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THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH TO BE PERPETUAL

IT IS our thought that the divine nature, the divine plane, has been promised only to the Anointed One, and when the Anointed One shall be complete it will be impossible to add to his members. To suppose additions would be as unreasonable in our judgment, as to think that after a man had grown up and become a king he should develop another foot. When the Body of [R4653 : page 237] Christ shall be complete – when the "Elect" number shall be full – we understand there will be no additions to it, just as there will be no deficiency in that Body when it shall be glorified. This nature of glory, honor and immortality of the Kingdom plane seems to appertain only to the Father, to the Son and to the "Bride, the Lamb's Wife." We know of nothing in the Scriptures nor in analogy that would imply that it could be shared by any others at any time; but of course what God has not clearly revealed we may not know of a certainty. We may be sure of one thing, however, and that is that Christ will always be "Head over the Church which is his Body"; that he will always be Head over all things.

Another thing we may be quite sure of is that the Church thus honored by the Father as members of The Christ will have still other glories; as the Apostle declares, "that *in the Ages to come*, God might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ" (Eph. 2:6,7), implying not only that the glory of Christ is to be perpetual, but that the glory of the Church is also to be perpetual – not confined to the Millennial Age.

DOES THE DEGREE OF SUFFERING DETERMINE THE DEGREE OF REWARD?

We agree that our Lord's statement respecting John the Baptist, "He that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he" (Luke 7:28), applies to the entire class of Ancient Worthies;

and further, that it refers not merely to the earthly status of the Gospel Church as being superior, but marks the Church as a superior class in the future.

This question might arise: In view of the statement of the Apostle James, "Take, my brethren, the Prophets, as an example of suffering affliction and of patience" (Jas. 5:10), and in view also of our Lord's words referring to the suffering of the Church, "So persecuted they the Prophets which were before you," and also of the detailed statement of these sufferings of the Ancient Worthies furnished us by the Apostle Paul (Hebrews 11), what should we say as to the degree of their sufferings in comparison with those of the Church and the reward that would justly be due them as compared with the reward of the Church?

THE GOSPEL AGE THE "ACCEPTABLE DAY" FOR SACRIFICES

We answer that if the Lord intends to reward his people in proportion to their suffering, some of us seemingly will get a very small reward. We have neither been stoned to death, nor sawn asunder, nor have we wandered in sheepskins and goatskins; nor have we been without any place to lay our head. We might say, however, that some of our sufferings may be of a different kind from theirs: It is possible to endure figurative scorching or stoning, and to have our names cast out as evil, etc. But on the whole we cannot say that, so far as *merit* is concerned in the matter of suffering, there is any advantage that the Church can claim over the Ancient Worthies even among those of our number who, in the early Church, were burned as torches by Nero. It would seem that we must make allowance for Divine "election"; that it pleased God to call *us* with this High Calling. During the Millennial Age even some may perhaps become as loyal to the principles of righteousness as any of the Ancient Worthies or any of the Church, and yet not be rewarded with either their distinction or

ours. We are favored, we believe, only in that we live at this particular time of blessing – "the acceptable day of the Lord" – in which the Lord is ready and willing to accept our sacrifices; and this acceptable day could not begin until our Lord Jesus had made his sacrifice and opened up "the new and living way," whereby we might follow in his steps.

John the Baptist had a very honorable work to perform, but that work was to be accomplished before our Lord's death and before the opening of this "acceptable day." Therefore he could not be of the Gospel Age Church and did not come under our "High Calling" – joint-heirship with our Lord in the Kingdom of Heaven.

