and the sad results of it are in flagrant evidence on every side. It is the will of God, however, that the redeemed need to understand better, and the Holy Spirit enables them to do so, for it is desired that "the full knowledge of His will" should be theirs, and that they should "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 1:9; 4:12). The former is necessary if the latter is to characterize us.

Whatever God would have to be--whatever is His good pleasure--is His will. We find this abundantly expressed in the inspired writings. "Thy good pleasure" (Ps. 40:8, N.Tr.) is cited by the Spirit as "Thy will" in Hebrews 10:7. More often than otherwise will is spoken of in ordinary parlance as something which wills--something in a person similar to his spirit or soul which is called a will--but Scripture speaks of it more as that which the person himself would have come to pass; and when we have the definite expression, "This is the will of God," are immediately told what He Himself would have. Two verses may suffice to show this fact: (1) "This is the will of God even your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4:3); (2) "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believes on Him, may have everlasting life" (John 6:40). When this is grasped we shall better understand the Scriptures which speak of God's will in different ways, in different times, and in different relations, for no one thing can be said to be the will of God to the exclusion of all others, whatever may be said as to the mystery of that will.

When the day is reached for the manifestation of the supremacy of Christ, and all things in heaven and on earth are headed up in Him, as we said before--the mystery of God's will being consummated--we can readily perceive that His will in every part of that glorious administration will be done by all. Meanwhile the elect are being called out to obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and also the glory of which we speak, but this calling out takes place now, when, on the other hand, God is allowing man's will--during the period which is called "man's day"--to expose its folly. This, pursued without subjection to God's will, eventually culminates in the "wilful king"; and a trinity of evil--Satan, the false prophet, and the imperial beast of Revelation--will plunge the nations--out of which the elect have been called in grace, and also by power from earth to heaven--into a vortex of strife, darkness, and blasphemy, bringing swift judgment upon both the deceivers and the deceived to make way for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The Gospel by which God calls out the assembly today is shown in the parenthetical chapters of Romans (9, 10 and 11) to be quite in accord with the calling out of Israel and the promises specially given to that nation. The will of God is recognized as the basis of that consistency. His "I will" of Exodus 33, made known to Moses at Horeb, is quoted to prove this. Showing mercy and feeling compassion towards sinners of the Gentiles as well as those of Israel is His way (Rom. 9:14-24); and, because all have sinned, "God has shut up together (Jews and Gentiles) all in unbelief, in order that He might show mercy to all" (11:32). This was necessary if His will was to be given effect to. Moreover, not only had we all sinned in practice, but we are all sinners by nature; therefore a work in us was also necessary, and so we read, "According to His own will begat He us by the word of truth, that we should be a certain firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18). This sovereign work of God is not said to be by His will, but according to it; the end in view being that He should have us as a kind of firstfruits. In John 1 we are told that those who are born of God are those who receive Christ. They are the children of God. The right is given to them to take that place. How great the honour to be of the family of God! They "were born not of blood"--as those of the priestly family or the royal family of Israel must be to have their place of privileged nearness to God--"nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (v. 13). According to His will He has so wrought to have them as His children.

It is said of this family, They are not of the world even as Christ is not of the world. They are in the world, however, and need to be kept from the evil of it. The Son prayed to the Father in regard to this (John 17); and one reason why He gave Himself for our sins was, "so that He should deliver us out of the present evil world according to the will of our God and Father" (Gal. 1:4). Note again, it does not say that this is the will of God, but "according to" it. When, however, apartness to God in well-pleasing and in honour is viewed

on its positive side, we read. "This is the will of God even your sanctification"; and it is the same in regard to our having eternal life through seeing and believing on the Son--"This is the will of Him that sent Me," the Lord Jesus said. There is, we may say, that which is pre-eminently the will of God, just as there is His will in relation to certain persons and things; and there is also that which is according to His will.

"To Do Thy Will"

The very first writing of which we have any knowledge records these words. In that most ancient roll of Divine counsel in the past eternity they are inscribed concerning our Lord Jesus Christ and the will or good pleasure of God. That which is written therein are words which express the devotedness of the Son to the will of God--"Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."

How sublime! How divinely becoming! God's will and the doer of it are pre-eminent in that first record! Here was One able to estimate the infinite value of the good pleasure of God, and notwithstanding all the toil and suffering involved in bringing it to pass, His wisdom, love and power are abundantly sufficient to enable Him to undertake the tremendous task, and though days and weeks and months and years and even ages may roll by before its full accomplishment be manifested in redemption splendour, yet He could speak in the consciousness of the infinite resources that were His, in the unquestionable assurance of the perfect result which should crown His labour, and with the deep joy of knowing that His work would eventually bring praise and honour and glory to God; and, having so spoken, He came forth to do His will.

