

THE

“C. S.”

TRACTS.

VOL. VI

LONDON :

G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

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YOU WILL NEVER MAKE

YOUR

PEACE WITH GOD.



THE GRACE OF GOD TO

A

COLLIER WITH A BROKEN LEG.



BY

C. STANLEY.



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THE GRACE OF GOD TO A COLLIER WITH A BROKEN LEG.

"THERE IS NOTHING BETWIXT MY SOUL AND GOD;
THE BLOOD OF JESUS HAS PUT IT ALL AWAY."

A FEW months ago the writer of this paper received a letter from a person at Hoyland, stating that a very dear friend, a collier, had had a most serious accident from a fall of a roof. His leg was broken in three places: and so badly crushed he was not expected to live. The writer of the letter felt assured that this accident was permitted for his dear friend's salvation, and further, that the writer of this little paper would be used in blessing to him. He felt it was a question of life and death, nay of eternity; and immediately drove to Harley. There lay Aaron Hoyland, on that bed from which he was to rise no more. A few hours before, he was a strong, able-bodied man. He had been a steady, sober, industrious man; had a well-furnished house, and was greatly respected by all who knew him. The writer had been giving lectures lately at the Public Hall, Hoyland, and at once remembered the remarkably attentive face of this now lame man.

He had been greatly interested, if not awakened, by the Spirit of God. But as yet he was a stranger to the present, perfect, and eternal salvation in Christ Jesus.

This may be the reader's condition. If laid on a bed from which you may never rise in health again, is it not an awful thing to be a stranger to God, because a stranger to Christ? However respected by friends and family, is that enough to enable you to face death, and after death the judgment?

The conversion of Aaron Hoyland was very similar

to that of Lydia. The Lord opened her heart to attend to the things that were spoken. There he lay utterly helpless. His poor leg sadly broken and crushed. Little or no hope of recovery. He was too much shattered to have his leg amputated, until this was the last possible alternative. The quiet reading of the Word of God was what the Holy Spirit chiefly used in his bright and blessed conversion. He was shown that the message of God from heaven was no less than the forgiveness of sins, through the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. These words were read slowly to him—"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38-39.) He heard God speaking to his soul in these words. He had heard the words before, but never heard God speaking in them to him as a lost, guilty sinner.

Very simple was the childlike faith with which he thus believed God. The certainty that God meant what He said broke in upon his soul. Jesus *had* glorified God on the cross in bearing the full judgment due to sins. God had raised that Holy Sin-bearer from the dead, and now every barrier was removed. God in righteousness proclaimed forgiveness of sins, and all that believe were, yea are, justified from all things. He believed God with his heart: that is, it was a message he needed, it concerned him, and he believed it; so that as sure as God speaks truth, he was justified from all things.

Then there was another scripture equally blest to him. These words gave him a threefold certainty. His heart was opened to hear them as the precious words of Jesus. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him, that sent Me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." (John

v. 24.) & He never seemed for a moment to doubt the very truth of what Jesus said in these words. He believed God, and therefore knew his sins were forgiven. He knew he was justified from all things; accounted righteous before God. God said so.

And now he heard the words of Jesus. He believed God that sent Him; and he knew that he had everlasting life. Jesus said so. He knew he should never come into judgment. Jesus said so. He knew he was passed from death unto life. Jesus said so; and he did not need anyone else to say so. The word of Jesus was enough for Aaron Hoyland. Oh that it might be enough for the reader of this paper! Think of the love of God in sending His Son! Surely that love must be infinite to poor sinners, that spared not His Son, but freely gave Him up: who also gave Himself, in voluntary love to us, to bear our sins on the shameful tree.

Being justified by faith, he had perfect peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He never doubted that that peace which Jesus had made through the blood of His cross must be perfect. Another scripture was very sweet to his soul for his blessed Jesus had said it. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out." (John vi. 37.) His soul could adore the God of all grace who had given him to Christ, and now had used this terrible accident in bringing him to know Jesus. And it was so sweet to rest in that love that says, "I will in nowise cast out."

And now he was looking for Jesus, not as an angry judge (this indeed He will be to all who reject Him now); but Aaron loved to meditate on that blessed moment when "the Lord Himself shall descend from he aven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain

shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) Yes, during those six weeks of great bodily pain, he loved to dwell on that blessed moment, the coming of the Lord to take His own, whether sleeping in Jesus, or alive and remaining. He would ask about the change in his body at the first resurrection : and when shown that just as he had borne the image of the earthy, so also should he bear the image of the heavenly : that he would be like the Lord in glory and have the same incorruptible body, as is shown in 1 Cor. xv. 42-56 : and that when Jesus came in glory he certainly would come with Him—then his soul seemed full of light, and joy, and peace.

It was beautiful to see how he drank in those words of Jesus, "Let not your hearts be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many mansions ; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ; that where I am there ye may be also." (John xiv. 1-3.) Never once did he doubt the reality and certainty of these precious words of love.

They must fill the soul with unspeakable joy, if we believe Jesus. Just think, as surely as He died for us, as surely as He is gone to prepare a place for us, so surely will He come and receive us to Himself. Oh ! wait my soul for the coming of thy precious, loving Lord.

What would an infidel have thought of that sight ? The poor leg as black as a coal. Very offensive ; decomposition, we suppose, had already, set in. But that dear face, as calm as the deep blue sky of heaven. Never shall we forget those few words he spoke, which express so much.—"THERE IS NOTHING BETWIXT MY SOUL AND GOD, THE BLOOD OF JESUS

HAS PUT IT ALL AWAY!" Yes, the precious blood of Jesus was more to Him than ten thousand worlds. Nothing in heaven or earth can give this divine, calm, intelligent certainty, in the immediate prospect of death, or the coming of the Lord, but the blood of Jesus. He had entered in some measure by the teaching of the Holy Spirit into the depth of those words, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John i. 7.) He could say, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. (Rev. i. 5.) "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.) Thus, believing these divine statements of God's Word, he could say with peaceful confidence, "There is nothing betwixt my soul and God, the blood of Jesus has put it all away!" Thus he had boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus. It was very blessed to witness the heavenly peace the precious blood gave to his conscience. He believed God that such was the value of the one sacrifice of Christ for those whose sins He bore, that God says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 17.)

This contrast also gave great comfort to his soul.

"And it is appointed unto men (not all men) once to die, but after this the judgment; so CHRIST was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin, unto salvation."

All his lifetime he had been taught to believe in a general resurrection of judgment; now he saw that all his sins had been laid on Jesus to be remembered against him no more. And now he could look for the very Jesus who bore his sins and their full judgment on the cross. Yes, when Jesus comes He will be the very one who bore his sins on the cross.

