

Obedience to the Will of God.

1. a

"And my Father are thee"

I wish to speak on obedience to the will of God, and its relation to our moral and spiritual life. What does it consist in? What are its fruits.

One hundred years have not yet passed since Jonathan Edwards and his followers blew upon the dying embers of Calvinism and caused them to burst forth into the last flickering flame, before its vitality had burned out and left it nothing but the cold lifeless ashes of history. Yet that last flickering flame of a dying religious system contained a power and a minuteness, a warmth from which every soul received the quickening influence to a deeper and more spiritual life. Whatever may have been the

limitations under which Edwards interpreted his religious experiences, the fact remains that he had been touched by the power of the spiritual life. He had responded to the command of the first great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind and with all thy soul." But the second commandment had not touched him deeply. He did not and could not love his neighbor or himself. He had not gone deep enough, or sympathetically enough into the nature and furies of the human hearts to really give work that would attest to the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." His intellectual surroundings were subject to influences that made this impossible.

Should we take this analogy that last flame of Calvinism, sometimes spoken

of as the Berkshire Divinity, showed me⁽³⁾
analyse it or the chemist analyses
the flower that grew from the whelk
in his crucible, we would find that it
gives evidence of three great elements.
The first element, the foundation and co-
minating substance of the whole system
the doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of
God. This doctrine seems to be an indica-
tion of the triumph of a more sensible opinion
of the earlier superstitions of New England
which formulated a ~~too~~ quite clearly
defined doctina, as illustrated in the
dramatic struggles between God and the
Devil.

This doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of
God, is strangely suggestive of if not
prophetic of the results which modern
science has been dealing out to us for
the last few years. The absolute sovereignty

of natural law, its moral mission, and ⁴ unquestionable activity. beefeoks of all over ruling power as sovereign and as absolute, as was Edwards or Hopkins or Edwards' channel of. Upon this point of the absolute sovereignty of God, the Berkshire Divinites were not so far wrong if our most modern conception ~~for any value.~~

The second great truth of Calvinism, man's dependence upon God, ^{this} is quite in keeping with with the most advanced scientific and philosophical notions. When the scientist tells us that there is not one atom of matter in all the universe that is outside the reign of law, when the moralist tells us that every act of a human being must conform in one way or another to the eternal laws of conduct, we are listening to a doctrine of man's dependence upon God set forth in no less exacting terms than the same idea has been treated at the hands

of Edwards.

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So far we can agree as to the essential idea of Colvinism, although we must take exception to the forms in which this idea was expressed, - forms which were colored and distorted by the third element which is found in Colvinism. This third element is the one which makes the whole system abominable, revolting, and which ~~is the same~~ was no small factor in causing the onward movement to leave Colvinism behind. The votins of total depravity, and the statement through Christ, and all the ideas connected therewith are based upon a profound pessimism. If you stop to think of it the entire system of ideas centering about the exaltation of Christ and the doctrine of election, is simply

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another way of expressing the feelings of
the man who thinks that everything is
in a bad way, and all things are on the
high road to ruin. The true feminist
always reserves, from the dire calamity
which is about to overtake the multitude,
a way of escape for himself and a
chosen few. So also did the colonists,
the few elected to be saved, would by the
~~for~~ grace of God through Christ enter into
eternal peace, and gloot over their happy
fate. This is a true thoroughgoing feminism,
the last and most complete expression of
a feminism that has been lurking
in the system called Christianity since
very early days. Perhaps it came from
the East, and was absorbed into the
christian christianity, as it was under-
going its transformation from its

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earliest days of spiritual power into its
presently unspiritual system.

The old system is fading away. Holmes' "wonderful the How Story" is a faint description of Colvinism. It was built in such a logical way, that it must collapse. There was no opportunity for repairs. Now it has become hardly more than a faint recollection of a bad dream. Even the worst Colvinists of this generation have lost the courage and daring to proclaim the doctrines of this wonderfully logical system. Yet much of the old phraseology and many of the terms are still used, but they are so twisted, wordfied, and re-fashioned that one feels that those who use them have lost the slightest comprehension of the strength and suggestiveness of the old worn system. They are destroy-

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the historic charm which might center about the remains of "the wonderful one hour story" by trying to work them up into timber for a carriage of the wooden world. In using such words as the statement, to use a figure of speech the world of Jews, they are putting new wine into old bottles which still retain their old labels. Once these bottles contained a ~~strong~~^{fine} sparkling wine discolored, to be sure, by a brackish fermentation, but ~~not~~ still nitol. But the wine has been lost and the ~~old~~ bottles have been filled by a flat, colorless, insipid water of sentimentalism. If we must have the old bottles and old labels, pray! let us have the old wine also. It was a powerful stimulant to the elect who could drink it.

The Sovereignty of God, and Man's dependence upon God. Is it possible that the leaders of the Perkins Divinity absorbed

those truths from the very spirit of these mountains? Overcome by the transcendental glory, by the overadoring power of God as revealed by the rugged ever changing scenery in the midst of which he liveth, did he not look upon himself, as the most insignificant, the most unworthy of beings what at best could but faintly utter "How terribly wonderful?" Can you stand and drink in the beauty and grandeur of the ever changing glory of the hills about us without feeling something of the utter insignificance of man?

