**“The Nature of Christ’s Kingdom” The Bible Echo 12, 1.**

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“For the kingdom of GOD is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Over that kingdom CHRIST has been set as King, for GOD has said, “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” Psalm 2:6. Now read further the words of the Father to the Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things: “Thy throne, O GOD, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore GOD, even Thy GOD, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” Hebrews 1:8, 9. {BEST January 4, 1897, par. 1}

A sceptre is the symbol of power. CHRIST’S sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness; therefore the power of His kingdom is righteousness. He rules by righteousness. His life on earth was a perfect manifestation of righteousness, so that He rules His kingdom by the power of His life. All those who own His life are subjects of His kingdom. No other thing but the life of CHRIST is the badge of citizenship in the kingdom of CHRIST. {BEST January 4, 1897, par. 2}

But with what was CHRIST anointed King? The text last read says that it was with “the oil of gladness.” Then gladness, or joy, is a necessary part of the kingdom of CHRIST. It is a kingdom of joy, as well as of righteousness. Therefore it is that every subject of that kingdom must be filled with joy. “A gloomy Christian” is as much a contradiction of terms as “a cold sun.” The sun is for the purpose of shedding the warmth of which it is composed; so the Christian is for the purpose of diffusing the peace and joy which is a part of his nature. The Christian is not joyful simply because he thinks that he ought to be, but because he has been translated into the kingdom of joy. {BEST January 4, 1897, par. 3}

“He that in these things serveth CHRIST is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.” He who in what things serves CHRIST? Why, he who serves CHRIST in righteousness, and peace, and joy. Or, as some translations have it, “He that thus serves Christ.” GOD accepts such service, and men approve. Not only do Christians approve such service, but unbelievers are constrained to approve. The enemies of Daniel were forced to bear witness to the uprightness of his life, when they said that they could find nothing against him except in the law of his GOD. But that very statement was an approval of the law of his GOD, obedience to which made him the faithful man that he was. {BEST January 4, 1897, par. 4}

Peace is a characteristic of the kingdom. Therefore those who are in the kingdom must follow the things which make for peace. But selfishness never causes peace. On the contrary, selfishness is always the cause of war, and inevitably produces war if it is persisted in. Therefore the subject of the kingdom must always be ready to sacrifice his own desires and ideas in behalf of others. The unselfish person will give up his own ways whenever they interfere with the peace of another. {BEST January 4, 1897, par. 5}

But do not forget that the kingdom of GOD is righteousness as well as peace. Righteousness is obedience to the law of GOD; for “all unrighteousness is sin” (1 John 5:17), and “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). Therefore, although by the laws of the kingdom one must necessarily give up his own wishes in order not to interfere with the feelings of others, by those same laws he is precluded from giving up any of the commandments of GOD. Obedience to the law of GOD is that which makes for peace, for we read: “Great peace have they which love Thy law.” Psalm 119:165. “O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.” Isaiah 48:18. Therefore he who is so “charitable” as to give up any portion of the law of GOD because some people are displeased with it, is not following the things which make for peace. On the contrary, he is rebelling against the kingdom of CHRIST. {BEST January 4, 1897, par. 6}

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