Thus justified from all things by His precious blood: and sin, (the root) condemned by the one

sacrifice for sin, he believed what God said, that "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 1-3.)

There was no excitement, but the calm rest of the soul in God.

Aaron believed God, as a little child believes a mother's word, a mother's love.

After some weeks, the doctor decided to amputate the dead limb. The broken bones could not be set. When that trying moment came, there was no fear of death, nor of pain. It was however a great stroke to the shattered system. He did not survive long. Lock-jaw ensued in eight days. His sufferings were now so great he could scarcely be seen; but his peace flowed like a river, until that moment when he was "absent from the body, present with the Lord."

He was a man of few words: but those few, and the way in which they were said, will never be forgotten by the writer of these lines. "There is nothing betwixt my soul and God: the blood of Jesus has put it all away."

Oh, reader, canst thou say so? Are the sins of thy youth put away? Are the sins of middle life put away? It may be of old age? If called suddenly away, canst thou say, There is nothing betwixt my soul and God? Hast thou tried by fasting, and prayers, and penance, to put them away? Are they put away? Darest thou die trusting to thy prayers of repentance, or penance? Has God said He will forgive for these things? Repentance will be inseparably connected with faith in the atoning death of Jesus, and produce the full acknowledgment of thy sins to God, in confession and self-abhorrence; but far greater was the price given before the sinner could be saved.

It was not at the beginning, but at the end of Job's long history, that he truly repented. The Ninevites believed God, and then repented. And so the Jews at Pentecost. And often when the soul is brought to

the lowest point, like Hezekiah, when he cried, "O Lord I am oppressed; undertake for me." Ah, it is just then full deliverance comes. What is your state at this moment? Can you say in perfect peace, There is nothing betwixt my soul and God? or do you say I have tried to give up my sins: have tried to serve God: I have tried to repent and tried to pray: but oh my sins: O Lord I am oppressed; undertake for me? Yes, when brought to this: guilty, lost, without power, or strength to be better: and unless God undertakes for me I am lost for ever. "What shall I say?" says Hezekiah; "He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it." (Isa. xxxviii. 14.) Is this true? It is not, will He speak to me? Will He undertake for me? No it is this; He hath spoken to me in His blessed Word. He hath undertaken for me: He hath done it! Oh what a fact, the eternal Son of God hath undertaken the lost, guilty, helpless sinner's redemption; and He hath done it! "Sing O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it." (Isaiah xlv. 23.) It is not He will: He hath done it! "It is finished." "Peace unto you." Go over this paper again; the same word spoken to Aaron Hoyland, is now spoken to you. He Himself hath done it. "Be it known unto you.....that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe ARE justified." He that believeth HATH everlasting life. Do you say I do believe God: will He now forgive my sins, even mine? Yea, if you believe God, He hath spoken unto you, and Himself hath done it. To the poor woman at Jesus' feet believing Him, He did not say pray, and thy sins shall be forgiven. No! He said "Thy sins are forgiven thee: thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace." (Luke vii. 48-50.) Do you believe this point? You cannot separate faith and forgiveness. Faith links us with the infinite value of the blood of Christ. Nothing is left between our souls and God; the blood of

Christ has put it all away. "I HAVE blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto Me for I HAVE redeemed thee. Sing O ye heaven; for the Lord hath done it." (Isaiah xlv. 22.) Thus will the Lord speak to Israel in mercy in days yet to come. And thus may He speak to the reader now. It is the earnest prayer of the writer that as God spoke peace to Aaron Hoyland through these portions, and others of His Word, so He may speak to the reader. Why should you doubt God? Why should you turn a deaf ear? Ponder these questions. Can anyone give me this calm peace with God; this boldness to enter His presence but the blood of Christ? Blessed be God! "Sing O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it." C. S.

"YOU WILL NEVER MAKE YOUR PEACE WITH GOD."

THE GRACE OF GOD TO THE COLLIER WITH THE BROKEN BACK.

A FEW weeks ago we were sent for to Elsecar, to see a collier who had met with a serious accident. His back was broken: and it was thought he had but a very short time to live. We had about eight miles to drive to see him, and therefore time to realize the serious importance of speaking to one just about to enter upon eternity. We called on a friend who had been to see him, but who found him suffering so much, that he could not bear even to hear the Word of God read to him. After a few sentences as to his terrible accident, we said, "You have only a very short time to live." "No," he said, "I am quite aware of it." We looked at him, and said, "You may indeed have only a very short time to live, and *you* will never make your peace with God. No, never!" Suddenly the man looked

eatly alarmed. We solemnly repeated the words. 'You will *never* make your peace with God. You have been a great sinner before God: and you never can make your peace with God. If you had a thousand years to live, *you* never could make your peace with God.' Just look at that man with a broken back. The sins of a lifetime behind; eternity before him; and the impossibility of making his peace with God!

Do you say it was enough to drive him to despair? It was. Thank God it did. If you had heard that groan, not only a broken back, but a broken heart crushed beneath the sense of sin; and the sudden despair of never being able to make his peace with God. Death and judgment were before him. Oh! reader, you may never have given such a groan: such tears of despair may have never run down your cheeks. You think there is time enough yet. You have no such gloomy thoughts. Oh dear no: you are not so bad: you have no doubt you will be able to make your peace with God. At least you hope so, don't you?

What we said to him, we solemnly say to you. You will never, no never, make your peace with God. No! until you despair of doing it, you are not in a fit state to hear the glad tidings, that peace has been made, as it is written, by the blood of the cross.

The imploring looks of poor Eaden, for that is his name, seemed to say, what can you mean? He might well be surprised at this plain speaking; for do you know, reader, how often the dying are deceived by those who visit them? They tell them to make their peace with God, some by repentance: some by prayers. Repentance and prayers are blessed accompaniments of salvation. But put them both together, and they would be a plank, far too short to reach across the wide gulf that separates man from God. Something more than man could do must be done. We waited a little while. He

then felt in some measure the meaning of that word, LOST: a lost sinner, who cannot make his peace with God: of course if he can, he is not lost. If he awakes to the truth, a sinner before God, then he knows he is lost.

Such was the condition of the collier, with the broken back.

We now turned to the Word of God and quietly read, "And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled." (Col. i. 21.) "For He is our peace.....and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." (Eph. ii. 13-17.) We said, thus you see, that which you cannot possibly do has been done long ago. Jesus must needs suffer. Nothing but His precious blood could atone for sins, and make peace with God. Yes, He made peace by the blood of His cross; and now God sends peace to you. This is the only true ground of peace. Believing God that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification; we are accounted righteous. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. iv. 24, 25; v. 1.) Yes, on the cross Jesus said, "It is finished." Now He says "Peace unto you." Ah, it is giving up all thoughts of making our peace with God; and accepting the peace made by the blood of the cross of Christ.

