

"Thy Kingdom Come."

Some say this petition was answered on the day of Pentecost, when the church of Christ was founded. Others tell us that the kingdom keeps coming as obedience to Christ increases, and still others are looking for the kingdom to come in connection with the return of our Lord.

There is doubtless some good cause for this variety of opinion, and we apprehend that the facts or testimony used in favor of them may be more harmonious than many suppose. That the church of Christ is called the Kingdom of Heaven and of God in the New Testament is clearly a fact. When Christ says: "On this Rock I will build my church...and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 16:18,19. He evidently uses the terms church and kingdom interchangeably. In the parables of Christ in referring to the work of the development of the church he calls it the Kingdom. They who heartily submit to the authority of Christ are said to have been "translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." Col. 1:13. And yet the "rich in faith" are only "heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him." Jas. 2:5. And they that "add to their faith" all the graces of the Spirit shall have an abundant entrance into it. 2 Peter 1:11.

These are all harmonized to our satisfaction by the principle that what is to be and is being developed is spoken of as already existing. God on account of the certainty of his promise "calleteth those things that be not as though they were." Rom. 4:17. From the many evidences we draw the conclusion that the church now is this Kingdom in embryo, and the future kingdom is the church perfected – glorified. Christ is its Head, and glorified, is a sample of what the whole Body is to be in due time.

Christ in another figure is the Foundation – the "Spiritual Rock" – laid in Zion, when he entered upon the higher, the spiritual life at his resurrection. From him to men flows the power by which they can rise from this earthly to a heavenly life. Each Christian is a stone in the heavenly temple, and since Pentecost is the period of fitting the stones for their proper place in the building, God's kingdom, the position occupied will be just what we are fitted for.

Now is the time for quarry work. During this period of getting the stones ready, the building does not actually exist, but is the grand ideal of the architect; but when all the stones are prepared, his ideal will be realized and manifested.

The kingdom exists now in mystery, but after the glorification of the Church, there will be a "manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19) – "an appearing with Christ [R32 : page 7] in glory" (Col. 3:4) – as foreshadowed by the transfiguration. Till then it can never be said, The kingdom of God has come. It may be appropriate to speak of it as coming while it is being developed, because the causes are at work which will bring it about.

When the Foundation was laid it had reference to the outcome, and all true Christian work has reference to the same thing, and may draw its inspiration from the certainty of success. For this cause, doubtless, Christ taught his disciples thus to pray. The return of Christ and the coming of the kingdom are related to each other as elements of the Christian's hope, and are used invariably in the bible as motives to holiness and perseverance. "Seeing ye look for such things be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless." 2 Pet. 3:14. "What manner of persons ought ye to be in holy conversation and Godliness." Ver. 11.

"He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." 1 John 3:3.

A proper view of God's plan of working by ages can not militate against faithful use of present opportunities, but it will serve to balance our efforts and expectations, and afford us great comfort in the assurance [R33 : page 7] that Father is at the helm, that he loves mankind better than we do, and that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose."

We would carefully distinguish between "God's kingdom," and the "kingdoms of this world." The former is to be a ruling power, the latter are to be made subject to it. Satan's kingdom rules the world now; Christ's kingdom will soon take its place. Under present rule the nations are cursed, under the coming kingdom the nations are to be blessed. And "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord." Psa. 22. This shows the proper relation of the two petitions: "Thy kingdom come" and "Thy will be done in Earth." The destiny of the world depends on Christ's kingdom.

During the period of the development of the church, Christ exercises authority over it, and to recognize his Lordship and obey him are conditions of eternal life, and of a place in his kingdom, but when the kingdom is "set up" and manifested, he will exercise power over the nations by his church. Now is the suffering, then the glory. "If we suffer we shall also reign with him." Not only for our own sake, but for the sake of all, shall we not heartily unite in the prayer:

"Thy kingdom come?"

J. H. P.