Moreover, none of the redeemed who know who He is that has thus spoken--whose words are indelibly recorded in the heavenly roll--who has come out to accomplish God's will--can entertain even a shade of doubt as to the final issue--the establishment in abiding blessing and glory of the good pleasure of God. Let each redeemed one, however, settle this in his own mind once and for ever, not one of us, not even all of us together, could accomplish it; none but an infinite Person could secure such an infinite and glorious result. The Son is this--He is an infinite Person--therefore He can bring it to pass, all is safe with Him. Centuries before He came, the prophet wrote, "The pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand" (Isa. 53:10). Glory be to God! this is true beyond all question.

He came! He entered upon the path for the accomplishment of God's good pleasure! He is seen in incarnation--a Man upon earth! "Mine ears hast Thou opened" or "prepared," He said (Ps. 40:6). "A body hast Thou prepared Me" is the beautiful and arresting citation of this by the Spirit (Heb. 10:5)! The prepared ears involved a prepared body, the ears being designated because He took the place of subjection and obedience to carry out the will of Another. It was in this He found pleasure! "I delight to do Thy will, O My God"! He said, again, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." This was the meat which the disciples knew not of! Yet, in this lowly path He was Himself "the Bread of Life." To appropriate Him thus is to appropriate life, for He said, "As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me even he shall live by Me." Of course His death was necessary for this. He died that we might have life eternal, and that is God's will concerning us. His own words we again quote, "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son and believes on Him may have everlasting life: and I will raise Him up at the last day" (John 6:40). This speaks of persons, verse 39 refers to distinctions of glory. "This is the Father's will which has sent Me, that of all which He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." These two verses amplify the important statement of the verse before, "I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." Glory and life in resurrection are the result, and that according to the mystery of God's will.

The new eternal covenant with all its glorious system of blessing was to be brought in, and the first covenant, thus made old, was to be set aside; therefore we read in Hebrews 10:9--which speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ coming forth for the doing of God's will--"He taketh away the first that He may establish the second." Believers were to be sanctified in view of this; those of Israel were to be set apart from the old system and established in the new, and this was by God's will. The means could not be through the offering of the "burnt-offerings and sacrifices" in which God found no pleasure, but through the offering of the prepared body of which we have spoken. The others were but types which found their perfect fulfilment in this one offering; so it could be written, By God's "will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all" (v. 10, N.Tr.). His death became the means of our being sanctified by the will of God. The sanctification is "through" the one and "by" the other.

All this is sound and healthful teaching for us--Behold, however, the cost! Behold the depths of sorrow and anguish into which the Doer of that will went! Behold the garden of Gethsemane bedewed with His sweat as blood! Behold the tree of Calvary crimsoned with the sacrifice and the offering of the body of Jesus! He knew all that was involved in undertaking to do God's will: the price to be paid was fully estimated by Him: As He knelt in prayer upon the soil of Olivet, being withdrawn about a stone's throw, from His disciples, He looked into the dreadful cup which he must drink, and the very perfection of His holy sensibilities deprecated it; nevertheless, though His soul was very sorrowful even unto death, though a deep depression came upon His spirit, though the sweat became as great drops of blood and fell upon the earth, He was in conflict and prayed more earnestly; yea, though amazement, oppression, and inexpressible grief were then His, yet, in all the strength of His holy devotedness to His Father's will, and in a depth of communion which is beyond measure, He said, "My Father, if this cup cannot pass from Me unless I drink it, Thy will be done." He alone could do it! He had come to do it and there was no other way! The awful depth to which He must go had in anticipation been fathomed! "THY WILL BE DONE," He says to His Father! In the past eternity, in the roll of the book, His words had been recorded--"Lo, I come to do Thy will"; and now, from the most dreadful deeps of suffering in spirit that had ever been known His devoted language is . . .

"Thy Will be Done"

He rises up in the calm of unbroken communion. He tells His disciples that the betrayer is at hand, that the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners, and that the hour has drawn nigh. A rabble band with officers, lanterns, swords and staves come and take Him. False witnesses before the chief priests and scribes testify against Him, but nothing takes Him unawares or moves Him from the place of dependence and peace. Mocked and stricken before Herod and Pilate, bearing the heavy cross as they lead Him to Calvary, hanging between two malefactors with pierced hands and feet, His communion with His Father remained full and complete. Yea, the love of the Father was called forth to Him as never before, and the Son knew it, and quietly rested in it when all else was adverse. In holy confidence and peace He could say, "FATHER."