A friend with us who often visits the dying colliers, now said, "Yes, it is giving up everything of self, and trusting Christ, resting in what He has done without a bit of our own." And looking kindly at

him he said, "Could you walk upstairs if you wanted?" He was laid in the little parlour downstairs. "Walk upstairs!" he said, and placing his hand on the middle of his body, he sorrowfully added, "Walk upstairs, why I am dead up to here." (Such was the case as to all sensation, or feeling, as the spinal cord was broken.) "Well," said my friend, showing him a pair of strong arms; "I could just put my arms under you, and carry you upstairs, like a child, and lay you on the bed. You would have to make no effort of your own: but just give yourself up into my arms. Now do you see it? It is just giving yourself up like that to Christ. Leaving yourself entirely in His hands."

At that moment, we believe, he passed from death unto life, from looking at self to Christ; from trying to make his peace with God; to resting for ever, in that peace made by his precious Saviour long ago. Resting in Jesus, what a contrast to human effort and works! God, who opened the heart of Lydia to attend to the things spoken unto her, opened also the heart of this man with a broken back, to attend to the Word of God spoken to him.

There was repentance, and there was prayer, but not to make his peace with God. When Israel had sinned against the Lord, and were bitten by fiery serpents, there was suffering and pain; but the suffering and pain did not heal them. The brazen serpent must be lifted up. "And it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten a man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." (Num. xxi. 9.) And Jesus said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 14.) Has He not been lifted up on the accursed tree? Has He not made propitiation for sins? Has He not made peace through the blood of the cross? Hasn't He

who cannot lie, said, "It is finished"? Yes, He has died the just for the unjust to bring us to God. He has been (believers can say), "delivered for our iniquities;" He has been raised from among the dead for our justification. Believing God, we are justified from all things; and have peace with God. We have not to make our peace with God, we have peace with God; not through anything we have done, or can do, but through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by faith, believing God: for God has raised Him from the dead, who bare our sins in His own body on the tree. And God says "all that believe ARE justified from all things." Oh blessed certainty, God says it. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

What a difference there is between having peace with God, and trying to make peace! The judge makes a terrible mistake, when he tells the poor trembling criminal, as he passes sentence of death upon him, that he has only a few days to live; he strongly recommends him to use those few days, in making his peace with God. It would be far better to tell him the truth. Better say, "You are proved guilty: you have only a fortnight to live; and you can never make your peace with God. No, never. There is no escape from endless woe for you, but accepting the free forgiveness of God, through Jesus Christ the Lord." Or, you see that poor soldier, just about to be slain by the pursuing enemy. He was fast asleep, and knew not his danger. Suddenly he awakes to his real condition. He seeks to escape for dear life: but there is a deep, dark, rapid river before him. He is told by one to make haste, and make a bridge; to use his utmost efforts. The least delay, and he is a dead man. True, he has two short planks, but both put together are still far too short to reach across that fearfully dark stream. "My friend," says another, "You can never make a bridge

across that wide and dark stream: you have neither materials, nor power, to make a bridge." The poor soldier's heart sinks in despair, and in a moment realizes his *lost* condition. "Oh," says his friend, "I am thankful you now own the true state of things. Cheer up, friend, I have good news: there is a new bridge there you have never seen; and anxious, awakened soul, that bridge is Christ!"

But why suppose an illustration? Whether you have a broken back or not: or whether you are under the sentence of death convicted by your country's jury, (and this tract will be read by such,) whether you are laid on a sick bed, and have but a few days to live, how many there are in this very condition! Or, whether you are in health. Yet, if unsaved, what are the facts of your case? Are you not like the poor soldier asleep, spiritually shutting your eyes to this fact, that all the world, Jews or Gentiles, are under sentence of death, found guilty, and under judgment? "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Read Rom. iii. 19-26.

If not a believer, then mark those words of Jesus, "He that believeth not is condemned already." If all the world are guilty before God, then you are, for you are clearly a part of the world. You may shut your eyes to these facts a little longer, but not long; compared with eternity you have but a few days at most to live. Oh, may God by this little paper awaken you to the real facts of your case. You cannot deny you are guilty; not only of a life of sins, as we said to dear Eaden; you have been a sinful man, and you cannot make your peace with God. Yea, you may even have despised the bridge, and spent long years trying to fasten your own planks together. Have you not? Works for salvation will do very well for men to preach and boast about in this world; but you must go out of it. May be you have only a few hours to live. Now look across that dark stream

of death : and after death ! How are YOU going to cross ? How are you going to meet the Judge ? There is no escape but one—only one bridge there. Satan and all your sins behind : death and judgment before. Don't talk of making your own bridge. Don't talk of making your peace with God. Would not this be to despise the work of God, the Designer, and Maker of that only bridge ? Oh, are you awake ? Do you own your guilty condition ? Your lost and helpless state, in sin and death ? Do not mistake : God must have the truth owned. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Can you now give all up into the hands of Christ ?—to be carried to heaven like a little child. Do you see the bridge that you never saw before ? Not our making our peace with God ; but peace made by the blood of Jesus. Simple rest in Jesus. Those arms will never fail : that bridge will never give way. It will bear your weight, nay, He has been made sin for us. He has borne the full weight of the judgment due to us. May you without an effort trust Him. Do you say, "I do believe God sent Jesus to bear our sins on the tree. I do believe God has raised Him from the dead. I do believe peace is made by His blood. I do utterly renounce all thought of making my peace with God. But how am I to know personally for myself that I have life eternal, and shall not come into condemnation, for my sins ?" We point you to the bridge. And now we will tell you a wonderful thing : Jesus has said it, on purpose for your everlasting comfort. These are His own words to *you*—*"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life."* (John v. 24.)

Perhaps you never saw this before. Now is this true that you hear the words of Jesus : that you

believe God that sent Him? Then do you see not only the bridge; but you have crossed it. You have everlasting life, you shall not come into condemnation. You have crossed the bridge, you have passed from death unto life. Must it be so? Jesus says it.

Just a few words more as to dear Eaden with the broken back. He still lives, as we write this. A monument of sovereign grace. Helpless as to the poor body. His little children around his bed. It grieves my heart to say there is frequently no provision for the need of these great sufferers; but God has lifted him up, superior to all circumstances. Filled with joy in Christ—waiting His will; and waiting His return from heaven. The following lines have been a source of great enjoyment to him. And with these words we must close our short paper on the Grace of God to the Collier with the Broken Back.

Fast now wears the weary night,
The night of sin and sorrow;
Soon shall break in glory bright
The long expected morrow.

