

"HIS LOVING-KINDNESS, O HOW GREAT!"

"Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee." – PSALM 63:3.

GOD has a kindness of nature and disposition, a loving-kindness, that is general, that goes out, in one sense of the word, to all of His creatures – not only the intelligent, but the unintelligent creatures of His hand. He bestows His kindness, His favors, upon the just and the unjust. He sends His sunshine and His rain upon the good and the evil. But there is a special loving-kindness, a special love which He reserves for those who have lovable qualities of heart – those who have such traits of character as permit Him thus to love them – just as every good person loves every other person who is good and noble-hearted.

God has such a love for the holy angels. He had such a love for Adam before he sinned. And since the sin, He has a sentiment of loving-kindness toward those of Adam's race who, realizing their sin, desire to turn back to Him and to do His will. His loving-kindness has led Him to make a wonderful provision for these. He has provided that some shall be of the earthly nature, to receive the blessing of life everlasting here upon earth, after it has been brought to Edenic perfection. He has provided for others to be of the spiritual nature. Truly,

"There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea!"

But God does not love the wilful sinner. This is in harmony with righteousness. We may love the ignorant, who violate the Law of God because of a lack of knowledge, of proper information; but we could not rightly love one who is wicked, whose intention of heart, of will, is to do wrong. God has no love for the incorrigibly

wicked. "All the wicked will He destroy." He has arranged that only those who shall come into accord with His righteousness may enjoy the blessing of eternal life. These shall have an eternity of happiness; they shall be the recipients of His loving favor everlastingly.

The Psalmist had a taste of the loving-kindness of God in his own experiences. When he was anointed to be king of Israel, he knew that he had found favor in God's sight. And later, when he did things that were wrong, God chastised him, punished him in love, because David was a man after the Lord's own heart – had a desire to do right – to do God's will. As the needle of a compass may under certain circumstances be detracted from its normal condition of pointing toward the pole, just so some attraction at times influenced David and led him into a wrong course. But as soon as the besetment was past, or he was led of the Lord to see his sin, his heart returned fully to Jehovah, as the needle of the compass returns and again points to the pole. Therefore King David declared that life without God's loving-kindness would be worth nothing to him; he would not appreciate his life if cut off from the favor of the Lord. This being the case, his lips would always confess the Lord – tell forth His loving-kindness, show forth His praises. **[R5441 : page 118]**

OUR ANOINTING FAR SUPERIOR

And this is still more true of us who are now the Lord's truly consecrated children, who are daily striving to serve Him and to follow the Master. We who by the grace of God have come into covenant relationship with Him since the Atonement for sin has been made have become sons of God, and have been begotten of the Holy Spirit. We have come thus into the anointed Body of Christ. We have not been anointed to an earthly throne, as was David, but our anointing does more: it anoints us to a Heavenly Throne, to share in the rulership of the entire earth.

No king or emperor on any earthly throne can hope to reign for more than a few brief years. But those who shall be accounted

worthy to reign with Messiah, to share His Throne, shall reign for a thousand years. And this is only the beginning of their glory. Our Father in Heaven, who is now training and preparing us for this glorious exaltation through His Only Begotten Son, with whom we are to reign, gives us the assurance that He will be with us to guide our way; that all things shall work together for good to us, because we love Him and are called according to His purpose.

So we, above all other people in the world's history, [R5441 : page 119] have the loving-kindness of God manifested toward us. We have His exceeding great and precious promises. We are the recipients of His special love. And the more we appreciate this love and these glorious promises and the bountiful provisions of His grace, the more our hearts respond in gratitude, the more His loving-kindness becomes a reality to us, and the more are we ready to lay down our lives in His service.

It was thus with Jesus. He preferred the Father's favor above all else. And He, through the Father's arrangement, opened up this new and living way for *us*, that we, by becoming His disciples, may share with Him God's special loving-kindness and matchless promises, granted only to those "who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Surely our lips shall praise our God! And not only so, but our pocketbooks, our bank accounts, and our influence shall praise Him! All that we have shall praise the Lord; and all that we ever hope to have!

"I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY!"

We who have come to realize our Father's unspeakable favor to us as better than this present life with all it could have to give, we who have joyfully laid upon His altar every earthly good thing, every hope and ambition, every power of our being, rejoice to tell the Good Tidings of Salvation to others. We rejoice to sound forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. The Message is too good to keep! If we could not

proclaim it, it would be as a burning fire shut up in our bones; so we *must* tell it. And we are willing that the telling of it shall cost us trouble, cost us money, cost us the misunderstanding and persecution of former friends, and possibly the breaking of home ties. We are willing that it shall cost us the frown of the world and of organized churchianity.