Nevertheless, the depths of the three hours of darkness were known by Him, when His soul was made an offering for sin, when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, when the judgment that we deserved was His portion, when He suffered that we might be saved, when He resolved the question of good and evil for God's glory, when, toward the close of those dark three hours, He cried out with a loud voice, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Mark, He did not say, "My Father" then; but the depth to which sin had taken man from GOD had to be known by Him, to bring man near to God according to His will. He knew the darkness and the distance that we might have the sunshine of God's favour in Him risen

and ascended in the nearness that is His. The redemption that He secured is an "eternal redemption," and it is ours now in Him where He is.

He has gone up to the throne! He is no longer on the cross! He is glorified as Man in heaven! The offering has been made! The Offerer is exalted! No longer crowned with thorns and dishonour, He wears the crown of glory and splendour. The work is done that the mystery of the will of God might be fully consummated in the appointed Head and Centre of all in heaven and on earth--in Christ Jesus, Hallelujah!

Notice the results of the work of Calvary in relation to the will of God;

1. Deliverance: "According to the will of our God and Father" (Gal. 1:4).
2. Sanctification: "By which will we have been sanctified" (Heb. 10:10).
3. Eternal life: "This is the will of My Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes on Him should have life eternal" (John 6:40, 54).
4. Glory: (Eph. 1:7, 9-10). Eternal praise to God.

Proving and Practising it

Our Lord Jesus Christ alone could bring to pass the good pleasure of God in its fullness, but we are to prove the will of God in relation to ourselves, and also to practise it according to what is written.

This can only be done by those who are "in Christ," as we see in Romans 8. There is "no condemnation" in Him (v. 1); "the love of God" is in Him (v. 39); all true believers are in Him; and God has called them "according to His purpose" (v. 28). Chapter 12 of the Epistle, which gives us the teaching of the gospel, shows that believers are not "in Christ" simply as individuals, but are "one body in Christ" (v. 5). This truth prepares us, and puts us on the line of the will of God at the present time.

Mark the way the Spirit speaks in this chapter, for we do not jump into it all at once. We passed out of darkness into light, out of death into life, from the power of Satan to God, from unbelief to faith, at our conversion, swifter than words can express; but we are told to "think so as to be wise" (v. 3) now that we are saved. In response to God's compassion toward us therefore we are to render the intelligent service of presenting our bodies to Him as a living sacrifice. Through the offering of the prepared body of Jesus, as we have seen, we are sanctified by God's will, and our bodies are to be for His will. To this end three things must mark us:

1. Nonconformity.
 2. Transformity.
 3. Conformity.
1. "Not conformed to this world."
 2. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind."
 3. "That ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God"

--being thus conformed to it. These three things are necessary to the proving of what that will is in relation to each one of us, so that we may carry it out as being "one body in Christ."

We have seen from Romans 8:28 that God called us (when we heard the gospel of His saving grace) "according to His purpose," and the "one body," the assembly, is formed now in accordance with that. We "prove,"--we make sure to ourselves,--the particular place and function which we are to fulfil--which is not only "good" but "acceptable and perfect,"--that which each is fitted for, and that which is fitted for each one in the "one body," for which grace is given, and the proportion of faith too; and then, having made proof of this, we are to make it our business henceforth, occupying ourselves in it as the good pleasure of God concerning us, each filling his own place in well-doing; for spiritual health, happiness and holiness, too, are the portion of the members that thus do. One may be able to teach, another to exhort, another to give, or to lead, or to show mercy with cheerfulness. All are to love and honour one another, walking in lowliness, so as to express the excellencies of Christ.

There may be testings and trials in the daily pathway of such, but these are not to be allowed to divert us from the other. Rather should they cause us to value and pursue with increasing zeal the revealed mind of God concerning us. Paul again and again tells us he was an apostle "by God's will" (1 and 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1, etc.). Yet in the pursuance of his service, he found obstacle after obstacle in his path, but with purpose of heart he pressed onward. Peril, hunger, nakedness, persecution, misrepresentation, imprisonment and many other things only called into greater activity his unswerving faith in Christ, and showed him to be more than a conqueror. As the end is kept steadily in view by the grace of God, we shall be found treading the right road in the right way, be it rough or smooth, stormy or pleasant, till the goal is attained; and, as we have said, details will be understood aright.

