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THE

Advocate of the Accused :

WHOSE SIDE DO YOU TAKE ?



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WHOSE SIDE DO YOU TAKE ?



THIS is a practical question for Christians in these days. It is not a question of whether we are Christians or not, though it may often test the fact. Happily simple faith in the Person of the Son of God and His work settles that question. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved (Acts xvi. 31). He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life (John iii. 36). We are justified by His blood (Rom. v. 9); as well as numberless other passages. But the question is, as professedly saved ones, do we take sides with the Advocate, or with the Accuser of the Brethren ?

The advocacy of Christ is founded on His righteous Person, and His perfect work. (See 1 John ii. 1, 2). His blessed work clears us from all the guilt of our sins, and in His blessed Person we have entire deliverance from our Adam state, He Himself—the dead, risen and ascended One—being our righteousness before God. It is on this ground that He

intercedes, does the work of an Advocate. If we sin after our relationship with the Father, as children to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will, has been settled, then the Advocacy of Christ applies. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we [children] have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins (1 John ii. 1, 2).

The office of the Advocate then is not to get righteousness for us, nor to put away our sins, nor to make us children. That is all settled by Christ's death and resurrection; by faith in Him. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool: for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Heb. x. 12-14). It is to maintain us as children before the father without sin, in face of the Accuser of the Brethren. (See Rev. xii. 10). When a child of God sins, communion is interrupted; the relationship remains, but the Father has no fellowship with the sin of His child. The Advocate pleads against Satan who accuses. The Father hears the pleadings of the Advocate, who thereon applies the word to our walk (John xiii. 4, 5),

brings us to the confession of the sin, upon which the Father is faithful to the righteous Advocate, and just to the Advocate who made propitiation, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John i. 9). Thus communion* is restored, and the child of God walks in the joy and light of his Father's countenance. Thus the Advocate is literally the Manager of our affairs in our Father's court, and has reference to His government of His children in this world. It reconciles the fact of a naughty child and a Holy Father.

The Advocate does two things. He pleads with the Father for us. He applies the word to us. The one maintains our cause if we sin before the Father, against the Accuser. The other brings up our practical state to our standing which is always maintained without sin by the righteous advocate who has made propitiation. The failure in our practical state is from the fact of our having the flesh still in us. Our actual state is that of having two natures in one person. With the mind I myself serve the law of God, with the flesh the law of sin (Rom. vii. 25). And though by faith, and in Spirit, we are no longer in the flesh, yet actually it is in us (though by faith

* Fellowship or communion means the association of two or more together, having common thoughts and feelings together.

we reckon it dead); hence the failure. There is no excuse, but the fact is we fail. Our standing as children ever remains the same, even though we sin, owing to the righteous Advocate who has made propitiation. If any man sin we have an Advocate. But we have failed in our practical state. We are defiled. Our bodies are washed with pure water, that is true (Heb x. 22); we have had once the washing of regeneration (Titus iii 5); we are born again (John iii. 3); we need not then to be put into the bath over again.* But we have sinned, we have got our feet defiled as it were in passing through this sin-defiling world. This will not do for the Father's presence. What does the Advocate do? He applies the word to us, washes our feet; the word judges us, leads us to confession and self-judgment. The remembrance of our Advocate who made propitiation leads us back on our knees to our Father who forgives us and cleanses us from all our unrighteousness. Thus the blessed work of the Advocate is on the one hand to plead for the children before the Father, if they sin, on the other hand to wash their feet with the word, to bring their practical walk and state up to their standing before Him.

* (John xiii. 10.) Literally, "He that is put into the bath, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all."

Satan on the other hand is the Accuser of the Brethren. He accuses them before God day and night (Rev. xii. 10). He is the author of divisions between the children of God, by accusing them one to the other (Rom. xvi. 17-20). He would hire Balaam to curse the people of God, and failing in that he would use the same prophet to teach Balak to mix them up with the nations around, and partake of their sinful practices. He would excite Jehovah to try Job, speaking bad things of him before Jehovah's face (Job i., ii.). He would tempt David to sin in numbering the people of Israel (1 Chron. xxi. 1), and move Jehovah against them to destroy them (2 Sam. xxiv. 1). He would resist Joshua the high priest, and seek to prevent his filthy rags being taken from him, and his being clothed in new raiment (Zech. iii. 1). This is the Accuser's wretched work. Those that follow him are called false accusers, slanderers (literally devils), because doing the devil's work. He whispers in the ear of a minister's wife (1 Tim. iii. 11), some false story about some brother or sister in Christ. She spreads it about, and so the evil spreads, which perhaps may end in an assembly being broken up. Some aged sister sits leisurely at home (Titus ii. 3), and not having much to do is ready to hear stories perhaps from some worldly

person about some child of God. She spreads it about to others who come to see her. It is a slander, a lie, and so the devil does his work, and perhaps some child of God gets a wound, or gets hindered in the work of the Lord for years.

I would solemnly ask every child of God who reads this paper, On whose side are you working? When some slander is uttered about a child of God, do you plead for him, go home and pray for him, if you know he has failed, do you go in love and humility, and take the word to him, and wash his feet? (John xiii. 14).—This is the blessed work of the Advocate.—Or do you listen to the story, go and spread it lightly to some one else, without knowing whether it is a fact or not? And if you are hurt by some brother, do you go in a pet to God or pray in anger at him at prayer meetings (1 Tim. ii. 8), and accuse him? This is to do the devil's work.

But how happy is it for us to be associated with the blessed Advocate; on the one hand pleading for our brethren if they sin, on the other hand carrying the word to them and washing their feet. May the Lord grant His people increasedly this grace, so that the saints may see their blessed privilege of love to cover sins (Prov. x. 12), plead for their brethren if they sin, and act in faithfulness to them, in carrying

the word to them, washing their feet, so that they might be cleansed from the defilement; these last, overcoming the Accuser by the blood of the Lamb, on the one hand if they sin, and on the other hand openly resisting him by the word of their testimony like the blessed Lord Jesus Himself. He answered the devil when tempting him to sin, by "It is written." So should we. If we sin thank God we can always answer Him by the blood of the Lamb, which is the balm for every wound. Thus the blood of the Lamb and the word, the sword of the Spirit, are our instruments against the devil down here, whilst the Advocate maintains our cause before the Father up in heaven. Thus in every case we are maintained, and are overcomers, more than conquerors, through Him that loved us.

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