

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.

If the knowledge of God is eternal life, Divine knowledge can not be something apart from life. Do not forget, eternal life is not life hereafter. It is a life which does not spring from the cistern, but from the fountain. Such knowledge of God which is itself eternal life is unthinkable, therefore, apart from practical life. When a will operates in all our works, and when our works are only good when they conform to the will of God, it is evident that there is a connection between the knowledge of God and the doing of his will.

The ox knoweth his owner, Isaiah tells us, but Israel does not understand. We would say: A horse knows his rider. The draft-ox is not much used among us. But how does he know his owner, or the horse his rider? Certainly in part by the eye and by the ear, but even more by the manner in which they are treated. When the rider comes up from behind, so that the horse does not see him, and utters no word or sound, so that the animal does not hear him, the thoroughbred knows his rider at once, and knows immediately whether his rider or a stranger springs into the saddle. A good riding-horse knows the will of his rider. He knows it even so well that at length horse and rider become one, and on the field of battle the horse will do his rider's wish, even with loosened bridle. Thus by careful training the animal has obtained such knowledge of his owner that to him it has become a living subordinate instrument.

Likewise the child of God that has lived according to God's will, and at the hand of that will itself has conformed himself to it, has come

to an instinctive knowledge of God such as no Catechism or Confession can impart. We do not say that this knowledge thus obtained is the only knowledge of God, nor that it is sufficient, nor that it offers satisfactory clearness; all we mean to say is: that doing God's will introduces a trait of its own into the knowledge of God, which is indispensable if that knowledge is to be a living knowledge, and which can not be replaced by anything else, be it understanding or feeling.

Take the case of forgiving those who have trespassed against us. As children of God we well know that this is our duty. We know it even so well that we are well aware that the matter is not ended when we are outwardly kind and return no evil for evil. Christian forgiveness goes farther and deeper than this. It must be honest forgiveness without any reservation. Our greatest enemy must be forgiven. Those who curse us we must bless. We must love those who despitefully use us. Consider it carefully: we must love our enemy. We must not show him love that we might exhibit our generosity. This, in fact, can only humiliate him. No, we must love him as ourselves. It is almost incomprehensible, yet such is the command. As it is prayed in the Our Father: Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. To forgive from love is the measure of the forgiveness of sin which we ask of God for ourselves. Not as though God could be bound to our measure, or forgive us because we forgive. That would be turning the Gospel around. But it signifies that we dare not ask more of God than

what we know is in our hearts to do to our debtors.

All this only shows that when in forgiving our enemy we do the will of God, we learn to know what it is to forgive, what it is to receive from God the mind and the will to forgive, and what it is to come to the knowledge of God as regards his mind and will to forgive us. He who himself does not forgive, who in opposition to God's will harbors hatred in his heart, and does not conform himself to God's will in this matter of forgiveness, lacks this particular knowledge of God, which makes it clear how God forgives him.

From this one example it clearly appears that doing the will of God increases the knowledge of God; not metaphorically, not unreally, but in deed and in truth.

There is still something else to be learned from this. The practical "Gospel of Works" puts special emphasis upon doing extra things; things which are outside of the ordinary life. By preference, therefore, it speaks of "Christian works," by which it means things outside the ordinary life of business, family and society, such as zeal for missions, visiting the poor, care for the sick and blind. And in part this interpretation is instinctively correct. When Christianity goes out into the world nothing of all this can stay behind. It all belongs to it. True, genuine Christianity can not be satisfied with inspiring ordinary life alone. It brings with it all sorts of things which remain unknown without it. Only it is a great mistake to suppose that the roses that grow against the wall are the main thing, and that the wall itself can be left to fall into ruins.

No, the doing of God's will covers all of life, the ordinary as well as the extraordinary, and the knowledge of God's will in common life is far finer, more intricate and more difficult than it is in those extraordinary things. To know what God's will is in our personal life, in our business or profession, in the family with its several connections, in society and in the world in general, is a study that is never ended on this side of the grave. To learn not only what God's will is in it all, but to bend the mind according to it, and to conform the life to it, even to its minutest detail, is not only a daily study, but a daily struggle, in which he alone triumphs who is led by the Spirit of God.

He who applies himself to this, who makes this his daily task, learns to understand God's will, and with every victory gained increases also in the knowledge of God. A knowledge which he does not acquire with his understanding, but with his whole personality. The more we begin to feel as God feels, and the more we become minded as God is, the more truly do we become children of the Father who is in heaven. For then we will not think that we do the will of God, when only once in a while there is heroic self-denial. But we will understand that to do the will of God is to be so changed of mind and inclination that we ourselves will what God wills. And he who attains unto this and is daily engaged in this, of himself increases in the knowledge of God by increasing in the knowledge of himself.

This will be plain when we remember that Being and Will in God are not two, but one. God's will is the crystal-pure expression of his

Being. Hence knowledge of God's will becomes of itself knowledge of his Being. The one can not be separated from the other. Only this: the will of God can only be truly known in the way of the will. To know the Ten Commandments by heart, and to make a list from the Scriptures of every utterance of God's will, does not justify a man in the least for saying that he knows the will of God. He may know it from memory, but the will is within, and can only be known within, by having the personal will enter into the will of God.

He who in a book on the art of navigation has read what a captain has to do in times of storm, does not know what it is to pilot a ship into a safe harbor. This is only known to him who has himself been out at sea in command of a ship in a storm and has brought it safely to port.

Likewise the knowledge of God's will is not acquired by learning lessons in morality by heart, but with the organ of our own will God's will must be so understood that we ourselves fulfill it. And thus only in the-way-of-the-will do we come to that knowledge of God, which can only be learned in this way.

We should not criticize therefore the Gospel of works, as though it had no use. On the contrary, it is absolutely indispensable. Only it must gain in depth. It must be applied to all of life. It should also be clearly understood that so far from being all the knowledge of God, the knowledge of his will is only a part of it. Forsooth, it is an indispensable part, but only in union with the other knowledge of God, which is obtained through the understanding, feeling and

imagination, does it form one whole. All these together constitute that full knowledge of God, which is eternal life. Only do not lose from sight that the daily increase in the knowledge of God is obtained solely and alone in the way of the will.

There is a two-fold will of God: the one is over us, the other is concerning us. The will of God over us determines our life, our career and our lot in life. It was with reference to this will of God that Jesus prayed: Not my will, but thy will be done. But the will of God concerning us shows us how to will, what to do and to leave undone; and regarding this will of God we pray in the Our Father: Thy will be done as in heaven by the angels, so also on earth by me. And it is this second, this last-named will of God which if we live in it, and conform ourselves to it, unconsciously makes us increase day by day in the knowledge of God.

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“BESIDE THE STILL WATERS.”

If there is a desire to know God, the will must be studied still more closely. In the days of our fathers the field, in which the will operates, was not sufficiently plowed and harrowed. The great question was whether the will was free or bound. For the rest, even in preaching and in catechising, the supreme significance of the will was ignored. Is not even now almost the whole realm of the will left fallow?

Of course this does not mean to say, that both in the times of our fathers, and in our own past, there has been no increase in the knowledge of