TEXT APPLICABLE ONLY TO SAINTS

The Prophet David in our text spoke prophetically of the Church of Christ. These words could apply to none other than saints of God. None but those who walk and talk with God would esteem His favor more precious and desirable than their earthly life. If we ask the average nominal Christian to weigh this matter, and tell us if he would exchange this life for the favor of the Lord – putting in one side of the balance all the good things, hopes, ambitions, family ties, social position, churchianity, esteem of men, and putting in the other side of the scale God's favor – he will hesitate, and will eventually decide in favor of the things of this life.

The reason for this is that such do not highly appreciate Divine favor. They have heard and believed certain things about the Almighty, some of them true and some false; but the misrepresentation of God's character and Plan, together with the worldly influences surrounding them, have largely neutralized and offset and made noneffective the truths which they have learned, and they lack confidence in the things unseen. Hence worldly interests outweigh their appreciation of Divine favor – ten to one.

Those who have, through the Plan of the Ages, come to see the loving-kindness and mercy of the Lord are, if they are children of God at all, being put to the test. If they are merely glad to find out that there is no place of eternal torture, and that God's loving Plan includes the whole human race, their hearts are not touched to responsiveness by this manifestation of His great love. They will go on their way, rejoicing that they have been delivered from the

bondage of error, but will be like the nine lepers who were healed by the Master, yet did not return to give Him the glory, nor to offer themselves in service to Him. And these, alas, are the majority! We are now in the great day of proving. Who will be able to stand the test in this evil time?

GOD THE SUN OF OUR SOUL

This loving favor of God, which is so appreciated by the true saints, is not a favor respecting future prospects and hopes merely, but it is the blessed possession also of the present life. Gradually these come to prize the communion and fellowship of the Lord to such a degree that any interruption of this communion produces misery of soul. It brings an aching void that nothing else can fill. This sentiment is beautifully expressed in the hymn we often sing:

"Sun of my soul, my Father dear,
I know no night when Thou art near;
O, may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes!"

The true child of God will walk so closely with Him that nothing, however sweet or precious to the natural man, will be permitted to shut from him his Father's face. This would be esteemed a calamity with which nothing else could compare. He would rather cut off anything as dear as a right hand, or pluck out of his life anything as precious as an eye, than that it should come between himself and his Heavenly Friend, whom He has come to love above all else beside. God is truly to these the Sun of their soul, without whom life would become the blackness of night.

"THE DARKNESS HATETH THE LIGHT"

Some professed disciples of Christ may say that a Christian life will not cost earthly friendships; that such an idea is an exaggeration; that it is an extreme view of what is required of a Christian; that a

course which produces such a result is an unreasonable one. But no! Our Master's words are as true today as when they were spoken: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19.) The declaration of the Apostle still holds good: "Yea, and all who live godly in Christ Jesus *shall* suffer persecution." – 2 Tim. 3:12.

Why did the Master suffer the loss of social position and of favor with the churchianity of His day? Why did the Doctors of Divinity and the notables among the religionists hide their faces from Him? Why did they finally become so embittered against Him that they crucified Him? Was it because of evil-doing on His part? Nay; for He went about doing good. It was because He told the truth. He declared truths which they themselves recognized as such, but with which they had so mixed the "traditions of the elders" that they were too stupefied, drunken and blinded to take anything but a perverted view of our Lord's work and teachings. Their hearts were not in the right attitude before God. "The darkness hateth the light."

The Master's persecutions came not from the outside world, but from the professed holy people of His time. So has it ever been since, and so is it today. Those who now oppose the Truth are not worldly people outside of the churches, with but few exceptions; but they are zealous sectarians, whom Satan has blinded with his false doctrines and misrepresentations. We are not to be surprised, therefore, that wherever the Truth goes it will be a Sword to separate, as our Lord declared. These conditions prove a test to the followers of Jesus. Are we willing to bear the hatred, the scorn, the contumely, which loyalty to the Truth brings? Is our Father's loving favor more, far more, to us than the favor and smiles of the **[R5441 : page 120]** whole world – even more, far more to us than life itself?

THE GLORIOUS HARP OF THE AGES

If so, we can go forth in His name, rejoicing as we go, praising Him with our lips, singing the New Song which he hath put into our

mouths, "even the loving kindness of our God." It costs something to sing this song. Only those who have learned to play upon the Harp of God, who have all its strings attuned to perfect harmony, can properly render this "Song of Moses and the Lamb." Never until today has it been possible to produce such melody from this wonderful Harp; for never before have all its chords been properly placed and attuned. Now its music is entrancing! Then let us take this wonderful Harp of the Ages, and as we sweep its chords, let us sing with the spirit and with the understanding this wondrous, glad New Song!