Look at that purposeful man! He wills to reach the distant gold field, amass a fortune, and return to dwell in a mansion! He attains his object. Others had perished on the way. The mountains to be scaled, the ravines to be traversed, the gorges and torrents met with on the way, the frosts and deep snows, had proved too much for them; but with purposefulness, strength and wisdom, he overcame every difficulty and accomplished his will--he attained the end in view. With the way to it he experienced many and great discomforts and difficulties; on the other hand, beautiful weather and magnificent sights at times attended his way. Chilled to the bone, crouching to shelter from the bitter blasts on a lonely, wild moorland, hungry and thirsty, he might say, "I never expected such dreadful experiences!--this is not my will!" Again, refreshed, and full of healthful energy, he enjoys the pleasant sunshine, the blue sky, the bright atmosphere, and the grandeur of the scenery, with views of towering heights, mighty forests, shining rivers and lakes, and then he might say, "I just wished for this!--this is my will!" Neither conclusion is correct. His will was the fortune and the mansion, the rest came in by the way, according to it. In willing the one the other was involved.

The difference with ourselves is this. There is no question that the end will be reached by everyone, and it is the will of God (not our own) which is to be known and pursued by us; and on the way to the full fruition of it, we "know" that all work together for our good, in view of that, which is before the mind of God--the mystery of His will, to head up all things in Christ for the coming glory. We are therefore not to be downcast by difficulties, nor become slack when the path is smooth, but dominated by the will of God, press forward with divine joy filling our hearts, having the double assurance that the end is secure and all is for good on the way. There is a great danger, however, and that is, having an end short of God's end; a present earthly ambition short of the glory of God. Sure disappointment awaits this. Being justified by faith, and standing in the favour of God, it is characteristic of even the youngest believer to rejoice "in hope of

the glory of God." As this joy in hope is bright, and becomes deeper and not shallower, we shall be enabled in faith to surmount all difficulties and all snares.

We see, then, the importance of proving what is that "good and acceptable and perfect will of God," so that being "filled with the full knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," we may "walk worthily of the Lord unto all well-pleasing" (Col. 1:9). It was the setting aside of this latter which brought condemnation on the religious boaster of Romans 2:18, Thou "makest thy boast in God and knowest His will, . . . thou who boastest in law, dost thou by transgression of the law dishonour God" (v. 23)? He was connected with Israel and law, we are connected with Christ and grace. There is the "one body in Christ" as we have seen, and we are each one set in that body to fulfil our function. When complete, when glorified with Christ, all will be perfect. But we are to know even now and answer to the will of God concerning us. "If any one desire to practise His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine," said the Lord (John 7:17). We are told not to be foolish but to, "understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). The day is coming when the earthly disciples' prayer will be answered and the Father's will shall "be done on earth as it is in heaven." There will not be "one body in Christ" on earth in that day, however, for Israel and the nations will be ordered in blessing in relation to Jerusalem according to the earthly promises. The one body, the assembly, will have been taken to heaven before that time. We shall have been glorified with Christ in view of the culmination of the mystery of God's will.

Meanwhile, the doing of His will is of the last importance. Let it, however, be His will, and not some imaginary service of our own devising. As we have seen, we must know and understand it first, and then put it into practice. "He that does the will of God abides for ever" (1 John 2:17); and God hears the petitions of such: "If any one be God-fearing and do His will, him He hears" (John 9:31): "If we ask Him anything according to His will He hears us" (1 John 5:14). Even in our demeanour toward the king as supreme, and rulers, we are to behave becomingly, "Because so is the will of God, that by well doing ye put to silence the ignorance of senseless men" (1 Peter 2:15); and if suffering come upon us for our "good conversation in Christ, it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing" (1 Peter 3:17). Again, it is said, "ye have need of endurance in order that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise. For yet a very little while He that comes will come, and will not delay." As His coming is thus before us we have a powerful incentive to do His will. Moreover, the Lord Jesus claims such as being in the most intimate relationship with Himself: "Whosoever shall do the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3:35). "He is not ashamed to call them brethren" for they are born of God.

His Good Pleasure

It is important for us to know also that even the desire to be well-doers does not originate with ourselves. Both the willing and the working according to God's good pleasure are the result of His working in us as Philippians 2:13 tells us. If Paul praises the brethren of Macedonia to those at Corinth, and speaks of the grace of God seen in their free-hearted liberality in helping others, he says their willingness and their giving were "by God's will" (2 Cor. 8:1-5). James shows us that even in the affairs of this life, instead of saying, "I will do this or that," we should say, "If the Lord will." In all things that should be pre-eminent with us.