Wake, awake, and sleep no more,
Farewell to the long, long night;
Turn from earth, and upward soar,
Watch to see the glory bright!

Brighter far than midday sun,
Sudden as the flash of light:
Hark the sound, the victory's won,
Millions rise in glory bright!

Not a spot of sin is there;
All are clothed in purest white;
Now they meet Him in the air,
Meet their Lord in glory bright!

Set on thrones, with crowns of gold,
What a rapturous, wondrous sight!
How shall all Thy praise be told?—
Jesus, come in glory bright!

We shall see Thee as Thou art,
We shall know, in heavenly light,
All Thy love, and never part;
Come, dear Lord, in glory bright!

A GREAT SUPPER!

WHAT IT COST.

WHAT IT IS.

WHO ARE THE WELCOME GUESTS ?

AND,

WHO ARE ENGAGED IN BRINGING THEM TO SUPPER ?

BY

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WHAT IT COST.

WE want to talk with you a little about the wonderful parables of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is one of them. Jesus said, "A certain man made a great supper and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." (Luke xiv. 16-24.) This great supper is a picture of God's great salvation. When you are invited to supper by a friend, do you expect that you will have to pay for it? Or will you be expected to provide it? Or take any part of it to your friend's house? Of course not. Would you not simply have to sit down and receive it? Just so. You would merely be a guest. All would have to be done by someone else before you could receive it. A great deal would have to be done before the servant could say all things are now ready: the supper is on the table. This is the peculiarity of the Gospel. Not so

when man was under law. Then the law made known the righteous demands of God. That was more like the landlord coming to your house for the rent, when you can't pay it; can't pay it when you would. This great supper is not like that. All is provided, all is given.

Why don't you like to think about God? Don't you think He demands something from you, something that you find you have not to give? Yes, you do. You think you have to become good, holy, righteous, religious. God demands all this from you, and you cannot give it Him. Is not that what you think? Have you not often tried to bring all this to God, and still you find you fail to do it. And yet you think if you do not bring something to God, according to the demands of His law, you never can be saved. The Lord Jesus will show you in this picture that you are quite mistaken, that this is not God's present plan at all. God provides and gives everything. He does not expect you to bring, but to receive, just as you would at your friend's great supper. Do you see that this great supper is in direct contrast with the demands of the law? The law says thou shalt love God. This supper shows how God has loved you.

What is a *great* supper? If half-a-dozen men were invited to a supper that cost one shilling, that would not be called a great supper, would it? A supper is great according to what it costs. What would you think, if a nobleman sold all he had, and made a great supper for the poor? That would be a supper to talk about. A great supper indeed. If a supper is great according to what it costs: and if God is the provider of this great supper: this great salvation: let us then inquire

WHAT IT COST.

It is not now God in law demanding: but God so

loved the world, *that He gave* His only begotten Son. Have you read of Him in the prophet Isaiah? "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of host." (Isaiah vi. 1-3.) This is Jesus Jehovah! "These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him." (John xii. 41.) "Unto the Son, he saith, Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever." "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thine hands." (Heb. i.) "For by Him were all things created." "And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." (Col. i. 15-17.) He became flesh and dwelt amongst us. Born of a poor maid of Nazareth; in a stable: laid in a manger. Oh! read His wondrous life of sorrow, of sympathy, of divine love to sinners. And now turn back and see Him in the glory, too bright for highest creature gaze: see seraphim veil their faces, and cry Holy, holy, holy! Now turn to another scene. See Him in dark Gethsemane—His soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. See Him sweating as it were great drops of blood! No human heart to sympathize. His loved disciples asleep! At that moment one of His disciples and the chief priests of His nation were planning to betray Him and put Him to death. He says, "When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me." (Ps. cxlii. 3.) Oh, see the Creator of the universe become lowly man, and giving Himself into the hands of wicked men. See Him bound; see Him led to Caiaphas; see Him delivered to Pilate. "Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him. And

the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe." Ah, they mocked Him; they spit upon Him. But see Him thrown down. See His hands and His feet nailed to the accursed tree. See Him hanging by those painful wounds! "He was wounded for our transgressions: bruised for our iniquities." His soul was made an offering for sin. And now the heavens grew dark. Made sin for us, He was forsaken of God. Oh, listen to that cry! "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" Harken again: "It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." This was the price of the great supper: the great salvation of God. This is what it cost. He must be lifted up on the cross, the sacrifice for sins. He must die or remain alone, and never have a guest at the supper. He must die: and rise again from amongst the dead, or all things could never be ready. There is no other supper for poor lost sinners. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

How long have you despised this great supper? It is said in Matthew, "They made light of it." Have you made light of it? So here in Luke they all made a polite excuse. The piece of ground—the oxen—the wife. Oh, is it so with you, your business, your work, your family: all right in themselves; but can you pay attention to these things, and neglect, nay refuse, the great supper; the great salvation?

In this section we have been occupied with what it cost; in our next we hope to see what it is. The greatest feast ever made on earth just dwindles down to nothing compared to this. Of every feast that man, guilty man, can make, it is like Belshazzar's feast, there is the writing of a man's hand on the wall. But of this supper it is written, "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

No other supper could ever pretend to this. At all

the feasts on earth man eats and hungers again. But this great supper is everlasting. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John iv. 14.)

Once made partakers of God's great salvation we cannot desire another: there is no other. It was first spread in the midst of the city, even Jerusalem. There it was made light of, despised, and rejected. Free to accept it, all rejected. They would not believe the free grace of God.

Have you tried the pleasures of this world? Do they ever satisfy? How can they, when death and judgment come after them? They only leave an aching void. The pleasures of sin deceive for a moment: this supper satisfies for ever. When we examine the supper in our next section, we shall find every need of the sinner met once and for ever. Let us remember we have nothing to do for it, nothing to give for it, nothing to bring to it; all is of God. All is done long ago. All things are ready. When the servant says supper is on the table, what have we to do but to sit down and receive it? The cost of this great salvation was the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The cost, His precious blood. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

WHAT IT IS !

We have seen in the former section that this beautiful parable of the great supper shows us that God is not demanding from man, on the principle of law, but giving, providing, in free grace. "A certain man made a great supper." Thus He provided everything, the guests brought nothing. What a new truth this

was as to God and salvation, to men under the administration of the law, which did not give, but demanded. Then we found this supper was great because it cost the greatest price in the universe: the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The agony, the atoning suffering, of the cross, forsaken of God: that was the price of the supper. The price of the great salvation was His precious blood.

Nothing could be more striking than this picture. When you are invited to supper, and all things are ready, you have only to sit down and receive the rich provisions. And mark, this picture admits of no uncertainty. A person *must know* whether he receives his friend's supper or refuses it. We now propose to examine what this great supper is. Let us continue the figure of the supper. Here then is a great supper spread out, all ready, warranted to meet the needs of every poor sinner brought to it, not only for a moment, but to satisfy for ever.

