

ful and just (R. V., righteous) to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness—The statement that no one is free from sin might be discouraging to those who are earnest in the pursuit of holiness, but we have the comfort of knowing that there is forgiveness for all sin, if we only repent of it, confess it and seek pardon for Jesus' sake. God is faithful to his promises and at the same time true to his holy law which the sinner has broken. Christ has satisfied its demands on behalf of the sinner and it would be unjust in God to accept the payment and also punish one for whom payment had been made. The Holy Spirit cleanses the hearts of believers from all sin.

10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1. 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—John was now a very aged man, and he speaks with fatherly affection to all christians. His object in writing this epistle is to warn them against sin. Although we fight earnestly against it, we are apt to be discouraged by our frequent failures, but we need not despair, for our Intercessor stands before the Father asking that we be forgiven and strengthened.

2. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of (R. V. omits "the sins of") the whole world—A "propitiation" is something that "propitiates" or makes friendly. The sufferings of Christ satisfied the justice of God, and so rendered him "propitious" towards sinners. He endured the penalty of sin and made it possible for God to be just and the justifier of those who believe in him (Rom. 3: 26). God's love ever yearned over fallen man, but his justice would not permit him to pardon sin until the penalty was paid. This Jesus paid, and now there is no one in the whole world who can say that there is no salvation for him. If any man is lost it will not be because Christ did not do enough for his salvation.

3. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments—To know God is not merely to know

about him, but to receive him into our hearts. The only infallible test of our being his children is our careful watching against disobedience to his will. If we truly love him we will obey him.

4. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him—He who says one thing and does another is a liar—his conduct contradicts his profession. If a plant bears thorns no label on it will make it a grape vine. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

5. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him—Obeying God is not only a proof of our love to him, but it teaches us to love him. The more perfect our obedience the more perfect our love.

6. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked—Christ is meant without being named—as in ch. 3: 3, 7; 4: 17. When in doubt about what we should do, consider what Christ would have done in similar circumstances.

ORIENTALISMS.

God is light.—Light has always been regarded as an attribute or symbol of deity. The Parsees, or disciples of Zoroaster, do reverence to fire as the only fitting emblem of God. In heathen Rome a fire had to be kept burning continually on the altar. A society of women, called the vestal virgins, had charge of this fire. Should it be allowed to go out at any time, it meant death to the virgin to blame, and it could be rekindled only by the rays of the sun. By many christian churches lights are also employed as symbols of God. The light-giving heavenly bodies have often been regarded as divine. The ancient Babylonian religion was largely astral, the stars being worshipped as gods. Abraham was probably, in his youth, a worshipper of the moon, which was the patron god of Ur. The Egyptian mythology was also astral, and was, according to Lockyer's "Dawn of Astronomy," imported from Babylonia. The Roman mythology was most likely from the same source, and the planets still bear the names of their gods.

We make Him a liar.—That God could be untrue could not be thought of by a Hebrew, for to him the two outstanding attributes of God are—might and holiness. Amongst the heathen the gods were often regarded as being