

THE FAVOR OF GOD.

Let the conditions of the present Gospel Age, the besetments of Satan now permitted, the obstacles which now hinder faith, and the *sacrifices* which are now demanded of all who would now be overcomers as shown in the article – "Think it not strange" (See last issue) be CONTRASTED with the favorable opportunities of the incoming Millennium, when the obstacles to faith shall be quite removed, when all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest; when Satan's power shall be restrained, and when the requirements of God will be no longer the *sacrifice* of things right and lawful, but merely the rejection of evil, with full liberty to use and enjoy every blessing and privilege, then freely supplied to all. In view of the contrast some would exclaim: "How *favorable* a time the Millennial Age will be! How I wish that I could have lived then instead of now! Why will that age be so much more gracious or favorable than the Gospel Age, if God is no respecter of persons and loves us, as much as them?"

Well, such is a very natural mistake. The fact is, however, that the Gospel Age is the one of *special* FAVOR. The greatest and grandest *favor* that ever has or ever will be offered to any of God's creatures is held forth during this Gospel Age, and closes with its close. While the advantages and opportunities of the next age are most favorable, the prize then obtainable is proportionately less valuable, though the prize offered for obedience during the Millennial Age will be great and grand also: It will be glorious indeed to have everlasting existence, in perfection and happiness under God's approval and blessing. But the fact is, that the prize offered during the Gospel Age to the sacrificing members of the body of Christ, is *exceedingly* great, *exceedingly* grand, *infinitely* sublime. So much so, that in the estimation of all who have truly realized its value, it is priceless, and would be cheap at any cost. It is no less than to be made

of the *Divine* nature, and to share *Divine* honors and glories with our illustrious Head and forerunner. It was when contemplating the EXCEEDING *great and precious* promises, held out during the Gospel Age, and the EXCEEDING riches of God's grace [favor] in his loving-kindness toward US through Christ Jesus, that the Apostle to the Gentiles, looking at its *cost*, in trials, besetments, burdens, sacrifices and sufferings, said: I do count them but loss and dross, and shall rejoice if by *any means* [at any cost – any sacrifice] I may win CHRIST and be found in him – if I may be a member in that BODY OF CHRIST which is to be so highly exalted and honored in God's due time. Phil. 3:7-14.

So then, in this as in the ordinary affairs of life, an article which costs *far more* may be a *more favorable* bargain than one costing less, though it be a favorable bargain also. Not only the cost, but the things obtained therefore, must be considered, when we decide as to which is the more favorable of any two things.

Our conclusion that the Gospel Age is one of superior *favor* [grace] to any before or after it, is abundantly proven to be God's estimate by many Scriptures; a few of which we here quote:

"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the GRACE of God which is *given you* through Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:4). "By whom also we have access by faith into THIS GRACE wherein *we stand* and rejoice" (Rom. 5:2). God "hath saved us [from Adamic sin and its penalty through Jesus our propitiation] and *called* US with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and *grace*" (2 Tim. 1:9). "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the *grace* [favor] that should come UNTO YOU." "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but UNTO US they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you." 1 Pet. 1:10,12.

Seen in its true light then, the fact is that Jesus' death was the equivalent or "*corresponding price*" for Adam's sin and penalty, and quite sufficient to legally effect the release of every member of the race. And the Millennium of blessing and the restoration of all mankind to that human perfection and being which they had lost through Adam, would have *at once* commenced after Jesus' resurrection, but for the Gospel Age of SPECIAL FAVOR offered to believers willing to follow in Jesus' footsteps of sacrifice. They are reckoned as members of the world's Redeemer and their sacrifice [made worthy and acceptable first by his] are accepted as parts of Jesus' sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and are RECKONED as filling up that which is *behind* of the afflictions of Christ.

This opportunity for sacrifice is a *favor*, because of the great reward and high honor promised to Jesus which we may share by reason of sharing in his sacrifice.

Does some one suggest that the *favor* contained in the privilege of suffering and sacrificing with Christ may perhaps be continued, and thus all come to the same divine nature and honor? We answer, No. This would be unscriptural as well as unreasonable. Wherein would consist the special favor of the Gospel Age unless it be as we have shown, a call to and opportunity for gaining a "high calling," a "heavenly calling," not otherwise obtainable?

Then, too, if the body of Christ "*fills up*" the measure of the afflictions of the anointed, how could there be any to *fill up* in a succeeding age? And if the *sacrifice* for sins is complete, and its measure filled up by the Gospel Church, what occasion and what opportunity could there be for *sacrificing* any in the Millennial Age? Further, we know that had there not been sin in the world, and had it not had *liberty* to flourish, it would have been impossible for either Jesus or his followers to have sacrificed, since there could have been no opportunity. Hence also, to have sacrifices for sins during any coming age, would imply that evil must *then* be in control, as well as

that the sacrifices of Christ head and body were not a sufficient ransom. The fact everywhere expressed in Scripture is contrary to this; Christ shall reign and the wicked shall no longer have *liberty* to insult, buffet, malign and crucify the righteous. Satan shall be bound – restrained – have no power. Christ shall have all power, and in his day the righteous shall *flourish* instead of being sacrifices; and the wicked shall be cut off, instead of prospering in wickedness. Ah, yes! the sufferings of Christ will have ended, and the glory which was to *follow* [the *end* of his sufferings] shall have commenced. See 1 Pet. 1:11.

Yes, though now the world esteem us as it did our Head, "stricken, smitten of God and afflicted," and not *favored*, yet the time is coming when of both head and body it shall be recognized as true, that the Christ was smitten for the world's iniquities, and that the price of the world's salvation was exacted of him, when throughout coming ages God shall display, and men and angels shall recognize – "The *exceeding* riches of his grace, in his loving-kindness toward US through Christ Jesus."

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