Pray, what is your need? Do you say deep indeed is my need. I am a guilty sinner. Death and judgment is before me, and I cannot escape; and I cannot undo what I have done; and I know very well in my sins I cannot enter heaven. Sit down here; this is what meets your case at the very head of the table, God speaks to you, "Be it known,"—yes, all is certainty at the supper—"that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." Yes, "To Him give all the prophets witness that, through His name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts xiii. 38.; x. 43.) This is a wonderful part of the great supper. Immediate forgiveness of sins. And mark this is not through our feelings or doings; but through Jesus. And this is not only immediate forgiveness, but perfect and everlasting forgiveness. "And their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." Oh! do you believe God? This is the very first taste of blessedness at

the great supper. "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." Yes, the moment you sit down in the light of that great supper—for there is no darkness there—then you immediately know that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Sins can no more be reckoned to any at that great supper. They have been borne by Jesus, their Substitute; and can never be imputed to them.

Then all there are justified from all things? This is the very next thing on the table. "And all that believe are justified from all things." Why, this was the very thing that Jesus, after He had died for our sins, was raised from the dead for. "He was raised again for our justification." Just as the creditor puts the stamp on the bill that has been paid, for full evidence of settlement, so God has raised up Jesus our Lord from among the dead, to be the everlasting receipt—the full evidence of settlement—for that debt paid in His precious blood. Perfect and infinite sacrifice: perfect and everlasting justification, must give perfect and everlasting peace with God. And so all at the supper enjoy this? If they believe God they do. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the happy position of all at the great supper. "Being justified." That is always so. Always we *have* perfect peace with God. It must be so, the supper is always the same, always through Jesus Christ our Lord. The justification could not be more complete. It was God who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead for our justification. Who shall lay anything to the charge of those at the great supper? "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again from the dead." Oh, reader, do you believe God? Have you sat down at the supper?

Now we will look a little further, and see what

God hath made and provided at this great supper. Christ Jesus, still meeting our needs, "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Just as you could look at the various dishes on your friend's table, all provided for you: not brought by you. So here, at the great supper; God's great salvation. Do you say, I am so ignorant, I greatly need wisdom. Sit down and contemplate Christ Jesus made unto you wisdom. The philosopher may study the stones and the stars, but at this supper, you know Him who made them all, from everlasting to everlasting.

Do you say before I can be quite sure I am saved at the great supper: must I not be righteous in all my ways before God and man? Can God possibly justify me before that is the case? Fatal mistake if you have to *bring* righteousness to the supper: at that supper you can never be: for you are guilty, and fail at every point. Was not this the fatal mistake of the Jews? Is it not the fatal mistake of the ritualists? They are vainly trying by works to bring that to the supper which God has made Christ Jesus to be to every one that sits at the great supper. But says another, must I not attain to higher christian life, must I not bring holiness to God? Here is the same mistake again: that is exactly what you find at the great supper, not what you bring. Christ Jesus made unto us sanctification. Well, says another, I need redemption, how may I be sure that I have got it? That again is exactly what all have at the great supper. Yes, God has provided all. Jesus Christ: infinite wisdom: everlasting righteousness. "By one offering He has perfected for ever all that are sanctified." Eternal redemption. The great mistake we make is in supposing we have to *bring* some of these, instead of sitting down, in perfect peace, and finding all we need, and all ours for evermore. If we are still on the ground of

God's righteous demands from us, we are lost, for if He deals with us in righteousness He must condemn us. The blood of propitiation for our sins has been shed. God in His righteousness has raised the believer's substitute from the dead. God thus proclaims forgiveness of sins to us, and all that believe God *are* justified. They sit at the great supper in perfect peace with God. Christ is their wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. And they hunger no more. They need no other righteousness before God; no other sanctification; no other redemption.

But what is there in this great supper to provide for righteousness before men? Just everything. Being justified by faith before God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost dwells in them, and thus walking in the Spirit, practical righteousness is fulfilled in them.

Here comes one with trembling desire to sit in perfect peace at the great supper. Well, Jesus says, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." Pray, what do you ask for at the supper? Is this what you long to know? When all the sorrows and storms of this sad life are past, I want to be *quite sure* of a home above. Oh, if you will sit down, and just take what is set before you, you will find three times more than you ask. This is the very thing He makes so certain. He says to you, poor trembling believer, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye *may* be also." (John xiv.) Yes, He says, your home above with Me shall be as certain as that I am there. Could He say more? Yes, He does. He promised the Comforter, the Holy Ghost to be with you all the way. Yet more still—"Peace I leave with you, My

peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Certainty of home; the presence of the Comforter all the way, and His peace which is surely perfect. My section is finished, but it will take eternity to unfold the vastness of this great supper; the great salvation of God. Tell us, dear reader, how will you escape if you neglect it?

We now proceed to inquire—

WHO ARE THE WELCOME GUESTS ?

We have seen that this great salvation is entirely of God; as the friend who invites you certainly provides the repast. We have seen that the cost of this great supper was the death of the Son of God. No other price could have bought it. We have seen that the great supper meets every need of the lost sinner. Forgiveness of sins; justification from all things; no condemnation to them that are in Christ, at the great supper. No separation from that festive feast of love. Christ Jesus their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Their home in the place prepared, secured. The Holy Ghost abiding with them. The peace of Christ their happy portion. All provided of God. Nothing to do, nothing to bring; all given, and given for ever.

Now, Who are the welcome guests?

Such a great supper, such a great salvation spread out before the multitude, hastening on to death and judgment and eternal woe. Surely, you would say, the whole world would at once accept so great salvation. No, it is not so. With all man's boast of freedom, if left to his own choice, not one would sit down at the great supper. These are the words of Jesus: "They made light of it." "They all with one consent, began to make excuse." Yes, profanely or politely, all refuse the salvation which is wholly of

God's providing. Is not this a true and sad picture?

Tell a man to wash in the Ganges, he will do it. Tell him to give his body to be crushed by the wheels of the idol, he will do it. Tell him to lacerate his poor body, to put it to untold tortures, he will do it. Tell him to own the false prophet of Mecca, he will do it. Tell him to fast; to say long prayers; tell him to become an idolater, and worship a bit of bread, or the blessed virgin; tell him to shut himself up in a cell;—all these things, or anything, the million will do, to work out a righteousness of their own: to provide something to bring to God. But, spread out the accomplished salvation of God, not one of the human race will accept it. All make their polite excuse. Is this true? Look at Jerusalem, nay, look at the cities and towns of highly-favoured England, for an answer. Nay, we don't need go beyond the reader and the writer of these few thoughts.

