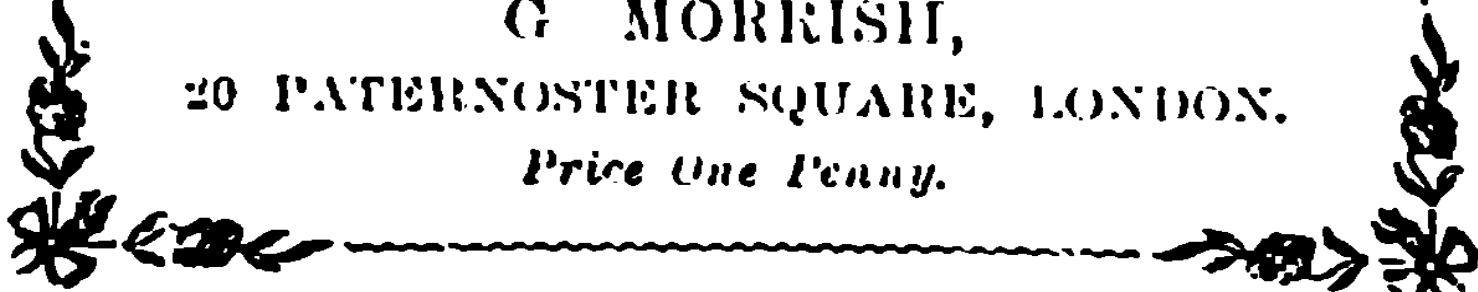


THE
ADVOCACY OF CHRIST.

BY
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THE
ADVOCACY OF CHRIST
ETC.

THE question often arises in the minds of the Lord's people, especially of those who are young in the faith, "What is to be done with the sins we commit after we have been saved?" Many a child of God has said, "I know that I have believed in Christ, and see that my sins were put away by His blood; but what troubles me is the sins I commit now, and what am I to do with them?" The direct

answer to this question is found in 1 John ii. 1, 2, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins." This is clearly written to believers, for the apostle addresses them as "my children;" that is, those who have been born of God. And again, "We have an advocate with the *Father*," as it is only those who are born again who can call God their Father.

The first thing for us to see is, that, as believers in the Lord Jesus, *all* our sins are put away before God by the one offering on the cross, as we get fully brought out in the epistle to the

Hebrews; because till this is seen there must always be confusion in the mind, confounding our *knowledge* of forgiveness of sins with the work of Christ that put them all away when they were all future. In Hebrews x. 11, 12, 14, we read, "And every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this Man (Christ), after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, *for ever* sat down on the right hand of God." "For by one offering He hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified." The priests, under the law, *stood* and offered "*oftentimes* the same sacrifices, which could never take away sins," therefore their work was never done; but this Man (Christ) offered *one* sacri-

fice, and "for ever sat down on the right hand of God." Do you see, dear reader, that there is only one sacrifice for sins, and that there never will be another? So that if all your sins were not put away then, they never can be, for Christ is not going to die again.

People often say, "I know that my sins were put away up to my conversion;" but Scripture never speaks in that way. When did Christ bear your sins? On the cross. Did He bear a part of your sins, or did He put them away up to the day of your conversion? No; if He bore one, He bore them all when they were all future, when you had committed none of them; for, blessed be His name, He offered the "one sacrifice for sins,"

and then “for ever sat down on the right hand of God.” This word “for ever” is not that which is used for everlasting, but it has the sense of continuously, uninterruptedly, never to rise up to offer another sacrifice or to complete the work; and the reason that He is so seated at the right hand of God is, that “by one offering He hath perfected *for ever*” (same word) “them that are sanctified.” He has perfected us for ever, therefore He has sat down for ever. The value of His one offering, which put away all our sins, is for ever; therefore He has nothing more to do throughout eternity with regard to the putting away of the sins of those that believe in His name.