We stand on some well chosen spot, and look about us, we take in at one full sweep the grand favorableness of nature about us, its greatness, its tremendous power that can lift great mountains, its infinite fatigues that can consume thousands

of years, is slowly wearing the mountain¹⁰
down to hills, and by the stern power of
rain and frost. - its unlimited variety, now
the warm baking day, now the terrible
wind and rain, now the blustering
winter storm, - all these speak of a force
so great and transcendent, that we almost
instinctively shrink back, expecting to see
the great spirit descend upon us from
some distant mountain peak, and speak
with a ~~far~~ voice as terrible as we ever
heard. What are you that ye think that
I am mindful of you? But the god
with his terrible majesty does not come,
and soon we are lost in the traine
of meditation, that comes over one as
he stands before the shrine of nature.
The mind and doors of the soul open,
the spirit flows in, the soul is filled

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and feebly from the clefts of our being
we utter the simple words. "How wonderful
it is?" As into the divine silence of our
being comes the God who speaks within
saying to us. "I have I made all this beauty
and wonder: world in which you live, but you,
you! I made with the power to understand
see, to understand, to speak, and with the
simple words of wonder and beauty to express
thoughts and truths that are eternal. So you
I have given the power to think over again
my thoughts after me."

Here we must part company with the
Calvinist, with him we can see the truth
of the sovereignty of God; with him we can see
the truth of man's dependence upon God, but
he has built his system in such a logical
way, that he had failed to look into the
human soul, he had failed to recognize
the divine power working its way to light

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in the midst of a struggling hopeful humanity. The real meaning of the words of Jesus of Nazareth, "I and my Father are one" had not touched his logical soul, and given his dark and world-minded the light of true spirituality. We fast conformed with him here because we dare to say as Jesus did "I and my Father are one". This is the touch. this is the gleam of truth that that destroys forever the gloomy pessimism of the dying system.

Wore this truth, that you and I dare to say "I and my Father are one" sets the high obligation of obedience to the will of God. Not an obedience born of fear, or a sense of meekness in the presence of a power so great, but an obedience born of the profound respect of our own divine nature, and strengthened and made nible by the real presence of God in the human soul.

Obedience to the Will of God! Do we mean by [13] that the conformity to those laws which every where rule with an unerring ^{according to} the things of nature. Those laws, which the earth is made and in accordance with which the seasons come and go; animals live and die. It will be a mere mass of wrecks to speak of such obedience. Whether we will or no we are a part of nature, and as such we must conform to her laws. With the dust at our feet we share in the obedience to that law which binds into a system the universe. With the animals who minister to our needs we share with the law of ~~the~~ generations life, and death. Not by one iota can we escape these eternal, ever active laws by which it covers with earth, stones, animals of every form we become a part and parcel of the things about us. But here do we find that Obedience to the

will of God, which is the very heart of¹⁴
the highest and best of the religious life.
Still further that highest obedience is not
identical with, or to be confused with that
obedience which we pay to the social
and moral laws^o which govern our daily
conduct is to a large extent governed.
These laws also have their authority, and
demand our obedience, and we disobey
at the peril of our social and moral well-
being. It consists not in the careful and
fainstaking obedience which we pay to the
dictates of another from a book, or institution,
but ^opresumes to be a mediator between the
human soul and God. All these forms of
obedience from the obedience to the natural
laws which we cannot escape to the obedience
to the highest moral laws, which we can
escape fails of reaching that highest and

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and most complete obediency to the divine will,
that obediency which is the source of the
peace that foweth understanding. What that
obediency is can be easily seen by one who
sleeps, but to express it in terms of words, so
that another may see is difficult. It consists
in the first place of that self abnegation,
or rather that self assertion of the spiritual
powers which lifts one above all considerations
of the day and the hour in which one lives.
One seems to free himself from his body
to become a free agent of the spiritual
world. It is something like the feeling
which comes over one by the sea shore, to
sit for hours at some spot and watch the
ceaseless rise and fall of the waves, to be
 lulled into a half slumber by the
 murmur of the breaking waves as they
 chase each other up and down the far
 beach, until finally it ~~seems as if one~~

the shore line in the distance becomes dim,
and we seem to become a part of the great
ceasless restless ocean. The world about us
is forgotten, that activity and alertness so charac-
teristic is passed, and our soul has gone on
a journey to the infinite. This is the
feeling that comes over us occasionally as
we open the windows of our soul in the
presence of the great divine world.

From this strange vacant like feeling
as if all the common ordinary forms of
our being had left us, we are awokened
by the growing consciousness of the presence
within us of a power, greater than our
own. It seems to fill every swolliest
secluded nook of our being first as the
incoming tide fills the most remote
creek of the bay. Two thoughts, high and
noble conjectures of life appear to us.

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We are in the real presence of God, and see
our own true wretched self as clearly and as
perfectly, as an object in one glass. It is as if
we took a powerful telescope, and by its
means brought the distant mountain to our
feet that we may examine it.

At such moments it seems as if we are
standing by the side of the way watching the
great army of subtle sinners marching fearlessly
to the life of peace that goeth all understandingly.
We are lead by an almost irresistible impulse
to leap into the thong, to be born along by the
tide of divine beings, resounding without
a thought of looking backward, to that exult
the corps, which we carried so very out
their dissolute fathers, and discontent, in the
true free spiritual obedience to the will of God
the God whose will it is that each human being
shall feel as Jesus did, that "the soul and
the Father are one." Could we but give
ourselves up to the voice that commands

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to the light that speaks within us⁶⁸
in those moments when the windows
of our soul have been opened and the soul
has been filled by the real presence then
would soul rise in its might and free
itself from the entwining claims of things
that rust and rot corrupt. With that
form in our daily life would become transformed,
and to the ordinary duties of life we would
give a joyous obedience, for though there
is the real life lived.