Our Advocate with the Father

"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."
—I John 2:1

ALL NECESSARY PROVI-sions of grace are abundantly supplied by our loving Heavenly Father for the spiritual calling, blessing, and development of a little flock of his earthly children to share joint heirship with our Lord and Master in his spiritual kingdom. (Luke 12: 32) In our featured text, the Apostle John has addressed one of these wonderful provisions in reference to our Lord, and his special position as 'advocate' for those who have responded to the heavenly calling of the Father through faith in his precious blood.

THE MEANING OF ADVOCATE

The word advocate [*parakletos*—Greek] in its literal sense means 'to call to one's side for aid or assistance' as in the case of an attorney. It also denotes 'the act of consoling' which suggests a close

and personal relationship. This identifies someone who serves in a very special way to plead for another person's cause as their intercessor or representative, and as a result of this action the recipient receives comfort, consolation, and strength. The Greek word *parakletos* has been variously translated in our English Bibles, examples of which are advocate, comforter, helper, one who will plead for us and one who will intercede for us.

ADVOCATE VERSUS MEDIATOR

The title advocate applies to the present Gospel Age, and relates to the members of the body of Christ. As our advocate, Jesus provides personal assistance and comfort to the members of his bride—those footstep followers who have responded to the Heavenly Father's calling, and have entered into a covenant of consecration with him. The Apostle Paul explains, "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." (Rom. 2:7) This commitment takes on new and added dimensions in our lives—"We are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."—Rom. 6:4

The New Creature in Christ must deal with the weaknesses of the flesh, as Paul points out, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (II Cor. 4:7) We also have many enemies of the Spirit, and must continue to struggle against the flesh, the world, and the wiles of the Adversary. During this present time of acceptable sacrifice,

Jesus has been provided as our Advocate by the grace of God, and he intercedes and represents us before the bar of Divine justice. We are never free from Satan's attacks, and may be sidetracked in our desire to walk in newness of life. The apostle spoke of this blessed provision. "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."—Rom. 8:27

The work of the Mediator, on the other hand, will not begin until the present calling and selection of members of the body of Christ has been completed. This title describes their future office as the anointed and glorified Christ. At that time, the faithful body members will share with our Lord in blessing all the families of the earth, under the terms of the New Covenant.

Because of sin and disobedience to the Divine law, the human family is alienated from the Heavenly Father and requires a third party who will act as the 'reconciler' or 'go-between' in reestablishing a relationship between God and mankind. A thousand years has been set aside in the plan of God for this mediating process. It will be a grand work of lifting up the willing and obedient to live under the righteous laws of God, and it will include all those who will be resurrected from the grave.

Concerning this, the Prophet Isaiah wrote, "Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish [raise up, *Marginal Translation*] the earth, to

cause to inherit the desolate heritages." (Isa. 49:8) In harmony with this wonderful prophecy, the Apostle Paul emphasized that, "our sufficiency is of God" (II Cor. 3:5), and then added, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament [covenant]."—vs. 6

JESUS OPENED THE WAY

Through his marvelous grace, our Heavenly Father has given his son—our Lord and Savior—as a means by which his consecrated children may now have communion and fellowship with him because of their faith in Jesus' earthly ministry and sacrificial blood. This blood was shed for all mankind, and it will become effectual for the world during Christ's future kingdom of righteousness.

The usage of the word *parakletos* in John's first epistle clearly demonstrates the special role that our beloved Lord Jesus would fulfill in connection with these Divine arrangements. No other being could possibly open the way for the footstep members of the specially called church class to follow. This is explained by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Hebrew brethren. He wrote, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." (Heb. 10:19,20) This opening of the 'new and living way' was demonstrated by Divine power at the time of his death. This was recorded by Matthew in his gospel, "Behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent."—Matt. 27:51

THE CLEANSING BLOOD

Paul also spoke many things to the Hebrew brethren concerning their religious ceremonies, including the offerings of the sacrificial blood of goats and calves. He explained, however, that these offerings served merely in a typical sense and pointed to something with far greater significance and value. (Heb. 9:12,13) The apostle then made the comparison between the blood of innocent animals with that of our Lord Jesus, and the true meaning surrounding his precious and life-sustaining blood.

He explained that sacrificial blood took on greater significance when manifest in its antitypical sense. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament [new covenant], that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." (vss. 14,15) During the administration of Christ's future kingdom, this sanctifying blood will be applied on behalf of the whole human family. "This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you."—vs. 20

THE MERIT APPLIED

During the present Gospel Age, the 'little flock' of consecrated footstep followers of Christ have enjoyed a special blessing by sharing in the Divine program for the ultimate reconciliation and salvation

of the human family. The merit, or true value, of Jesus' blood has now been made available to them for their justification in Christ Jesus. "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (vs. 24) Jesus has appeared at the celestial court and in the presence of our loving Heavenly Father on behalf of the footstep members of his body. They have been brought into a covenant relationship with God and share in the wonderful plans of the Father in connection with the future work of the kingdom.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Apostle Peter testified to the wonderful plan and purpose of God when he rose to speak to those who had been witnesses to the great events that were taking place on the Day of Pentecost. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read, "Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words."—Acts 2:14

The apostle then turned to a prophecy which had been written by one of the prophets of God approximately eight hundred years earlier, and he read, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel [2:28-32]; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." (vss. 16,17) Looking down the stream of time when the kingdom of our

Lord would be established, he noted that the blood of sacrifice will be applied for the whole human family, and the Spirit of truth will be available to lift up the sin-sick and dying race.

