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## THE EMBRYO KINGDOM OF GOD, AND ITS PRESENT PRIVILEGES.

**"For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but  
righteousness, and peace, and joy in a holy spirit."  
– Rom. 14:17. –**

THOSE who have studied the subject of the Kingdom of God, as presented in the Scriptures, and treated in MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. I., have not only noticed its prominence in the Word of God, and that it constitutes the sum and substance of the gospel theme (Matt. 4:23; Matt. 10:7; Luke 9:60), but they have also marked the difference between the Kingdom established in glory and power, and the Kingdom in its incipient or formative stage – the Kingdom in its humiliation, as it at present exists.

To the Kingdom *established* (at the second presence of Christ) belong all those precious promises of its glory. Its dominion shall be "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth;" its royal members shall shine forth as the sun in glory and majesty and power; its authority will go forth in righteousness; and its blessing of peace and joy and justice will be realized by all the families of the earth. But to this Kingdom *in its humiliation* belong those prophecies which tell how the Kingdom of heaven must suffer violence, how the violent should take it by force, and how its members would be despised and rejected of men and counted as the filth and offscouring of the world, and be hated of all men.

It is easy to see that the one is yet future, while the other is present. And it is the privilege of the saints who now constitute the kingdom in its humiliation, to avail themselves of its present privileges, and to look forward in joyful anticipation to its future

establishment and reign. In its future glory we see both its [R1580 : page 278] visible, earthly phase, in which Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets shall sit down, and from which all the unworthy of the [R1580 : page 279] Jewish age shall be excluded (Luke 13:28; Matt. 8:11,12), and also a higher spiritual phase, whose royalty will be Christ and the apostles and all the faithful overcomers of the Gospel age.

But while we dwell with special delight upon the glory and blessing of the established Kingdom of the near future, it is our present purpose to notice what are the privileges of being in the Kingdom now. In the Apostle's days, some Christians got the idea that its chief privilege consisted in their freedom from the ceremonies of the Jewish law, which formerly restricted them in eating and drinking and enjoined the keeping of sabbaths and holy days; and now they rejoiced that they were no longer under the Law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14): they could eat and drink what they pleased, so far as the Law was concerned, and might esteem every day alike, or set apart any day they might choose to be holy to the Lord. (Rom. 14:1-16.) And some, specially prizing this liberty, used it thoughtlessly to the injury of weaker brethren, who had not yet learned of this freedom from the yoke of the Law.

The Apostle remonstrates with these, and urges them to more carefulness, lest their good be evil spoken of. Then he declares that the Kingdom blessings and privileges do not consist in a mere release from these requirements of the Law, and consequently a little more freedom in eating and drinking, etc., but, rather, that its privileges consist in "*righteousness* [the imputed righteousness of Christ, making us acceptable to God as his sons], and *peace* [there being now "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"], and *joy in a holy spirit* [in the joy that comes from the possession of the spirit or mind of Christ]." These blessings – of justification through faith in Christ, of peace

with God, and of joy in the possession of a holy mind – are blessings which the world cannot give or take away.

These present blessings are necessary to fit us for the inheritance of the Kingdom of God in glory and power. Without the blessing of justification, we would still be like the world, under condemnation, disowned of God and disinherited; nor could we be filled with the joys of righteousness or hope. But, having these, we are privileged to make our calling and election sure to the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for the called according to the divine purpose to be heirs of the established Kingdom.

Being justified and fully consecrated to the Lord, how blessed is the further privilege of being filled with his holy spirit – a spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, faith, love and joy. With such a spirit, the cares of this life set lightly in comparison with those not so supported, and the joys of hope and of the realized fellowship of the Lord, gladden the heart, even under the tribulation which the Kingdom of heaven now suffers because of the world's opposition to it.

These precious privileges of the Kingdom, even in this time of its humiliation, are such as the world cannot appreciate. The world might appreciate the freedom from the law, which permits the eating of any thing which is wholesome and good, and which requires no holy days, etc.; but these, to the Christian who rightly views his privileges in Christ, are minor considerations in comparison with those which the Apostle enumerates.

To-day, as well as well as in the days of the Apostle, it is occasionally manifest that some do not catch the real spirit of their liberty in Christ, and their use of it becomes an occasion of stumbling to others. If we have learned to esteem every day alike – holy unto the Lord, a sabbath or rest of faith (Rom. 14:5; Heb. 4:10) – shall we offend the conscience of other Christians, who

regard the first day as holier than the rest, by devoting it to the common pursuits of life and causing many to stumble? No: we rather delight to have the special opportunities of such a day before us; and, if other men had not ordained such a day, we would feel like doing it ourselves, if possible, that we might have the privileges of spiritual communion with others of like precious faith.

Our liberty in Christ is not to be made a mere occasion of ministering to the flesh in any way; but it should rather be accepted as an opportunity **[R1580 : page 280]** to manifest the loyalty of sons, which so enters into the spirit of the righteousness of the law as to require no special commands or prohibitions. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

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