Of course, when a soul is first

awakened by the Holy Spirit, it could only be past sins that are brought to his knowledge, and that he knows are forgiven; but then, when we get the knowledge of forgiveness, we see that the work that put our sins away was accomplished when they were all future, and the value of that one sacrifice was not only up to the day of our conversion. Now, we see the One that did the work "*for ever* sat down on the right hand of God," because He has perfected us *for ever* by that one offering; and God says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Hebrews x. 17.) Forgiveness of sins is the common portion of all Christians, as we read in 1 John ii. 12, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are

forgiven you for His name's sake." There would be no sense in saying our future sins are forgiven, for we have not committed them, and we ought not to contemplate sinning in future; but we can always say, as Christians, as in Colossians i. 14, "In whom we *have* redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." But many have thought, If we have the "forgiveness of sins," why do we read, in 1 John i. 9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to *forgive* us our sins" ?

There is another sense in which Scripture speaks of forgiveness; when a child of God has sinned, and his communion has been interrupted, and he confesses his sin, he gets forgiveness, not in the sense of non-imputa-

tion, as in Romans iv. 7, 8, but of communion and joy being restored, which had been interrupted by the sin. The above verse (1 John i. 9) is a general statement, and would apply either to a sinner first coming to God and confessing his sins, and so getting forgiveness once for all on the ground of the death of Christ, or to a child of God who has sinned and confesses, and gets forgiveness as a child by the Father. The one might be called justifying forgiveness in the case of the sinner; and the other, Fatherly, or governmental, forgiveness in the case of a saint; and it is very important to distinguish between the two.

There are two things we need in order to be happy in God's presence—

the question of our sins to be settled, and a new life and nature.

You find these two in 1 John iv. 9, 10. In verse 9, "God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him;" and in verse 10, "To be the propitiation for our sins." In the former we have life, and in the latter propitiation for sins. Every one is born into this world at a distance from God, ignorant of Him, and with a corrupt, fallen nature, which is enmity against Him; "dead in trespasses and sins," without a spark of life or desire Godward; as we find in Romans iii. 11, "There is none that seeketh after God." But God saw us in that dreadful condition, with nothing but death and eternal judgment before us, and loved us, and

“sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him;” and we, by the mighty energy of the Holy Ghost, are born again, have a new life and nature; as in John i. 12, “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name; which were *born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” So that those who have received Christ, and have truly believed in Him, can say, on the authority of Scripture, that they are “sons of God,” and born of Him. Those who are thus born of God have a life and nature that loves God, and delights in Him, and can have “fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus

Christ" (1 John i. 3); whereas the old Adam life has no communion with God whatever. What a wondrous word that is, "fellowship" (or communion) "with the Father, and with His Son!" What does fellowship or communion mean? Common thoughts, joys, and interests.

"Fellowship with the Father!" One might well say, "How could such poor feeble things as we are have fellowship" (communion or common thoughts) "with the Father and with His Son?" Suppose you are enjoying Christ, and you get a glimpse of His glory and perfection, and you delight in Him; well, the Father delights in Him too, so that through grace you have common thoughts with the Father about the Son, only of course

in far different measure. And again, "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." (Matt. xi. 27.) If Christ reveals the Father in all His love to your soul, and then says, "My Father is now your Father," as in John xx. 17, you have common thoughts with the Son about the Father, as far as you are able to enter into it. Of course "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," would include more than this—one could not limit it in any way. It is common thoughts, joys, and interests with God our Father and His Son Jesus Christ, known in the power of the Holy Ghost, in part now, but unhinderedly by-and-by. Oh, if all Christians

knew more of this communion, which is our highest privilege, how blessed they would find it! *Peace* which was made by the blood of His cross cannot alter, nor our standing in Christ, because it does not depend upon us, but upon the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus; but our *communion* and joy may be broken by the merest trifle, even a foolish thought. Many a dear child of God has been thrown into doubt and perplexity through not seeing this: as long as their conscience is clear, and they are going on happily with the Lord, all goes on well; but if through unwatchfulness, neglect of the word of God and prayer, or the cares, pleasures, or business of this life, they get away from the Lord, the happy feelings are all gone, the taste

