

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

When we speak of a sin forgiven it implies that a sin has been committed, and that the one who committed it is a sinner. And when of Jesus it is written: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," we realize somehow that the whole world are sinners and that Jesus is their Redeemer from all sin. This is Paul's thought when he wrote: "All have sinned." John 1:1-10, says: "If we say we have not sinned, we make him (God) a liar." As all are sinners and "The wages of sin is death," we read: "Death hath passed upon all men in that all have sinned." We are in a bad condition in two ways; first, our characters and lives are stained with sin – and secondly because so marred by sin we are cut off from life and placed in the grasp of death. We are apt to take a superficial view of the matter and to think of being released from death as the thing chiefly to be desired, but this is a false view. If released from death and not from sin which causes death, you would again die. You would die because as a sinner you would have no right to life. The wages or legitimate end of sin is death. "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death and if you could be released from death a thousand times yet not forgiven the sin, you would again be obliged to die.

Our real aim and desire should be to get forgiveness of sins, for then the penalty – death – can be removed legally. And in fact when we are forgiven or justified in God's sight, he is bound by his own justice to release such a forgiven and justified one from death. But can we obtain forgiveness of sins if God's punishment for sin was a just penalty? Could he be just and forgive or excuse sin? We answer, no; God's mercy and love can never be exercised at the expense of his justice. How then can we be forgiven? We answer: "The Lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world." Jno. 1:29. Yes

says John (1:35) "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins and in him is no sin." First, he was manifested, tried in all points yet without sin, that he might after being thus proved, act as our High Priest and "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb. 9:26. He who knew no sin was made sin for us," i.e. on our account he was treated as though he were the sinner (2 Cor. 5:21), and God "Laid upon him the iniquity of us all," and "We have redemption through his blood, even forgiveness of sins." Col. 1:14. "The blood (life given i.e. death) of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." 1 Jno. 1:7. "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Eph. 1:7. Thus "Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man;" therefore "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you;" (Eph. 4:32.) because

Jesus paid it all,
All the debt we owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.

And because thus ransomed and bought from sin with a price, even the precious blood of Christ, the "sins are blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord and He shall send Jesus etc." Acts 3:19. For **[R94 : page 8]** as God was just to punish for sin and would by no means clear the guilty, so also "He is just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all iniquity" since Jesus paid for us the price of our sins. And if the sin is forgiven will not its wages – death – be abolished? Yes, by ransoming us from sin Jesus obtained the right to destroy death; and when sin is abolished, it may well be asked – "O death, where is thy sting? For the sting of death is sin." THANKS be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Verily, as in Adam all die so, in Christ shall all be made alive. All were condemned to death because of sin and all are justified to life again because "Jesus paid it all."

But what shall we say of those who claim that Jesus was a sinner, who claim that he died for himself, that he appeared in the world on the "lowest round of the ladder," a sinner among sinners merely to set us an example and by working his way up to life to show humanity how they could work their way up and each win life for himself?" We say: God pity them and show them the value of "the blood of the cross," (Gal. 1:20.) that it was because the penalty of our sin was death that "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" that we might be forgiven. Oh no; Add nothing to their burden, they will have enough to bear; They will find it a difficult task to do as he did – keep the whole law blameless, and thus work their way up to life. They will in time find a necessity for "forgiveness through His blood," of whom it was written – "Ye shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sin." By and by they will learn –

"What grace was in the Lamb of God,
Who died to make them free."

The doctrine of "forgiveness of sins through his blood" (Col. 1:14) is the one on which the whole fabric of christianity is built. It is the basis of all our faith and hopes as christians. If we are not forgiven, we cannot approach God as "Our Father." He is not the father of sinners. Unless forgiven we cannot approach God in prayer, for "God heareth not sinners." We must first have his forgiveness before any of the blessings are ours, as it is written: "Being justified by faith (in the perfection of his offering) we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And we must first be forgiven before we can receive the Holy Spirit, as Paul says: Eph. 1:13. "In whom ye also trusted after ye had heard the word of truth – the gospel (good news) of your salvation. (from sin, i.e. forgiveness.) In whom also after ye believed that ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

Brethren, "Let us draw near (to God) with a true heart in full assurance of faith, (that our sins are forgiven) having our hearts sprinkled from a consciousness of evil, (sin) and our bodies washed in pure water" (our fleshly nature cleansed by, and brought into harmony with the truth.) (Heb. 10:22.) and "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering," for, in this – God's way of forgiving sin. "The righteousness of God is manifested" most beautifully and his justice, mercy and love all find harmonious expression for, "Herein is manifested the love of God, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."
