

## "HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST"

– DECEMBER 31ST. –

**"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." – 1 John 1:9.**

WE KNOW of no heathen religion which teaches a god of mercy and love and kindness. Heathen deities are represented as powerful, ferocious, terrible. The people fear them as demons, but know nothing about the God of Love. Alas! that we must say it, but there are many Christians who, misled by the creeds of the Darker Ages, do not recognize, do not worship the God of the Bible – the God of all Grace, concerning whom we have the declaration, "God is Love."

The Psalmist's words give us a proper conception – "But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared" – revered. (Psa. 130:4.) We can see readily enough that the Almighty must be the very embodiment of Justice – not, however, a justice of the kind we were taught, which was really a great injustice. God was just in sentencing Father Adam to death because of his disobedience to the Divine Law. He was just in making that sentence applicable to all of Adam's posterity. Had He let the sentence rest and allowed man to die like the brute beast, without any hope of a future life, we would have had no ground for complaint. It would have been simple Justice.

But God commended His love to us, and it is His love which constrains us to seek Him and to desire to serve Him and to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. God's will meant the requirement of Justice and He opened up the way by which He could be just and yet be the Justifier of those who believe in Jesus, who become His disciples, to take up their cross and follow Him; and having thus arranged for the satisfaction of these, God purposes to give a blessing to Adam and his race in a way which would do them the most good. And this showing of the Divine character is not merely to bring laudation to the

Almighty, but specially for the purpose of making His creatures acquainted with His character, that they may have great confidence in Him throughout eternity, and that, seeing the beauties of His character, they may copy the same and thus be more abundantly blessed.

### **SALVATION'S FIRST STEP**

The first step of God's Plan is the selection of a special class, a saintly few from amongst mankind. They are chosen for a purpose. In them God would show forth the exceeding riches of His Grace and His loving kindness in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6,7), in lifting sinners from the miry clay to so glorious a station as He has promised them – the divine nature, far above angels, principalities and powers. Additionally He proposes to use them and their experiences with sin, and their victories over sin, by making them joint-heirs with Christ in the ruling and blessing and judging of the world by and by.

Following the completion of the Church of the First-borns will come the later borns. It is the Divine intention, not only that the Church shall attain to the liberty of the sons of God on the spirit plane, like unto the angels, but it is His purpose also that humanity in general shall be granted an opportunity to become sons of God during Messiah's reign: "For the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption [death and sin] into the glorious liberty of the sons of God" [human sons, **[R4931 : page 445]** such as Adam was in his perfection, free from sin and death, possessed of the full liberty which God provided for all in full fellowship with Him]. – Romans 8:21.

### **IF WE CONFESS**

Our text undoubtedly refers to those now called of God to be members of the Bride of Christ, and sharers of the liberty and glory of sonship on the spirit plane. Nevertheless it states a principle which will be applicable also during the thousand years of Messiah's reign. None then need expect to make progress on the Highway of Holiness except

first they confess their sins and turn from them and accept the proffered blessing of Messiah, who then will be reigning for the very purpose of destroying sin and uplifting sinners.

Applying the text to the present time, we see that it does not refer to sinners in general, but to the Church of Christ, as again we read, "If we sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ." So this confession of sins does not relate to the world, who have not yet become children of God through faith and consecration. This statement corresponds to the one in our Lord's prayer which says, "Forgive us *our* trespasses as we forgive [R4932 : page 445] those who trespass against us."

### **"JUST TO FORGIVE US"**

Those who have become new creatures in Christ by faith and obedience – those who have taken up their cross to follow Him and have been begotten of the Holy Spirit – God has agreed to forgive all their unwilling trespasses upon request. Hence the Apostle John here says that it will be merely just on God's part to fulfil to His holy ones this promise which He has made to them. Reasoning upon the same subject St. Paul urges, "Let us come with courage to the throne of heavenly grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." – Heb. 4:16.

It was evidently because the Lord foresaw that His people might become so abashed by their repeated failures through inherited weaknesses of their flesh that He provided this special exhortation for their encouragement. This is a point well to be remembered. At this, the close of another year and the opening of a new one, we urge that all Christians keep daily record with the Lord and never retire to rest without obtaining this grace of forgiveness and help. But if any have delayed the matter and a cloud has come between them and the Lord, let them surely avail themselves of these promises in the close of this year that they may start the New Year with a clean slate – with the smile of their Father's face upon them, and with the fellowship of their

Redeemer and with fresh resolves for earnestness and carefulness in walking in His steps.

## **WEARY AND HEAVY LADEN**

There are other Scriptures which apply to those of the world who have not yet become the Lord's people, and who are not therefore included in our text. This class we refer to are included in the Lord's words, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, and ye shall find rest to your souls." (Matt. 11:28,29.) There is no rest of heart in the restless striving of selfishness and sin, yet these sometimes work out experiences which lead the weary to the great Sin-Bearer, the Friend above all others.

What more opportune time than the beginning of the year to make the one great contract with the Lord which will make us disciples indeed – the covenant of self-sacrifice, self-denial, self-renunciation, taking up the cross to follow the Lord's leading whithersoever He goeth, knowing that the end of the journey will be glorious and blessed; yea, and that the trials on the way toward the Heavenly Kingdom will be blessed and overruled for good, because Jesus will be a sharer also in them.

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