If we think of the great matter of salvation, we are told He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; neither is it His will that any little children should perish (Matt. 18:14), for the Son of Man came to save them. Indeed, it is said, He is "not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9); and, again, He "desires that

all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). This salvation is in Christ Jesus, and is according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself before time began; and if it be written, "By grace ye are saved" (Eph. 2:8), we are also told in 2 Timothy 1:9, He "has saved us, and has called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace." It is the same in regard to the wonderful relationship of sons into which the saved are brought by redemption--He "marked us out beforehand for adoption (or sonship) through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:5, N.Tr.); and verse 9 tells us that the mystery of His will to centre up all things in Christ is also "according to His good pleasure." From the start to the finish--from the first moment when this was purposed right on to the moment of its full accomplishment in glory--this has been kept always in view; and between the time when the design was divinely conceived and the time when its glorious attainment shall be universally seen, God has been ordering all after the counsel of His own will for the praise of His glory.

God has made known "the unchangeableness of His purpose," and from the first thought to the final display, we are shown the great outstanding features as the mighty strides onward are taken to its complete attainment, as well as a multitude of intervening and necessary, details that are according to His good pleasure, leading forward to the glorious culmination when all things shall be headed up in Christ. Here are five of those distinguishing features.

1. HIS ETERNAL PURPOSE which is "in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11).
2. CREATION, which has the same end in view; "for Thy pleasure (or will) they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11).
3. PROPHECY, too--the spirit of which is "the testimony of Jesus,"--came not "by the will of man" but by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21).
4. REDEMPTION--which is ours in Christ through His blood--also has the pre-eminence of Christ in view as Head of the body the assembly (Col. 1:18), according to God's good pleasure.
5. THE UNIVERSE--"all things,"--"the breadth and length and depth and height,"--filled with beauty and order and honour and glory--centring in Christ--resounding with the praise of God--shall display the full outcome of "the mystery of His will" (Eph. 1 and 3).

"Loud Hallelujahs then shall lift the song."

Throughout the whole realm of universal rejoicing and splendour the will of God shall be done by all. The good pleasure which He purposed in Himself will have come to pass to His everlasting praise. On earth and in heaven not one will be found acting contrary to His will. Darkness will have overwhelmed the wicked--the unrepentant--for ever; shut out from the scenes of light and life and liberty and love eternally--shut out from the realms where our Lord Jesus Christ is exalted and loved--they will have perished from the way, from the way that leads to life eternal, from the way to the abodes of God's good pleasure, and, away from that, they exist eternally in what is called "the second death" (Rev. 20:14). The glories of immortality and incorruptibility are not there though eternal existence is.

Wonderful indeed is the exceeding greatness of God's power which has quickened us and set us apart from the ways of death, placing our feet in the path of life according to the great end He has in view. Our hearts may well be grateful and our lips speak forth His praise! for, if--(1) "This is the will of God, even our

sanctification,"--and, (2) "This is the will" of God that we "should have life eternal," and be raised up at the end, as we have seen; so also, (3) "This is the will of God in Christ Jesus" concerning us: "IN EVERY THING GIVE THANKS!"

Thanksgiving is indeed most fitting and becoming! Saved and sanctified according to the good pleasure of God, to share in the scenes of life eternal--knowing that all things work together for the good of such--for grace has called them according to God's purpose--what could be more suitable than giving thanks "IN" everything, though "FOR" everything it may not always be possible? Yes, such is the reasonable and striking exhortation given to those who are of the "one body in Christ,"--literally reading--"In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus towards you" (1 Thess. 5:18). Colossians 3:15 also says, "Let the peace of Christ preside in your hearts, to which also ye have been called in one body, and be ye thankful" (N.Tr.).

In a far higher sense than the sweet Psalmist indicated shall the hosts of heaven and earth praise and bless His holy Name: "The Lord has prepared His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all," he sang, "Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye His hosts: ye ministers of His that do His pleasure. Bless the Lord, all His works in all places of His dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul." This will be truly glorious: the blessed responding to the Blesser in praising and blessing. It reminds us of the end of Luke's Gospel, when the risen Saviour ascended to heaven from Mount Olivet with His hands outstretched in blessing, and the disciples rejoiced with great joy, "Praising and blessing God continually!" Begun here on earth, it shall never end even when universal glory is established in Christ Jesus for God's glory in the power and grace of the Holy Spirit.

