



## “THY KINGDOM COME.”

BY THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.

**I**N the threshold of this sentence let us recognise three secrets of acceptable prayer. The first is that we should address it to a Father, who is both a common Father and a Heavenly Father; the second is that if we observe its true order and proportion, we shall desire God's glory before even naming wants or troubles of our own; the third is that the hallowing of the Divine Name, the first object His children are to have at heart, will be found to consist in the coming of His kingdom, and the doing of His will. Moreover, the far-reachingness of it is beyond words. For across all time, with its changes and revolutions, and failures and triumphs, from the moment when it was first whispered into the hearts of the Disciples to the supreme hour when the judgment shall be over, and death swallowed up in victory, and the kingdom of the Mediator surrendered to the Eternal Father, this prayer is to be humbly, and trustfully, and sincerely, and even passionately uttered. It is to the Father that the prayer is offered about the Father's kingdom. The one purpose and end of the Incarnation of the Son is, that “God may be all in all.”

Let us see what the prayer includes, and implies, and requires.

It includes, and here the order is of importance before everything, a life, an institution, an authority, an empire.

It is an essential feature of this kingdom that it works from within to without, not from without to within. First and foremost it means righteousness, and its throne and seat are in the heart, where the Holy Spirit dwells and reigns. This is what our Lord meant when He said, “The kingdom of God cometh not by observation; the kingdom of God is within you”; and the extension of the same thought by St. Paul runs, “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Goodness is what God aims at in His children; and goodness

is kingship, and they who rule themselves are also ruled by God. It is also an institution, visible, organised, in a sense territorial, with laws, and rites, and traditions, and documents, which regulate its administration, arrange its worship, compile its history, and explain its existence. Bishops, priests, and deacons have ordered its affairs from the earliest times. The Sacrament of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord are its two ordained channels of grace, the first initiating into it, the second edifying within it. The Bible is its Divine Library. Every baptised member of it is a king and priest to God.

It is also an authority. The Church, which is God's visible kingdom on earth, teaches, commands, binds, and looses in her Lord's august Name. Our Lord Himself commanded, “the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.” “The Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, or authority in controversies of faith,” and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound or place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another.

Once more, the kingdom is an empire, the most powerful, irresistible, self-propagating, indestructible empire in the world. It is an empire, not through secular protections, or material resources, or the smile of princes, or the suffrage of the millions, but because it is a fellowship of the sons of God, bound by the closest of ties, inspired by the noblest of motives, cheered by the loftiest of hopes, and fortified by the strongest of forces—living in a spiritual communion with the Incarnate Son of God, at once His organ and witness, His spouse and His body. What does it imply? Three things. First, the gift of grace; or that God will help it to come; for without Him it cannot come. Second, the co-operation of man. Prayer implies effort, as well as encourages it. The