

GOD'S GRACE AND GOD'S REWARD

**"The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared for all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious revelation of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."
– Titus 2:11-13.**

GOD'S grace or favor relates primarily to the mercy which he purposes to extend to Adam and all of his posterity through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is grace or favor because it is a thing not merited – it is not a reward. It has appeared for all men in the sense that it has been manifested to some and the information has been given that ultimately it will be extended to all, so that all may have a share in it. It bringeth salvation in the sense that the opportunities afforded by grace make possible our salvation from sin and death conditions. It has many teachings or lessons, but one of these is paramount, namely, that in God's sight sin is exceedingly sinful and must become so also in our sight. It teaches that we should forego the weaknesses, the tendencies of the flesh, and should resist them and show our preference for righteousness by our zeal in fighting against sin. All who will eventually get God's blessing and perfection on either the earthly or the heavenly plane must come to this standard of loving righteousness and hating iniquity, else the blessings of God's grace will not continue with them.

And, contrariwise, when the sinners shall have been fully lifted out of their weakness and imperfection and fully established in righteousness, grace or favor toward them will be at an end; because they will no longer have need for it. They will, however, to all eternity, assuredly acknowledge with gladness

the grace which saved them and lifted them to full salvation and accord with the Divine Law.

During this Gospel Age God's grace is manifested in a variety of ways, whereas during the Millennial Age his grace will be manifested merely through the operation of the Millennial Kingdom and its influences. Now, God's people have his grace through Christ in the arrangement provided for the justification from their sins and weaknesses on the basis of obedient faith to the extent of ability. To abide in God's grace we must turn from sin to serve the Lord. Then we were brought to a knowledge of a second step of grace – the privilege of using our faith-justification as a basis for sacrificing with Christ and becoming partakers of his Divine nature, glory and Kingdom. After we had taken the step of consecration, a third step of grace was opened to us – the begetting of the holy Spirit and the induction [R4576 : page 89] into the School of Christ to take his yoke upon us and learn of him. Grace still pursued us. After cancelling our share of Original Sin and imperfection, grace provided also for our continuance in the love of God, after we became New Creatures. The "New Creature" has need of grace and mercy because it has for its expression only the "earthen vessel," which is frail and prone to sin, weakness and error.

The New Creature cannot sin – wilfully – and it never had "Original Sin"; but it could be strangled by the old nature, if the latter were allowed to revive and regain the control. God recognizes the flesh as dead and deals only with the New Creature, which never knew sin and which never could love sin. Nevertheless the New Creature has a responsibility for its earthly tabernacle, the body, just as a man has responsibility for the conduct of his dog. If he knows the dog to be vicious he must muzzle him. If he does not encourage the dog to do mischief, he is still responsible for him and liable for his depredations. So the New Creature is responsible for his body of flesh. Because he

cannot fully control thoughts, words and actions, there are sure to be trespasses. And these must not only be fought against, but must be repented of – taken to the Throne of the Heavenly Grace for forgiveness. Here again the voice of grace is heard speaking peace through Jesus Christ the Redeemer, for the Redeemer through Divine arrangement is our Advocate. As such he is both able and willing to apply all that may be needed to make good our errors of weakness or ignorance. God's grace continues thus with us to the end of the journey, lending assistance at every step.

But there are certain things which are not of grace. While *justification*, the basis of our sacrifice, is of grace, our presentation of our bodies living sacrifices is not of grace. The *knowledge* of our privilege is by grace, but our *sacrificing* is of our own volition. It is this *spirit of sacrifice* and its manifestation in the spirit of loyalty to God and to righteousness which God purposes to reward with association with the Redeemer in his kingly glory, honor and immortality. In *this* we are copies of God's dear Son. "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." Notice well the rewards promised: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." (Rev. 3:21.) "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." (Rev. 3:4.) On the other hand, it may be truly said that all of our blessings and favors are of God's grace, because we could never have merited any of them ourselves – because the foundation of all our blessings, honors, glory and immortality rests upon the grace of God in Christ, without whom we could do nothing and would be nothing.