During the present Gospel Age, Joel's prophecy speaks of Christ's faithful followers who were to be especially blessed. They would be the first to receive the merit of Christ's sacrifice that was presented to the Heavenly Father, and as a result the Holy Spirit of truth and understanding would be given to them. Reading further from Joel's prophecy, Peter said, "On my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy." (vs. 18) Jesus had presented the merit of his blood to this specially called class for their justification during the present Gospel Age. When the church class has been completed, the merit of his blood will then also be applied on behalf of the whole human family.

INTERCESSION FOR US

All who love and obey our Heavenly Father have an altar of prayer that has been consecrated and sanctified for us by Jesus. Prayers that are offered to the Father must be through the Master, and it is fully available any time we have need of it. Paul explains, "He is able also to save them to the uttermost [evermore, *Marginal Translation*] that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7:25) The word 'intercession' means to meet and converse for the purpose of making a petition for someone, a most wonderful provision of God's grace in connection with his consecrated children.

Although Jesus paid the price for Adamic sin by giving his perfect life on the cross, he promises to intercede on behalf of his class of faithful followers when they approach the throne of heavenly grace for forgiveness and spiritual guidance. This is especially true with the Lord's people who are searching their hearts to understand the mind of God. It is only for those who are fully consecrated and who obediently approach him through the precious name of Jesus. Paul said, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—Rom. 8:28

We then read, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (vss. 31,32) It is God's purpose to call a class of faithful Christians who will share our Lord Jesus' glory in his kingdom. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."—vss. 33,34

OUR SYMPATHETIC HIGH PRIEST

The Apostle Paul addressed the importance of the great High Priest and our special relationship with him. Concerning our Lord and Master he wrote, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched

with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."—Heb. 4:14,15

Paul further emphasized this relationship when he said, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared [for his piety, *Marginal Translation*]." (Heb. 5:7) Even our Lord Jesus required the Father's testing as spoken by the apostle when he pointed out, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (vss. 8,9) Having learned the necessary testings by suffering death for the fallen human family, Jesus is now in the position to serve his Father as the personal Advocate for the children of God. During the present age, this blessing is limited to those who have been called out of the sin-sick and dying human family, and have experienced firsthand the terrible results of sin, degradation and death. He is, therefore, the great and compassionate High Priest for all those who are yet being called to share with him in the kingdom blessings soon to be made available for the sin-sick world.

THE THRONE OF GRACE

Another of the provisions that have been made available to the children of God during the present time is the privilege of prayer. This wonderful means of communication with Almighty God is offered to us whereby we may approach God and ask

him for spiritual help, guidance, direction, and the forgiveness of sins whenever and wherever necessary.

This privilege is available through our blessed Master who serves as our Advocate to the Father. Thus, all prayers and petitions that we present to the Father must be presented in and through the precious name and merit of Jesus. "Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. 2:18) We cannot neglect this marvelous provision as we walk in newness of life with our blessed Master. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16) Jesus assures his faithful believers of the privileges and blessings associated with prayer. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."—John 15:7

IF ANY MAN SIN

In our featured text (I John 2:1), the apostle wrote that if we sin, our Lord Jesus will serve as our Advocate with the Father. The question, however, is not 'if' we sin because we have all inherited fleshly weaknesses. If anyone has convinced himself that he is without sin he is only deceiving himself. When we seek forgiveness at the throne of heavenly grace our Lord Jesus stands beside us as our Advocate and helper.

In his letter to the brethren at Rome, Paul reminds us, "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not

one." (Rom. 3:11,12) The apostle was quoting from the previously written words of the psalmist David, who wrote, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."—Ps. 14:1-3

Being subject to the weaknesses and frailties of the fallen flesh and in need of forgiveness from our Father, we need to ask forgiveness from the Father whenever we may stumble. We need to approach him for all offences, and Jesus will represent us as our advocate, intercessor, and helper at the bar of Divine justice. We must seek forgiveness for our sins on a continuing and daily basis.

SONS OF GOD

We enjoy this special relationship with the Father because we are now part of his family of New Creatures in Christ Jesus. John said, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." (I John 3:1) This has been made possible for us through the marvelous grace of our Lord Jesus. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (vs. 3) These wonderful provisions of the Father are given to the members of the bride of Christ to ensure their faithfulness in laying down their consecrated lives in sacrifice to him.

PRESENTED FAULTLESS TO THE FATHER

We read, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (Jude 21) We may rest in full assur-ance of faith that the Lord Jesus, as our Advocate, will represent us before the Heavenly Father when-ever we petition him to do so. When we confess our faults to the Father and seek his forgiveness, we show him that we are in harmony with his arrange-ments. It is our desire to be faithful to the end of our consecrated walk in newness of life with our Lord Jesus and, if faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10), we will be privileged to receive the abundant joys of the heavenly inheritance.

Jesus is especially interested in the spiritual growth and everlasting welfare of his body mem-bers. He died for us and has promised to bless and guide us even unto the end of our consecrated course, and he will then present us all faultless and blameless to the Heavenly Father. Blessed is the precious name of Jesus who stands ready to help us to make our calling and election sure.

The servant of God wrote, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with ex-ceeding joy."—Jude 24 ■