The result of those divine words recorded in that first writing--"Lo, I come to do Thy good pleasure,"--shall be seen in abiding blessedness--"The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand!" The result of the cry heard by God in the loneliness and agony of the garden of Gethsemane shall be full with abiding joy--"Thy will be done!" The result of the good pleasure of God's will, the revealed mystery of His will, and the work done according to the counsel of His will, shall be to the praise of His glory, when all heavenly and earthly things are headed up in Christ in the fullness of times for an administration which will surpass in wealth and wisdom and power and honour and splendour the administration of the wise and royal Solomon, even though the priesthood and the ark and the cherubim and the temple and the city of the great king--the earthly metropolis--were associated with his great throne of ivory; for, in the administration which has Christ Himself as its Centre, there shall be seen the all-varied wisdom of God, and the city--the heavenly metropolis--the bride--the Lamb's wife--shall be illumined with the glory of God; and her radiance like unto a stone most precious, clear as crystal, shall shine undimmed for ever. "The throne of God, and the Lamb," shall be in that city! (Rev. 22:3).

"God and the Lamb shall there

The light and temple be,

And radiant hosts for ever share

The unveiled mystery" (Rev. 21:22).

The words of Christ, the prayer of Gethsemane, the many prayers of the saints, shall have a perfect and abiding answer--His will be done: His good pleasure accomplished.

Meanwhile, may it be ours to prove and practise His will on the way. Shall we not pray as the Psalmist, "Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God"? Surely, this is our desire. Only One could accomplish it in the fullest degree, as we have seen, and He said, when on earth, "I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." Not that His will was ever contrary to the will of the Father, but that which governed His activities was the Father's good pleasure. The Son quickens whom He will and that in accord with the Father's will. Likewise, "the willing and the working" (Phil. 2:13) which God produces in us are not in anywise at variance with His own good pleasure; but it is in Christ we see the perfection of obedience and subjection; not in ourselves. We are told to behold Him, to consider Him, yea, to consider Him well. There we see the truth--the expression of what is true, even as the full display of the mystery of God's will shall be seen in Him universally very soon.

"O gracious God! Thy pleasure

Is in Thy Christ made known,

In Him Thy glory's centred,

In Him Thy purpose shown."

The riches of the grace of God have abounded in securing not only our present and eternal blessing in Christ, but also in giving us even now intelligence as to the mystery of God's will, according to His own good pleasure to centre up all things in the heavens and on the earth in Christ, in whom we are granted an inheritance in the vast realm of glory of which He is the Head, for we shall share it with Him as the assembly, as His body and His bride. When the glorious administration takes place in the fullness of time Christ will be supreme as Head and Centre of all, and meanwhile in view of this God works all things according to the counsel of His own will, so that we should be to the praise of His glory in the day of Christ's pre-eminence. Having marked us out for sonship according to "the good pleasure of His will," the present working out therefore of the "counsel of His will" has in view the full display in glory of the "mystery of His will." It is the latter of these three which He has made known to us (Eph. 1:5-10).

From God's side this is so, but on our side--Do we understand it? It is one thing to have it told to us in the Scriptures, it is another to make it ours "in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." The importance of this should be rightly valued. A kindly father has planned for the good and pleasure of his family, friends, and household, as well as for his own good pleasure, to lay out his gardens and grounds in a certain way. His son is in his fullest confidence. They design together, but he desires all the others in the family circle to know also, that they may be in communion with him and have his mind while all is being wrought out. They will benefit when the desired end is reached, but how greatly will the father value their present interest in his interests before the end is attained; and how their ways, their instruction, and their communion with the mind of their father will be affected as they enter into his designs. It will surely be so with ourselves, and that increasingly, as we get apprehension in what is before the mind of God. The end which He has in view will certainly be reached, but as it fills our own hearts many minor matters will be understood better by us. The molehills which we had magnified into mountains will assume in our eyes their right proportion, the giants will become as grasshoppers, the difficulties as food for faith, and many inexplicable happenings will be seen clearly to be working for our good as we hourly draw nearer to the full fruition of God's rich designs of glory, honour and praise. With spring in our steps and patience in our souls we shall hasten along the upward way, whilst our rejoicing increases and our communion deepens, for to that end the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has disclosed to us the "mystery of His will" even now.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/hj-vine/the-mystery-of-gods-will/>

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