Oh, is this so? Are you hastening on, day by day—every day a day nearer to death, judgment, the lake of fire—and yet every day rejecting the great salvation of God.

Blessed be God, even from Jerusalem, the city that killed the Holy One of God. From the lanes of that city *the poor, the maimed, the halt, the blind*, were brought to the great supper—three thousand in one day!

Who are the welcome guests? The poor, the maimed, the halt, the blind. "And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room." Yes, there is room; room for the writer, and room for the reader. Yet there is room! "And the Lord said unto His servant, Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." This is the blessed work of God amongst the highways and hedges of the lost Gentile world. Is not this grace beyond all

measure, beyond all human thought? Not only is this great supper spread, but the outcasts of the highways and hedges are compelled to come in. Oh, how they sing,

'Twas the same love that spread the feast,
That sweetly forced me in;
Else I had still refused to taste,
And perished in my sin.

We will take two persons as samples of the welcome guests. One from the Old Testament, which throws light, in picture, on this great supper. We ask your attention especially to the kindness of God, in fetching a welcome guest, lame on both his feet. This young man had fallen, and became utterly lame on the day of the death of his father. This is our condition through Adam's sin; we are fallen and utterly lame without strength. David said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? There was one, this lame young man, in the house Machir, in Lo-debar. There he was hiding from David in the place of Lo-debar—that is, the place of no pasture—such a picture of our condition. Are you there, not only hiding from God, hasting on to endless woe, but nothing to satisfy all the way? David sent and fetched him from his hiding-place. And when he came he fell on his face. Then “David said, Mephibosheth! And he said, Behold thy servant. And David said unto him, Fear not, for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake and thou, shalt eat bread at my table continually.” Thus God fetches the poor hiding, guilty, helpless, lame sinner, and says, Fear not, I will surely shew thee kindness, for Christ's sake. Think of these words, Surely I will shew thee kindness. Surely! What a feast; and to eat continually This kindness of God at once produces repentance. “And he bowed himself, and said, what is thy servant.

that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am." Has the kindness of God ever led you to this deep self-aborrence ?

All is given to this poor cripple. He is placed at the King's table, as one of the King's sons. The kindness of God gives this poor lame sinner the highest place of royal blessing. It was the will of the King. "As for Mephibosheth, said the King, he shall eat at my table, as one of the King's sons. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he did eat continually at the King's table; and was lame on both his feet." (2 Sam. ix.) Wonderful as is this picture of the kindness of God, yet the reality far exceeds the type. David deals with him for Jonathan's sake. God deals with us for Christ's sake. He sits at the feast as one of the King's sons. But as to all who are brought to the great supper, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

Very beautiful is the love of David to one of the house of Saul, his enemy. "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

One scarcely knows which is the most wonderful, the grace of God in spreading such a feast, or the wickedness of man in despising it? What a text is that over the door of the feast, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Look at it again and again. Yes, the house shall be filled. There is a place for every guest; and every guest shall fill that place. The poor, the halt, the lame, the blind, are welcome. The chief of sinners He receives. The greatest sinner you know is welcome, and is not that yourself? Cast yourself on His own words, "Shall in no wise be cast out."

Do you say, Oh, I am a christian without all that; I was baptized; I was confirmed; I say my prayers.

Are you a christian? Are you at the great supper? Are your sins forgiven? Are you justified? Have you peace with God? Don't say I pray for these things. Many things we have to pray for. But the poor, halt, lame, blind, had not to pray for the great supper; it was all ready for them. To pray for a supper then, would have been to reject it. Don't say no man can know whether he is saved or not; it is like saying no man can tell whether he has had his supper or not. The great supper, remember, is the gift of God, and to doubt it is to make God a liar. "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar." (1 John v. 13.)

In our next section we hope to take up a sample case from the New Testament, and also to consider the persons engaged in bringing the guests to the great supper.

Don't forget those words of Jesus, "And shall in no wise be cast out."

WHO ARE ENGAGED IN BRINGING THEM TO THE SUPPER.

We have seen that this great supper, the great salvation, is entirely of God. That it meets every possible need of the sinner. It is a great supper because of its great cost. That it lasts for ever. "He that believeth hath everlasting life." We have seen that the whole human race, left to their own choice, reject this great supper. We have seen a sample, how the guests have to be fetched to the supper, in the case of Mephibosheth, lame on both feet. The kindness of God shown unto him. The place given him at the table as a King's son. How God fetches the sinner that deserves everlasting judgment, and how God shows him everlasting kindness for Christ's sake.

Now we will look at another sample guest brought

to the supper. And who, dear reader, do you think are the persons engaged in seeking this strange guest, and receiving him safe to the great supper? The ever blessed glorious persons of the one Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We shall soon see how.

If you read on in Luke xiv. you will find one thing greatly overlooked. If you are brought to the great supper, and made a partaker of the great salvation, there must then be no half measures. Christ must be all; He must have the first and sole place. No claims of nature, of relations, or of your own life, must come betwixt you and Him.

This beautiful parable had a wonderful effect:—"Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him." This is just what we want you now to do: listen to the words of Jesus. "And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." They who would be thought righteous, always murmur at this. But now in connection with the great supper, Jesus, who receiveth sinners, gave the following parable, in which is both shown who are engaged in bringing the guests to the table and also fully describes a sample of the guests.

Don't forget it is Jesus, the Son of God, who speaks to us. The parable is divided into three parts. The man who seeks, finds, and brings the lost sheep. The woman who seeks diligently until she finds the lost piece of silver. The father who rejoices to find the lost son. In each case notice the word *lost*. Ah! if you knew the meaning in your own soul, *lost*! Will you notice the order of the parable, all to show how the lost sinner is brought to the supper.

First, the lost sheep. David sent to Lo-debar to fetch the poor cripple. Jesus came himself from the highest glory to bleed, and die for the lost one. Yes, the Good Shepherd must die: must be lifted up: must

bear our sins on the cross, or never, never, have the joy of receiving the one lost sheep. He says, "I lay down My life for the sheep." It was not the lost sheep that sought the man, but the man that sought the sheep. It was all *the man*. He sought it, he found it, he carried it, he desired to have it safe at home, and he never gave it up till he got it there. Such is the Man Christ Jesus. He came to seek the lost sinner. He died for him. He brings him safe home at last rejoicing.

And all this the will of the Father. He says, "Therefore doth My Father love Me." If you know Him thus, it will fill your heart with repentance; fill His with joy.