and appetite for the word of God is lost, and the things that are not seen lose their reality, and they feel truly wretched, and have often thought, "I have got all wrong, and God is angry with me, and has turned His face away from me;" and often doubts come in, "Have I ever been converted at all? Perhaps I have been deceiving myself all the while!" But no, thank God, He never hides His face from a real Christian. Why? Because He never hides His face from Christ, and we are accepted *in* Him. God hid His face *once* from Christ when He was in love and grace taking our place, and was made sin for us on the cross, and uttered that terrible cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" When He cried,

and was not heard. (Psalm xxii. 1, 2.) But that is all over, and He is now a risen man before God, in the most perfect acceptance and favour; and "as He *is*, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.) Does God ever hide His face from that blessed one? Never. Therefore He never hides His face from those who are accepted *in* Him. So that nothing can touch the acceptance of a true child of God, because it is not a question of what we are, but of what Christ is. Does this blessed truth give a license for sin? God forbid! On the contrary, I am convinced the knowledge of it gives us a power over sin, and a proper motive for not sinning. If I am accepted in Christ, I am to walk as He walked. (1 John ii. 6.) If He

is the measure of my acceptance, He is also the measure of my walk. But if we get away from the Lord in our souls, or should sin come in, our acceptance is unchanged, but we lose the sense and joy of it, or, in other words, our communion has been interrupted. It is as though a cloud came between us and the sun; the sun remains unchanged, but we do not feel its rays. It is here that the blessed service of love of our Lord as the Advocate comes in, when we have sinned, to restore us to the enjoyment of the communion we had lost through it; not to put the sin away; that was done once for all by the "one sacrifice" on the cross. We read, in 1 John ii. 1, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father." The

common thought is, that when we have *confessed* our sin Christ goes to God and intercedes, and the sin is passed over. It does not, however, say, "If any man *confess* his sin," but "If any man sin" (before he confesses it) "we have an Advocate with the Father." An advocate means one who undertakes the cause of another, one who manages our affairs, maintains our interests. What a comfort this is for us to know, that if we do sin there is One who loves us perfectly, understands us thoroughly, takes up our case, and undertakes for us with the Father; not, as before said, to put the sin away, nor to procure righteousness for us, but to bring us back to communion. And who is the Advocate, the One who manages our

affairs? . Jesus Christ the *Righteous*, not the loving or merciful, as we might be inclined to think, but “the *Righteous One*,” “and He is the propitiation * for our sins.” (Chap. ii. 2.)

It is very beautiful, and divinely perfect, the way this is brought in here. He is the Righteous One, our unchanging Righteousness; He has also done a work upon the cross, by which our sins have been put away, “and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.” The terms “the Righteous One,” and “the propitiation for our sins,” would imply that a believer has an abiding righteousness before God, and that the question of his sins has been settled for ever.

* Propitiation means God's holy nature fully met and satisfied.

Thus, if a child of God sins, his righteousness (Christ) remains unchanged, and the value of the "propitiation for our sins" is the same; and because this is the case it is now not a question of the sin being put away before God, nor of procuring righteousness for us, but of restoration to communion. The very expression, "*Advocate with the Father,*" would show this. Father is a name of relationship. "*The Father judgeth no man.*" (John v. 22.) So that we may lay it down, as a general principle, that when we find the word "Father" in relation to us, it is never a question of acceptance nor of justification. It is not said it is the Father that justifies, but "*it is God that justifies.*" "*We have peace with God,*" &c. Thus, if

a child of God sins, the Advocate is with the Father. He is also "the Righteous One" and the "propitiation for our sins;" and the *result* of His advocacy is, that the word of God is brought home to our consciences by the power of the Spirit. It is this action of the blessed Lord, in applying the word to us, that is spoken of in John xiii., the Lord washing the disciples' feet. The "hour was come when He should depart out of this world unto the Father" (v. 1), a significant word, which enables us to understand better the application of the truth in this chapter. The Lord said, in verse 10, "He that is washed"*

* This word in the Greek is a different one to that used for "*wash* his feet;" it means the whole body washed; whereas the word used for "*wash* his feet" means only a part of the body, such as the hands or feet.

