

## A Lord's Day Snippet!

### Biblical And Southern Studies

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1 My God my Father, while I stray  
Far from my home, on life's rough way,  
O teach me from my heart to say,  
"Thy will be done!"

2 Tho' dark my path, and sad my lot,  
Let me be still and murmur not,  
Or breathe the prayer divinely taught,  
"Thy will be done!"

3 Let but my fainting heart be blest  
With Thy sweet Spirit for its Guest,  
My God, to Thee I leave the rest;  
"Thy will be done!"

4 Renew my will from day to day;  
Blend it with Thine, and take away  
All that now makes it hard to say,  
"Thy will be done!"

Charlotte Elliot (1789-1871)

### The Majesty of Divine Providence

*"His kingdom ruleth over all."*

Psalm 103:19

"In the beginning God created" and all that He created is under His superintendence relative to events, existence, energy, etc. Providence has to do with God's governing His creation by directing everything by His infinite power, wisdom and will. So, providence is that which results from God's superintending His creation. Sometimes we lose sight of the God of providence because of the dark shadows cast by that providence. We sometimes enter what we misconstrue as Egyptian darkness because we stay too long in the shadows of trials missing the light behind the very shadows, that we have become too accustomed, and not realizing God is there.

"His kingdom ruleth over all." What He created He rules over as King even to the most minute detail even the fall of a little bird. "A clear view of His ever active, and everywhere supreme providence, is one of the most delightful of spiritual gifts; He who has it cannot

do otherwise than bless the Lord with all his soul” [Spurgeon]. When people try to rule providence, they are seeking to replace God or overrule Him because they think they know better. It is hard to kick against the goads. Life must be lived in accord with the rules God has established for its end. Our will needs to be brought into conformity to His.

Our King rules and reigns over every facet of life and material creation. Sometimes we look at events lopsidedly when it comes to divine providence. This was well illustrated by Dr. John Witherspoon, the only minister to sign the Declaration of Independence. He lived near Tusculum, at Rocky Hill, about two miles from Princeton University where he was president. He drove back and forth every day to preside and teach. One day a neighbor came excitedly into his study at the college and said, “Dr. Witherspoon, you must join me in giving thanks to God for His extraordinary providence in saving my life, for as I was driving from Rocky Hill the horse ran away and the buggy was smashed to pieces on the rocks, but I escaped unharmed!” Dr. Witherspoon answered, “Why, I can tell you a far more remarkable providence than that. I have driven over that road hundreds of times. My horse never ran away, my buggy never was smashed, I was never hurt.” Both experienced the providence of God but one realized that all events are in divine providence.

What e'er my God ordains is right:  
Holy His will abideth;  
I will be still what e'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.

Providence has its own distinct dialect if we will hear and submit to it by a life of obedience. When we do not listen to each providence we become rebels against the kingdom over which God rules. Providence is the GPS that God gives in directing us in the right way toward the Celestial City. It is true that sometimes we are inattentive to these directions and we enter our own Egyptian darkness with its hieroglyphics which makes providence much harder to read. Then it is that we must consult with Faithful who will assure us that the King or Judge of all the earth will do right for He is not seeking to deceive us. Sometimes we are caused to wait upon the Lord for our directions, but when we are impatient the result can be hurtful. We are confronted with the truth that the God of all the earth does right.

There are times when our self-imposed darkness seems to overshadow the providence of God. Perhaps we are being prepared or tested for greater things from the King. There may

be a situation when providence may even seem to be getting darker until it merges as the setting sun declines into the shadows of night. God can give a pillar of fire by night if He will until blessings burst on our heads. Our desire should be for the will of our King to be done. Jesus when teaching His disciples to pray taught them to say, “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” What a lesson in divine providence from this prayer. Then Jesus during His soul sufferings in the garden prayed regarding the cup and said, “Thy will be done.”

I am reminded of the Vice President of the CSA, Alexander Stephens, and his extremely poor health and how at the end of the War Between the States he was cruelly imprisoned. His nightly routine would be to dress for bed, stretch on his bunk, try to commune with God in prayer, and finally say from his heart, “Thy will and not mine be done.” He had the habit previously in life to emphasize the will of God as the great necessity for his life. His was a desire to actively obey God’s will, and it was a desire to patiently submit to God’s will in his afflictions as well as his incarceration. He had preferred God’s will to his own. They could not lock up his heart and soul toward God. The will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven; this is true liberty.

J. R. MacDuff rejoiced, “Blessed Lord! my pilgrimage path is studded thick with Ebenezers testifying to Thy faithfulness and mercy. I love to think of Thy manifold gracious interpositions in the past: God sustaining me in trial—God rescuing me when in temptation—God helping me when ‘vain was the help of man!’ ‘When my foot slipped, *Thy* mercy, O Lord, held me up!’ And shall I not take all Thy goodness manifested hitherto, as a pledge of faithfulness in the future? In full confidence that Thou art a ‘rich Provider,’ I shall take no thought for the morrow, but repose in this covenant assurance of a covenant-keeping God; ‘I will never fail thee nor forsake thee.’ ‘Thou hast *been* my help, *therefore* in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice!’”