

This forming of images has at last been perfected in the "human nature" of Christ. After he had entered into glory, Christ appeared to St. John on Patmos in his human nature and the manner of this appearance has been committed to writing for us. This is the only appearance of Christ, given to the church, that may and should govern our imaginative life.

To this we add that in a child of God even here something of his Father is manifest. The nobler the Christian life, the more this is visible. The weaker the Christian life, the less apparent it is. But when a Christian life is deeply spiritual, they who are equally devout, see through it, as it were, something of the Image of the Eternal God. From this it follows that if we are God's children it is our high calling, not by our imagination, but by the image-forming manifestation of our entire personality to cause something of the Father to be seen by those who are of the household of faith.

### "IF ANY MAN WILL DO HIS WILL."

In behalf of the knowledge of God there is great power in conformity to his will. God becomes known to us by studious thought, by play of the imagination, by inner experience and in other ways. But it can not be denied that he also becomes known to us by the will. Within the last fifty years the will has been put in the foreground, by which to interpret many things which no one associated with it before. An important school of philosophy has emphasized the will

to such an extent that the significance of the other activities of the human spirit has suffered serious loss. The fundamental position of this school is that the will alone determines things, accomplishes things, creates reality, and makes itself known as a power; and that the more deeply one studies the question the more irresistibly one is forced to acknowledge that the will is the only power that governs and employs all other powers. This was confirmed by history. It is observed in the present. In every department of life the man of will exercises authority and overrides the weak. From man we have learned the wonderful power of will. Similar phenomena have been traced in the animal-world, but too little is known of this to build on. And so it has seemed safest to make the power to will, as it showed itself in man, the starting point.

But, of course, it could not stop with this. The phenomenon of the will is too great, and its dominance too prevalent, than that it can exist in man otherwise than derivatively. In the original state of things the will existed outside of man, and man himself was the product of the great supreme Universal-will that brought all things to pass. What until now had been worshipped in the world as God, or had been denounced as Satan, was according to this school nothing but that Universal-will, the gigantic will-power by which everything is what it is. The world shows anything but wisdom and less love. It is but the product of monstrous will-power. Hence the unsatisfying condition of its life. And since in us also, on a small scale, there is a will with power of will, the supreme duty of human life

is to train the will, to develop it, to apply it to mighty deeds, and with this strongly trained human will to maintain ourselves in the face of the Universal-will. Hence everything that is, and everything that is called history, and life itself is reduced to one power, and the only thing that is supremely high and holy is our personal will.

That the philosophic school which oracled like this is diametrically opposed to all religion, and more especially to the Christian religion, needs no demonstration. But it is noteworthy that the Christian religion in the Christian church, simultaneously revealed an allied tendency, which likewise put the will in the foreground, and at length subordinated every other utterance of the Christian faith to it. We mean that religious tendency which interprets the confession with ever greater liberality, which allows feeling and sentiment ever less opportunity of being heard, and shows ever more the need and inclination to exhibit Christianity solely and alone in works and display of power, that is to say, in utterances of the will. This idea and inclination was not born nor taken from this philosophic school, but owed its rise to an universal phenomenon, which shows itself in human life. The healthful Reformation in the ecclesiastical world was followed first by the barren period of dogmatics in the 17th century, and after that by the period of emotional religion in the 18th century. As neither the one nor the other proved satisfactory, and as it became evident that between these two, Christianity was losing strength, it naturally came to pass that with the depreciation of subtle credal statements, and an increasing distaste for weak emotionalism,

another extreme was reached in the effort to realize the Christian spirit in acts of the will. Not the hearer, but the doer of the law shall be holy. Not every one that sayeth, Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven shall be saved. If any one doeth His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God (John 7:17). In brief, in behalf of this new effort, many clear and strong utterances of Holy Scripture could be cited. Thus a tendency found an open door in every direction, which could boast of its meritorious exhibition of Christian works, but with this drawback always, that it under-estimated both the confessional statements of the church and mysticism.

The well-known fact that in the Christian struggle of the 19th century English Christians stood in the front ranks, was a powerful aid in this direction. The period of concise confessional statements was dominated by Switzerland, France and the Netherlands. The emotional period had been brought into prominence by German and French sentimentalists. But with the 19th century England appeared in the foreground. England with its matter-of-fact system, its commercial spirit and cool determination of will. From England the thirst after deeds crossed over to the continent of Europe, and what this tendency-of-will accomplished in the interests of philanthropy and missions can never be fully appreciated. It gave birth to a new life and encouraged the desire to exercise power. It simultaneously put to shame the barren and meagre results of intellectual orthodoxy, and the weak and sickly fruit of sentimental mysticism. It inspired a willing-

ness to give. It inspired a devotion and an energy of faith such as had not been in evidence among us since the days of the Reformation. In the Salvation Army, which is the most sharply defined exhibition of this tendency and at the same time its crudest expression, there showed itself a many-sided activity in behalf of the poor and the unfortunate which aroused sympathy even in unbelieving hearts.

The onesidedness, however, of this movement is a matter of regret, since it incurred the danger of abandoning justification by faith, and of putting in its place salvation by good works. The center of gravity was transferred too much from God to man. The outward supplanted the inward life of piety. And as on the part of unbelievers there was great and self-sacrificing activity along philanthropic lines, it soon became evident that people of this "Gospel of works" felt themselves in closer sympathy with unbelievers who shared their ideal of works than with the confessors of Christ, who fell short of it. And what cut more deeply still is that real religion, which is the search after fellowship with God, was undeniably more and more lost in this Gospel of the Will. There was too much lack of loveable, tender piety. The delicate plant of devotion became more and more mouldy. And both in preaching and in private conversation the hidden walk with God, the quiet ways of the secret of redemption, salvation by faith and being hid in Christ received ever less attention, until at length nothing more was heard of it. Everything had to be doing, nothing but doing. All that was asked for was facts and still again facts. The method came in vogue to com-

pute these deeds in numbers, and from high figures to infer that God crowned the work with blessing. There were statistics of converts, of moneys raised, of society memberships, of the hungry that had been fed, of the naked that had been clothed, of the sick that had been healed. And flattery on account of such showing was not always unacceptable.

And when it was objected that Christianity in this way was externalized, and that the knowledge of God which is eternal life was relegated to the book of forgetfulness, the answer was, that this surmise rested upon a misunderstanding, since true knowledge of God does not come through the intellect, and not through emotion, but through the will. He who doeth the will of God knoweth the Eternal. This pretext will be examined in the following meditation.

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### “INCREASING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.”

He that doeth the will of God naturally grows thereby in the knowledge of God. Of two persons, the one who is careful and conscientious in his confession, but careless as to his manner of life, has less chance to know the Lord than the other who is careful and conscientious in his manner of life, but indifferent in his confession. The so-called practical Christianity, the tendency which seeks salvation in christian works, was correct to this extent, that doing the will of God is certainly one of the means which is indispensable to him who would have a full knowledge of God.