(washed all over) "needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean." Here the figure is water, not blood. It may refer to Leviticus viii.; when the priests were consecrated they were washed with water (v. 6); this was never repeated; but they had to wash their feet constantly in their service. (Exodus xxx. 17-20.)

Water is used in Scripture constantly as a symbol of the word of God. (See Eph. v. 26; John iii. 5; also 1 Peter i. 23, as a practical comment on John iii. 5.) The word is the instrument which is employed by the Holy Ghost in giving us life. (1 Peter i. 23.) This is never repeated; but we get defiled in our walk through this wilderness, so the

Lord, in His grace, applies the word to our consciences in order to remove from us that which would hinder our communion ; for the Lord would not have us at a distance from Him, but would have us near to Himself ; not merely satisfied because we are saved, which is a cold, heartless thing, but in the enjoyment of His love and of what He is Himself. Nothing else satisfies His heart of love ! This action of the Lord, in applying the word to us, would be rather the result of His advocacy, or its application to us ; and when the word is applied to us by the power of the Spirit we are made to feel how we have sinned, and, humbled about it, we go to God our Father in the full confidence of a child, and confess it to Him. How

blessed it is that we can do so! And the very fact that the sin can never be imputed to us because Christ bore it, only humbles us the more, as we think that Christ suffered all that agony on the cross for that very thing that I have done. It is the advocacy of Christ that leads us to confession—His grace in restoring our souls. And when we do confess, we have the blessed assurance, in 1 John i. 9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Mark the expression—“faithful and just;” not loving and merciful, but “faithful and just;” not to the sinner, as some have thought, but to Christ, who is our Advocate and the “propitiation for our sins;” and not only

does He "forgive us," but cleanses us from all unrighteousness—He removes every trace of the sin from us, otherwise there would be a distance between us and the Lord. How blessed it is to think of the Lord's unchanging love and service to us! He loved us, and gave Himself for us, and put away all our sins; and though now He is away, and we are left in this evil world, His love is still the same; and should we sin and get away from Him, He restores us to the communion we had lost. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." (John xiii. 1.)

So now the answer is simple as to what a child of God is to do with his sins—we are to confess them to

God our Father. But how blessed to know that, when we have sinned and confess, that Christ has already been to the Father for us, and that we have the word, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." So that if we have truly confessed and judged the sin, we ought to believe, on the authority of the Word, that we have forgiveness. Confession is not merely a general confession of sins at the close of the day, that would be no real confession at all; but every time a sin is on our conscience, it should be judged and confessed; and not only ought we to judge ourselves for an act of sin, but for the state of soul we were in at the time, which is a far deeper thing; for if we had been in com-

munions with the Lord, we should not have committed it at all ; for, depend upon it, a child of God does not fall into positive sin when in communion with the Lord ; but there has been a getting away from Him first, and neglect of the word of God and prayer is generally the first cause of our departure from the Lord, and of positive falls. But what a blessed privilege when we have sinned to be able to go to God our Father and confess it all to Him ! not as a sinner to get salvation, or to be converted again, but as a child to a Father who loves us perfectly ; but at the same time is God who is "Light," and cannot have fellowship with anything that is evil or inconsistent with that "Light."

May you and I, dear reader, know more what it is to have "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," that "our joy may be full," till we enter that blessed home where "there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth . . . or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life," where there will be no need of an "Advocate with the Father," because our walk will be perfectly in accordance with our standing, no more inconsistencies, failures, or sin, but we shall be "holy and without blame before God in love;" the world, the flesh, and the devil, and every thing that hindered our communion here, gone for ever, and we shall know throughout eternity what uninter-

rupted communion means in everlasting glory.

R. F. K.

Priesthood in Hebrews is with *God*, not for sins, but for weakness, and to uphold us in our wilderness journey. Advocacy is with the *Father*, if we sin, to restore communion. Intercession is a general term that would include both.



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