

"As in Heaven, so on Earth"

by T. Austin-Sparks

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" (Matt. 6:10).

You see the setting - *"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father — who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth".*

The verse itself, with its setting, brings three very simple things into view.

A Heavenly Order

The first is that there is a standard of things in heaven. "As in heaven". There is a mind about things in heaven, in heaven there is a way of doing things. It was not without knowledge, and firsthand knowledge, that the Lord Jesus used these words "as in heaven". He knew what things are like in heaven, how things are done in heaven, how those in heaven think about things, what their standard of things is. There is a heavenly order, a heavenly standard, a heavenly mind, a heavenly way.

Prayer for its Expression on Earth

The second thing is that He made it a matter for prayer that things in heaven should have an expression on the earth, that as things are they might be expressed here on earth. *"Pray ye ... Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth"*. He said that was something to pray about. This is not just a formal prayer used repeatedly. He was giving in fragments great divine principles, whole ranges of divine meaning. He did not say, Pray this prayer. "After this manner", in accordance with these great principles, pray, and among them, pray that as things are in heaven so they may be expressed on the earth.

A Family Matter

The third thing is that this is a family matter. It is a very discriminating matter. *"Our Father, who art in heaven"*. "Our Father" — and that was said strictly to those of that intimate circle who asked Him to instruct them in the matter of prayer, who were enquiring, whose hearts were seeking to know the secret of fellowship with God, communion with God, how to come into touch with God. "Our Father". He is not the Father of all. The same Lord Jesus taught most definitely that He is only the Father of those who are born from above. *"Ye must be born anew"* (John 3:7), He said. Literally the words were: Ye must be born from above. On another occasion He said, *"... that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven"* (Matt. 5:45), and that was made absolutely conditional. The "sons of your Father who is in heaven" demands a new relationship by new birth. You need not, most of you, that I say that, but it brings in this family factor and element very strongly. "Our Father". It is corporate, but it is corporate within a compass. *"Give us ... forgive us our ..."*. This is the family praying, this is a heavenly family praying, a heavenly family of those born anew.

Those are the three things that come clearly out of this verse — a heavenly order, prayer for its expression and reproduction here, and that within — within the compass of born-again children of God, those begotten of God, born of His Spirit, who know definitely the crisis and the revolution of new birth.

The Heavenly Order altogether different from the Earthly order

The application of this is far-reaching, and much beyond our time and ability to compass now, but this does mean that the heavenly order is another world altogether different

from this. Yes, heavenly order, heavenly-mindedness, heavenly ways, heavenly standards, are so utterly different from those here that men know nothing about them and do not understand. It is far greater even than going into what we call foreign lands and taking up that land as the land of our adoption. That means enough changes of mentality and conduct and standards. We know that. When I was recently in India, and there two years ago, I found plenty of things where I had to watch my p's and q's. I knew that I could give great offence by just passing something to someone else with the left hand because it is an insult to a Hindu to pass on something with the left hand, or to do anything with the left hand where they are concerned. And so many of you here know from other countries where you have lived how far-reaching is that law of a changed mentality, changed habits, changed customs, changed ways. An entirely different order of things which naturally you do not understand and into which you have to grow, to learn, and very often learn by how you suffer, through the mistakes you make. You find yourself not able to get their point of view. Until you do, everything is in a state of suspense, it does not flow easily. But it is very much more like that in this matter of a heavenly order. We might learn from books as to the earthly nations and their customs, we might get it by advice from other people, but you cannot do that where the heavenly order is concerned. You do not even come into the heavenly order by reading the Bible, certainly not by listening to sermons. You can only come into it in one way.

I want to emphasise the utterly different conception of things which obtains in heaven. Their standards are so altogether different from ours, ways of looking at things, and yet the Lord Jesus goes as far as to say that that mind should come down here, that mentality should be expressed here, those standards should be established here. That is the matter He says we should pray about and the Lord has provided a way in which that could be done. We do not often see it now, I do not know whether it obtains now, but I remember years ago in my younger days a thing which was not an unfamiliar sight on the streets of London. You would see a coal merchant on the streets selling coal from house to house with his sacks of coal, and then suddenly as from nowhere, round the corner, there drew up a little van all covered in. It came alongside of the coal merchant, the driver got out and went round to the back, threw open the little van, and there was a pair of scales, and the weights were government weights. They tallied exactly with the standard in the *Government department of Weights and Measures*. The merchant was ordered to put his bag of coal on the scale, and woe betide him if he had weights of his own, if he had set up his own idea. People do that usually for personal ends and gains and to get advantage over unknowing people who have not a government standard weight to go by. Woe betide the merchant if he did not conform in his weights and measures to government standard. That little van was, to all intents and purposes, the government house, and it was a heavy fine or imprisonment would be the punishment to infringe the standard.

The Lord Jesus the Heavenly Standard

The Lord has come down here. He is the heavenly standard, He is the governing weight and measure of God's thought. You can only know the Lord Jesus by revelation of the Holy Spirit. He is not someone to be imitated from without. He is to be known only as the Spirit of God shows us. He was here, but they did not understand why He did this and that and refused to do this and that. An accepted thing among religious people, and yet He would not have it, He would not go when they wanted Him to go, and they did not understand. He was actuated by another mind altogether, not the common religious mind of this earth, but the heavenly mind. Later when people did come to understand Him by revelation of the Holy Spirit, you have a big transformation. They were people who were not understood by this world, and yet what a heavenly kind of thing it was, how actuated by heavenly thoughts and conceptions, heavenly weights and measures, heavenly standards.

The Prayer answered, by the Revelation of Christ in our Hearts

He has come, and the Holy Spirit has now come to reveal the Lord Jesus in order that the answer to the prayer, "as in heaven, so on earth" may be made possible, that is, made possible by the Holy Spirit revealing Christ to our hearts in that way. When we essay to speak after this manner, the Spirit of Christ in us says, No, that will not do, you must not speak like that. We find our speech is changed by the love of Christ in our hearts. When we would do this or that, go here or there, the Spirit of Christ in us says, Oh no, not that way, not that thing, this way. We learn inwardly when the Spirit of Christ comes in through new birth, and we begin to understand what a heavenly order is, what a different mentality there is in heaven.

How the Will of God is Done in Heaven

"*Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth*". If only we knew how the will of God was done in heaven with a single eye, never with any personal interest, how it will affect the ones who are going to do it, what advantage it will bring to them or what they might have to give up to do the will of God, no such considerations at all, but a single eye. It is God's pleasure, God's glory, that governs in heaven. "So on earth" — with a single eye to the glory of God, the pleasure and satisfaction of God alone. "*Thy will be done, as in heaven*". We cannot but believe that it is done very heartily there, not grudgingly, no complaints or murmurings or reservations, but "... *heartily, as unto the Lord*" (Col. 3:23) as we have in our New Testament. That is how it is done in heaven. And it is done unreservedly, wholly, utterly, and we can see in the Lord Jesus how true it was. Heavenly order, no personal interests, always repudiating suggestions of how it would affect Him, to safeguard His own interests, to preserve His own person, to escape suffering and death. Never would He allow such a suggestion to influence Him. The glory of God, the satisfaction of God was the only consideration. Heartily — "*I delight to do thy will*" (Psa. 40:8) — heartily unto the Lord, ungrudgingly and perfectly. He became "*obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross*" (Phil. 2:8). How utter was His obedience to His Father's will. That is how it is done in heaven. Let us ask the Lord that so it may be done in us, as members of the family, and in us as that family together.