

LOVE OF THE WILL OF GOD.

Intention for September Blessed by Sovereign Pontiff.

"As the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are My ways exalted above your ways." The supreme will of God, which rules over all His creatures, is directed by an infinite wisdom, and on that account lies beyond the reach of our thoughts, our judgments and complaints. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor?" We have only to bow to His decrees and accept them with submission.

To-day it is the Pontiff universally beloved, full of years, it is true, but in all the use of his wondrous faculties enhanced with a ripe experience in the varied and perilous courses of Church pilotage, who is snatched from Peter's bark in the thick of her battling with the surges. Or it is the Congregations of God's friends, driven from their homes, their employments, the busy scenes of their self-sacrifice and zeal, and who are cast upon the world before the cruel alternative, to starve or to beg. Now sickness rages and the destroying angel with pitiless arm strikes down the prop of the family's support, or the gentle minister of its wants, or the flower of its sunshine. Now it is pain of body or anguish of soul, affliction or misfortune, that weighs upon the individual life, blights its hopes and crushes its aspirations. What keen disappointments and baffled plans, what loss of time, and labor, do we not hold the weather responsible for?—promises and calculations dragged to earth under the fury of the cloudburst or rain torrent, nipped in the bud by the frost, or burnt by the drought! The call of duty—in tones now imperative and menacing as in commandments, precepts, obligations of state, or in gentler whispers of counsel, charity and inspiration,—what is it but the message-carrier of the divine will!

Practice.

Thus it is that in the countless happenings and afflictions of life, whether resulting from our own waywardness, or altogether outside our control, we must recognize the hand wielded with infinite wisdom, surpassing love and unerring rectitude. "Father, not my will, but Thine be done"—the cry of the heart bowed in submission and the loving transport of the soul in adversity of whatever kind as well as in prosperity—is the one short leap to the highest holiness. It is also the easiest, requiring neither talent nor study, nor deep meditations, nor ascetical treatises, nor extraordinary spiritual guides. It is but the simple exercise of a childlike faith and love, which accustoms one to see and love in all that happens, except the disorder of the sinful will, the effect of the holy will of God. It is a practice especially adapted to those who live busy, bustling lives, or who are sorely tried, or who fail to understand the wisdom of God's dealings towards them, and are tempted to deny his fatherly Providence—for example, in the removal by death from a family of the father who is the only prop of its support, or of the mother who is the sole visible chance of the preservation of her children's faith and their religious education.

"Thy will be done," rising to the lips from a heart bowed in submission, who can tell the merit, the ascent in holiness, the glory it attains? How many a poor, lone and illiterate woman, bent under the weight of years and infirmity, drenched with affliction of spirit, has reached a height of holiness and glory that neither she nor any one in the world has the remotest suspicion of, by her mere lifelong fidelity to this simple practice?

Three Degrees.

To encourage the practice of this virtue, which contains all others, the Saints have marked out three degrees, like so many steps which lead us to the height of its perfection. The first and lowest is of those who resign themselves to the divine will without rebellion of the heart in affliction, or disobedience to the precept imposed, but with a certain reluctance, repining and desire of deliverance. Rather than a sacrifice which they offer, it is a penance which they undergo. It is the case of Simon the Cyrenian,

whom they forced to take up his cross, though he carried it without resistance. This degree is necessary for all who desire to be considered the servants of God and followers of their Saviour. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me." The commandments of God and precepts of His Church, resistance to temptation, the flight of sin and its occasions, and chief duties of state are a cross which all in earnest about salvation must shoulder and carry.

The second degree aims at something higher than mere resignation. The good soldier offers his services to a rightful leader, holds himself in readiness for his orders and executes them with courage. Thus true Christians will what God wills because He wills it, no matter what sacrifice it may entail. They carry their cross with a certain alacrity of spirit, without murmur or complaint. It is enough for them that the Lord to whom they have offered the service of their lives has signified His will.

"Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die."

To arm ourselves with courage for this degree, we ought to be thoroughly convinced that the will of God is our true glory and happiness. He is come to fight our battles and goes before us with the word of command and His example to point out the way; He accompanies us at every step, "teaching our arms to combat"; and follows to secure unto us the fruits of victory. He will permit no pain to afflict us that has not been surpassed by His great agony, who "trode the wine-press alone," and the chalice which He presents to our taste He has emptied to the dregs. "Taste and see that My yoke is sweet and My burden light." And the reward! His bliss our joy, His glory our recompense. "Well done, good and faithful servant! enter into the joy of thy Lord."

And yet there is something higher still,—a third degree of love of the divine will,—when the soul which has long made of this conformity her daily bread, so to speak, is borne almost unconsciously, by a kind of instinct, to its accomplishment. "My bread is to do the will of Him who sent Me, to perfect His work. To rest in this most holy Will becomes the one over-mastering joy of life, and the one fear is not to accomplish it fully.

This degree is the result of a strong interior light which penetrates the soul with the conviction, reaching almost to evidence, that there can be nothing in heaven or on earth higher, holier or better than the will of God. The divine will and the will of the creature are as if identified. The happiness and glory are the same. "My son, all mine are thine," said the good father to the child who had never forsaken him, but always followed his behests. He was given the sweet assurance that whilst devoting himself wholly to the interests of his father he was working never so efficaciously for the advancement of his own, and that all his father's possessions were his recompense.

Means.

It is to this most perfect union of wills that the Apostleship of Prayer in union with the Heart of Jesus constantly tends. It is the fruit of fidelity to its practices and its spirit. "He who adheres to the Lord is one spirit." In the Morning Offering we profess to offer all our works and sufferings, all our days, to the Heart of Jesus for His intentions. The multiplied communions have for their immediate fruit to strengthen the bond of union between the soul and its Saviour, even as the bread becomes part and parcel of him who partakes of it. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him; he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me." To secure more efficaciously this most desirable of unions, to impart to all its blessings, the Apostleship has recourse to those strong incentives of human endeavor—association and organization.

If we animate our lives with the spirit of this great work we shall not merely resign ourselves and crawl along the path of salvation, but embrace ardently the holy will

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of God and enter the royal road of the friends of Jesus. Let our prayer for the month of September be that all Christians love more and more this holy will as made known to them by the chain of happenings which make up their days.

J. J. C.

FOR WOUNDS CAUSED BY RUSTY NAILS.

Summer is the season of small accidents. Here is the remedy an exchange recommends for one of them: Every little while we read in the papers that some one has stuck a rusty nail in his foot or hand or other portion of the body and lockjaw resulted therefrom, and that the patient died. If every person were aware of a perfect remedy for all such wounds and would apply it then such reports would cease. The remedy is simple, always on hand and can be applied by any one, and what is better, it is infallible. It is simply to smoke the wound, or any bruise or wound that is inflamed, with burning woolen cloth. Twenty minutes in the smoke will take the pain out of the worst case of inflammation arising from such a wound. People may sneer at this remedy as much as they please, but when they are afflicted by such wounds just let them try it.—Ex.

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