A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical and Southern Studies

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SBSS

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1 Whate'er my God ordains is right:
his holy will abideth;
I will be still, whate'er he doth,
and follow where he guideth.
He is my God; though dark my road,
he holds me that I shall not fall:
wherefore to him I leave it all.

2 Whate'er my God ordains is right:
he never will deceive me;
he leads me by the proper path;
I know he will not leave me.
I take, content, what he hath sent;
his hand can turn my griefs away,
and patiently I wait his day.

3 Whate'er my God ordains is right:
though now this cup, in drinking,
may bitter seem to my faint heart,
I take it, all unshrinking.
My God is true; each morn anew
sweet comfort yet shall fill my heart,
and pain and sorrow shall depart.

4 Whate'er my God ordains is right:
here shall my stand be taken;
though sorrow, need, or death be mine,
yet am I not forsaken.
My Father's care is round me there;
he holds me that I shall not fall:
and so to him I leave it all.

Samuel Rodigast (1649-1708)

The Majesty of God's Will

"He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"
Daniel 4:35

Our text is a part of Nebuchadnezzar's press release from Babylon's royal palace. This was the result of his confrontation with God. The ruler was taught about his humanity and at

the end of Nebuchadnezzar's days of madness, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, after having been turned out like an ox to learn he was not God, and when his understanding returned he began to bless the real most High God. He praised and honored God who lives forever and ever, whose dominion is everlasting, and whose kingdom is from generation to generation. With a totally new perspective on God Nebuchadnezzar said, "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and *he doeth according to his will*…." His final remark was, "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

The two aspects of God will are evidenced in this passage. Here we have God's secret will or will of decree, and God's revealed or preceptive will. God does according to His will, and God's will is evidenced in time. R. L. Dabney pointed out, "God's will is absolutely executed over all free agents; and yet Scripture is full of declarations that sinful men and devils disobey His will! There must be, therefore, a distinction between His secret and revealed, His decretive and preceptive will. All God's will must be, in reality, a single, eternal, immutable act. The distinction, therefore, is one necessitated by our limitation of understanding, and relates only to the manifestation of the parts of this will to the creature. By God's decretive will, we mean that will by which He foreordains whatever comes to pass. By His preceptive, that by which He enjoins on creatures what is right and proper for them to do. The decretive we also call His secret will; because it is for the most part (except as disclosed in some predictions and the effectuation) retained in His own breast. His preceptive we call His reveled will, because it is published to man for his guidance."

As God is sovereign, He does according to His sovereign will. This means His rights are supreme and He maintains dominion over everything He has made. This being true He posed a question requiring a positive answer, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own" (Matt. 20:15)? As Nebuchadnezzar realized God does His will "among the inhabitants of the earth." None can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou" (Dan. 4:35). He is higher than the highest (Eccl. 5:8).

As God is all-wise, He does according to His all-wise will. This is what Nebuchadnezzar learned the hard way. This is why we were taught to pray, "Thy will be done" (Matt. 6:10) for He is all-wise. This is why we rest in the Great Physician and the Great Shepherd. This is why Nebuchadnezzar declared that the King of heaven's words are truth.

As God is just, He does according to a just will. Another question was asked that required a positive answer, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right" (Gen. 18:25)? He wills justice. "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne" (Ps. 97:2). God will

never wrong us, but He may act contrary to us for He knows best. In heaven and earth, He does according "to His will."

As God is gracious, He does according to a gracious will. Nebuchadnezzar when his reason returned to him knew this and "blessed the most High" … who does "according to His will." It is because of the mercy of the Lord that we are not consumed. God's grace is greater than our sin. Grace is an act of the will of God.

Since God is irresistible, He acts according to an irresistible will. Since God is almighty in power all that He wills, He performs. Nebuchadnezzar by experience had experienced this all-powerful God's rebuke and said, "those that walk in pride he is able to abase." Why? "His ways are judgment." Nebuchadnezzar's pride had been abased by the irresistible God. He had had an introduction to the God of the army of heaven! This God does "His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Paul asked, "For who hath resisted his will" (Rom. 9:19)? Then he proceeded to say, has "not the potter power over the clay?"

"I think we sometimes have the impression that God's will is always something we do not like to do. The little boy who said, 'This medicine must be good for me, it tastes so bad,' was not unlike many Christians in their view of Providence" [Havner].

The last words of Richard Baxter, the English Puritan divine and author of the celebrated work *'The Saints' Everlasting Rest;'* he was also the man "who preached as a dying man to dying men, as never sure to preach again," whose final words were, "Lord, what thou wilt, where thou wilt, and when thou wilt."

Oh, the majesty of the holy will of God!