There is the diligent seeking of the woman, who had lost the piece of silver. Thus next in order, when the Lord Jesus had finished the work given Him to do, and was ascended up on high, the Holy Ghost was sent down, and for eighteen hundred years has He been diligently seeking lost sinners, to bring them to the great supper. And what ever it is to the repenting sinner, it is joy to the Holy Spirit to find and to bring the lost. Is He not diligently seeking you? Oh, that by this little paper He may bring you to the happy feast. And now we will go to the third part of the parable. Jesus, the Son of God, having bowed His head, and cried, "It is finished;" God having raised Him from the dead for our justification; the Holy Ghost having found the sinner, and awakened his conscience, we will now dwell a little on the Father's joy in receiving him.

There is the guest to be brought, far from his Father's house. As to all good, dead in trespasses and sins. As to all that is bad, he wasted his substance with riotous living. Spent *all* in grossest sins, with harlots. Could sin satisfy him? When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land. Satan sends him to the swine. Poor fellow, he would fain

have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. Oh, the dreadful slavery of sin! What wretchedness! And no man can give relief. And yet this very wretchedness and self-aborrence is what God is using to bring this poor prodigal to himself. He came to himself. Yes, is not the slavery of sin, rushing wilfully, madly, unto certain everlasting woe; is it not madness? He came to himself. Would you have thought that that wretched sinner was the sample guest the Lord Jesus selects as the one to be brought to the great supper? The moment he came to himself, the Father came to his mind, and bread enough and to spare in the Father's house.

What of the Father? "But when he was a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion on him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Did you ever see anything like that? Words of Jesus revealing the Father, meeting the sin-oppressed lost prodigal. The work of Jesus, the beloved Son, has removed every barrier. Are you a wretched sin-confessed prodigal? Oh, see the Father's compassion and kiss first, and then the prodigal's confession second.

The Father ran to meet him; the Father had compassion on him; the Father fell on his neck and kissed him. The kindness of God melts the heart in repentance and confession. It is not our repentance that melts the heart of God in kindness. Oh what precious lessons these are! "And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son." "But" yes, *immediately* sins are confessed all are forgiven. "But the Father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." Thus is the one lost guest received. Thus is he clothed in righteousness divine: the best robe. Thus he receives the ring, golden pledge

of everlasting love. And the shoes on his feet, power to walk and do the will of God. At once and for ever he is ready for the great supper. Nay, though the Father met him a great way off, yet at once he is at the supper. But we don't hear a word more from him, it is all the Father's joy. If thus crouched to see and accept the grace of God, let us now forget ourselves and be occupied with the Father's joy. He says, "And let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry." The man rejoiced to find the lost sheep; the woman to find the lost silver; and the father rejoices to find the lost son! God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, God the Father. The three persons in one Godhead REJOICE in seeking, saving, bringing, receiving, the lost sinner to the great supper. Such is the great salvation wholly of God.

Satan would tell you there must be long weary years of penance here, or purgatory hereafter, or both, or you must do something to bring a righteousness to God first; or you must do great works of repentance first, before God can love you or show you kindness; or you must spend a life of dismal ritualism first, and then hope God will be merciful; at last. Satan is a liar.

The Lord Jesus Christ shows us that on the ground of His own infinite sacrifice, by His death for the sinner that now the supper is spread, and now the unhindered kindness of God the Father, by the Holy Spirit, melts the heart of the vilest sinner to full repentance and confession of sins, and immediately all sins are forgiven, the sinner, covered in divine righteousness, is fitted and brought to the great supper, to sit down as a son, in the glory of God.

'Oh, that this may be the reader's place, now and for ever more. Amen.

C. S.

“GOD SO LOVED.”

JOHN iii. 16.

THE substance of a discourse first preached on Lord's day, March 29th, 1835; and again, after fifty years, on March 29th, 1885.

We will read from verse 14: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Before we notice the wondrous revelation of God in these verses, it may be necessary, for some, to refer to a fatal mistake made by many in applying the doctrine of the new birth, as stated to Nicodemus, as though Christ meant, or taught, the new birth by water baptism. We must notice that the Lord was not speaking to a Christian about the church or Christianity, but to a ruler of the Jews; and He was speaking to him about the kingdom of God—that kingdom

which God will assuredly set up on earth. And we must not confound the terrestrial glory of that kingdom with the celestial glory of the church. No doubt there are even important principles in common. Whether for the kingdom or the church, fallen man must be born again; but to suppose that the new birth is a priestly act of man, in the ordinance of baptism, is the most fatal heresy. It destroys the efficacy of the word, and faith. If a man can make a child or adult a member of Christ by water, there is no need for either faith or the word of God.

But the Lord does not say one word about baptism in His discourse to Nicodemus. He evidently speaks of that which Nicodemus ought to have understood. Now turn, and see if this was not the case. In Ezekiel xxxvi. 22-37 we have a very complete account of what God will do when He gathers His people, Israel, again, and sets up His kingdom—that of which Jesus spoke. And when He has brought them to their own land, He says, "THEN will I sprinkle clean water upon you . . . and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Water was the well-known emblem of purification. Thus will Israel be born again in that day,

by the operation of the Spirit of God, no doubt applying the word, as in our case.

It is important to notice also the entire change as to the law, when God shall thus set up the millennial kingdom. Under the law God commanded, required everything. In the kingdom of God He produces everything by the new nature and the Spirit. Even repentance is produced after they are born again in the land. "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations." (Ver. 31.)

The law could not produce in man that which an absolutely holy God requires; but God will produce it in His people: "and cause you to walk in my statutes." This is very blessed. Well, there is not one word of christian baptism either here, or in the Lord's words to Nicodemus.

Let us now look at these verses, John iii. 14-16. We would call attention especially to three things in these precious words of Jesus:—

First, The atonement has the first place: "even so must the Son of man be lifted up;"

Secondly, Why was this, the death of Jesus on the cross? The answer is, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son;"

Thirdly, What was the purpose of God in Christ being so lifted up—so given? "That

whosoever [or, every one] that believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

We must never fail to notice, that in the gospel the atonement has the first place. To exclude this, and preach what is called the Fatherhood of God, is the delusion of Satan. "So must the Son of man be lifted up." As Jesus said, on the way to Emmaus, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" And again, to the disciples gathered in the upper room, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." And after this manner the apostles preached the gospel: "Opening and alleging, that Christ **MUST NEEDS** have suffered, and risen again from the dead." (Acts xvii. 3.) "For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. xv. 3.) "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Pet. ii. 24.) "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (Chap. iii. 18.) "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 25.)

Jesus assures us this *must be*: "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up." The work of Christ on the cross is the only true foundation

for the glad tidings of God; and His resurrection from the dead is God's assurance to us of sins forgiven, and justification from all things. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him, ALL that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38.)

