

## God's Will on Earth ...

By

Curtis Dickinson

“Thy kingdom come. They will be done, as in heaven, so on earth” (Matthew 6:10).

In this portion of the prayer which the Lord taught us, there is both a statement of fact as well as a petition. It is a solemn fact that God's will shall be done.

Before the creation the Creator had a plan. “Let us make man in our own image” indicated that God knew what He was going to do before man was created. Furthermore, the ultimate order of the universe, including man's attainment of immortality like that of Christ, through a resurrection; a new creation wherein man is provided with all his needs; and life in perfect harmony with the Creator, — all of this was in the mind of God before He laid the foundations of the world. It is called in scripture the “eternal purpose”, revealing that God's purpose did not originate after man entered the scene, that His plans do not change according to human events, but that His purpose is fixed, and that it always was and always will be the same. It includes not only the ultimate fulfillment of man, immortal and glorious, in fellowship with God, but also the means by which this is attained, for Christ's atoning death “was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world” (I Pet. 1:20, and according to God's foreknowledge His people were predestined to attain life through Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:4, Rom. 8:29–30). This refutes the false millennial doctrines that Jesus came to the world to set up a Jewish Kingdom, but because of their misunderstanding He could not do so and thus changed His mind, postponing such a government until His second coming. Scripture expressly states that Christ came the first time according to God's purpose to give His life a ransom for man, that He was sent for the purpose of dying in man's place to meet the penalty for man's sin (Isa. 53), and that this work was accomplished to please God, to fulfill and reveal His purpose.

Therefore Christ's sojourn on earth, His suffering and death, was the work of God and the doing of His will. Satan and all the host of his servants failed to thwart God's will. Christ came at the very worst time. He resisted the greatest temptation of Satan man ever faced. He then suffered the terrible shame of being treated as a traitor (defying the zealous patriots) and as a coward (He would not fight back) and finally suffered the horror of death by crucifixion. He then ascended to heaven and began the reign over His saints on earth. God's will was done.

Christ's accomplishment of God's will in taking man's death penalty has never ceased to be a battle-cry and song of praise for Christians. At judgment the redeemed will see the horrible end of sinners as they are denied the blessing of immortality and subjected to the destruction of the fire that will burn up not only the sinner but all the earth (Jude 7, II Pet. 3:7). One might expect them to raise a cry for leniency, for the Father to show His love and refuse to enforce His law of final punishment. But God will have an in His own image, or not at all, and to be in the image of God means that we must want what God wants. He is absolutely just. He has laid down laws for the whole race — not just for Christians, but for all men.

Men who refuse the will of God make it conspicuous that they are resisting His plan and that they do not want the life He offers. God is good. He is totally good (James 1:17). His laws are perfect (Psa. 19:7). To reject them is gross wickedness, and the law-breaker knows it. Therefore the Christian, having been taught of God through His word, will rejoice in every act of the Father because he will see in it the execution of the “good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2). Thus his song of thanksgiving in the day of judgment (Rev. 11) because God at last wipes out all evil (men) and every trace of sin and sorrow. Therefore, when we pray, “Thy will be done” we may be sure that it shall be.

But the main thrust of the prayer is a petition. It is an “asking prayer,” begging God to do His will here on earth in the one doing the praying.

Note two things. First, there are two places considered, heaven and earth. The Christian lives upon the earth, but is a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven (Phil. 3:20). This Kingdom has already come, Christ having already ascended to David’s throne. Each Christian is translated into this kingdom upon his redemption or conversion (Col. 1:12–13). But the kingdom is continually coming in that new members are being added, it is ever spreading wider in the world, and will ultimately come in full eternal glory after the judgment. The Christian is a part of this kingdom, even though he lives upon the earth in “the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” (Phil. 2:15). Still, he prays to Heaven that God’s will may be done through him while here on earth. Here is the rub. The Christian must walk the earth and pay taxes to an earthly kingdom (whether it be the U.S.A., or the U.S.S.R.), for Christ has commanded it. There is no way to escape the earthly kingdom, and even if one could he is bound by the law of Christ to live in this world in such a way as to be a light and a witness to the heathen. Yet he is not to seek the ways of the earthly kingdom, but the ways of God. He is to seek God’s will on earth, “denying ungodliness and worldly lust” and to “live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world” (Titus 2:12). That is, he is not to wait until the *next world* to begin doing God’s will. This is the point of the prayer, that we ask God to do His will here on earth, and that it is to be done in us.

This is dangerous praying. Jesus prayed, “Not my will but Thine be done,” and was slain within hours. Paul was seeking to do God’s will when he was confronted by Christ, who said, “I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name’s sake” (Acts 9:16). The Apostles declared that they “must obey God and not man.” This attitude marked the confession of the early Christians who marched to death in the Roman circus arenas rather than give their allegiance to a corrupt king who played God. The Christian seeks to live at peace with all men, but when conflicts arise between Heavenly authority and earthly decree, he prays, “Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.”

Of course this earth is a far-cry from heaven. We face all kinds of opposition, from the law-breaking criminal, to the deceitful false teachers, to the edicts of human government in opposition to God’s commands. Christ teaches us to wage spiritual war on earth, to fight the good fight of the faith. Our warfare is “against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-ruler” (Eph. 6:12). A government that is loaded with anti-Christ appointees who have the power to make laws merely by directives from unknown agency administrators is indeed a great power. Hence the need of prayer that we may do God’s will on earth.

The other thrust of this petition is that God's will may be done as it is in heaven. That is, in the same manner as the heavenly hosts do it, without question and without argument.

A great amount of prayer is merely seeking God's assistance as one pursues his own earthly ambitions. But Christ did not come merely to help men over the rough spots on the way to hell. He came to turn them around and order their lives after His will. The question for every Christian is whether or not he can sincerely pray that God's will be done in his own life. We must remember that Jesus said, "Not everyone that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

And how do we know God's will? By knowing the written word. It is inspired of God and able to instruct us in righteousness and furnish the godly for every good work (II Tim. 3:16). Christ said that we do His will when we keep His commandments. That is so obvious that it is sheer stupidity to suggest that we can seek His will and ignore His commandments. It follows that if we are going to pray sincerely "Thy will be done", we are going to study (equally sincerely) to learn what His will is. The gross ignorance of the Bible is a scandal to the church. How is it that people who have been in the church for 35 years can not sit down and tell someone about the doctrine of sanctification or redemption or immortality or the great types of the Old Testament? It is true that study takes time. One may have to give up the lodge, the club or the extra hours of work that contributes to more luxurious living. But, this is what it is all about — doing God's will as it is in Heaven and not trying to make this earth and its fleeting riches our goal.

The ministry and the church as a body must assume some responsibility here. But if you are in a church that never teaches the great truths of heavenly things, then perhaps it is God's will for you to find one that does. Is it God's will to support those organizations which bluntly oppose the commands of God? Is it His will that a Christian surrender his life to the teachings of men who simply ignore the commands of Christ? Is it possible to sincerely desire God's will and at the same time compromise with any form of earthly authority that is in opposition to His will? Do we want God's will if it means ridicule and slander by friends? Do we want God's will even if it cost money? Job? Prestige? Comforts? Do we want God's will done even if we have to go to jail?

As the nation becomes more consolidated under the financial octopus of world bankers who deny Christ, and as the secularists (atheists) more openly exercise control in public schools an government, the Christian will be faced more and more with the question: God's will, or man's? Let us learn now to discern the difference between God's eternal purpose which He certainly will accomplish, and the temporal satanic purpose of men. We need to learn His will, and train ourselves to exercise judgment in the choices that are bound to face us in the future. Let us pray:

"Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth."

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