But now, in the second place, WHY WAS THIS? Why did the eternal Son, by whom all things were made, and by whom all things subsist—why was He nailed to the cross? Why did He thus groan from beneath the load of our sins? Why *must* He thus die, the propitiation for our sins? Oh, wondrous answer! let heaven and earth hear it. FOR GOD SO LOVED!

Let sinners hear it. The cause was the unfathomable, eternal love of God. For God so loved. Do not suppose that God loved us because Jesus died for us—that He *then* began to love us. Did He love Israel in Egypt because the blood was shed, and sprinkled on the doorposts? No, the blood was sprinkled as the token of His love. His purpose was to spare them. They were sinners, and thus the lamb *must* be killed, and the blood must be sprinkled, to shelter them from righteous judgment. Oh, wondrous grace! Christ lifted up on the cross was the manifestation of God's eternal love to us.

You may say, How can this be? I am sure I never deserved such love as this, neither before, nor since, I have tried to be a Christian. How can God love me, since I hate myself, and only deserve to be cast out of His sight, or into hell? All this is really true, whether we know and own it, or not.

But mark the contrast between the love of God and man's love. Man loves that, or those, whom he thinks deserving of his love. Not so God. For whilst nothing can shew more distinctly God's abhorrence of sin than the cross of Christ, yet it is even there that the love of God to the sinner shone out in all its glory. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 6, 8.)

And all this, when it had been fully proved that there were none that met, or could meet, by law, the righteous requirements of a holy God. All were guilty as to acts. All were also dead in sins, children of wrath. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins," &c. (Eph. ii. 4.) "God so loved." If sin had not come in, and Jesus had not been lifted up, the love of God could never have been known, and would never have been manifested. The telescope may reveal the great works of God, and the micro-

scope the no less wonderful minute things of God; but no glass can be formed of sufficient power to manifest the love of God.

No, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." Here alone is the revelation of what God is to us, and what His love is to us. It is fully manifested. The sending of His Son manifests what He is: God is love. Surely we ought to love God. Man under law was required to love God. But looking within, or at himself, he could never say, I have found it, here is love. Has it not been fully proved that man, with every privilege of the law, only hated God? God was manifest in the flesh as Son of man. Did man love Him? He hated, only hated Him, and sought miserable satisfaction in killing Him, the Prince of life. No, it is not, if we love God, then God will love us. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Do you not see, dear readers, it is not our love to God, but God's love to us, when we deserved nothing but eternal wrath? Owning this honestly, that you only deserve wrath, can you say, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love"? Oh, do you so enjoy this love? Is it perfected in you? That is, do you so know and believe the love that God hath to

you, that that love casteth out all fear? If we know that there is nothing but infinite, perfect love in God to us, how can we be afraid of Him? Nay, "because, as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." If you are afraid of God, you are thinking of your own love, and that is not perfect. If you are thinking of His love, how can you be afraid? for He has brought you to be as Christ is, even in this world. As Jesus said, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." Oh, blessed position!—"As he is, so are we in this world."

Do we not love God then? Oh, yes; but let us remember it is love *produced*. "We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John iv. 6-19.) We thus see that we cannot possibly be under law, and grace. If we are on the ground of love to God as a requirement, we entirely set aside the gospel of the glad tidings by which love is produced. We will now pass on to the third thing we find in these precious words of Jesus. May the Lord open our understandings to understand the riches of His grace.

The third thing we notice then in these verses is this. What was the purpose of God in Christ being so lifted up—so given?

"That whosoever [or every one] that believeth

in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We have seen that the propitiatory death of Christ must have the first—the foundation place in the Gospel of God. "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up." The cause of this, was, "God so loved." We now come to the purpose of God in all this. Surely this is a deep and wondrous theme. God has His own eternal purpose respecting us poor sinners. It was no afterthought when sin had come in, and surely no subsequent thought when Christ had died or we had believed. No, the greatest gift ever given in the countless ages of eternity, the gift of His only begotten Son, was according to purpose. "That whosoever believeth in him." Mark, this purpose was not limited now to Israel, as a nation. No, "whosoever believeth in him." This is a message for you, *to* you, because to every one that believeth. The only limit or distinction is faith, "That believeth in him."

Now the question is this, Do you believe *in* Him? Many would not deny there is such a person as Jesus, the Son of God. The demons were compelled to own that. We do not ask, Do you believe there is such a person as Jesus, once on the cross, now at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens? but we ask, Do you believe *in* Him? Is He the object of your faith, and of your trust? The Waldenses fully admitted the existence of the church; but they

would suffer martyrdom, in its most cruel form, rather than say they believed *in* the church, as an object of faith and trust. Is Jesus the object of your faith? Have you received Him as your Saviour, in whom you trust for present and eternal salvation? This faith is not the belief of demons, but it is the gift of God. We beg of you to answer the question in the presence of God. Have you this faith *IN* Jesus? Can you abandon every hope in yourself, and rest in Him alone for eternal salvation? Do you say, I do believe in Jesus; but oh! my sins, and especially some of them, they so trouble me? It is all well to abhor ourselves; but did not Jesus die for all the believer's sins? Was He not lifted up on the cross for that very thing? Have we not seen that the atoning work is done? Can those sins be charged on Him now? Then, can they be charged on you who now believe in Him as your complete and eternal salvation?

God's eternal purpose then was that every one that believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. If this purpose embraced every one that believeth in Him, and you believe in Him, then it surely means you—it embraces *you*. God is love, and what did He purpose concerning you? That, through the lifting up of the Son of man, you should not perish, but have eternal life. You may not yet know how good this news is, and how many there are that treat it as the

greatest error. God grant you may believe it with an understanding heart.

What then is eternal life? Sometimes we understand what a thing is, by looking at what it is not, or in contrast. What then is temporal or mortal life? It is life that may cease to be. That is the life of all living creatures; as to the life even of man's body, it may cease. It may be for a day, or a month, or a year, and then cease to be. Now many would admit that God had so loved as to give a life, not eternal, but temporal—a life that may be lost or cease to be—may be for a time, and then cease to be. Now eternal life is the opposite of all this; it is life that cannot cease; it is not the life of a creature, it is the life of the self-existent Son of God. Not temporal, but the self-existent, eternal life. And has God so loved, that, through the lifting up of the Son on the cross, we, every one that believeth in Him, should have the eternal life that cannot, that will not, cease to be—the life of the self-existent, eternal Son? This amazing fact is revealed by Jesus.

In scripture, eternal life is spoken of in two ways. The one as to the believer's future state as Matthew xxv. 46. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." See also Romans ii. 7. It is also, as we shall see, spoken of as already the portion of the believer. These words of Jesus,

"should not perish but have eternal life," do not necessarily imply present possession.

We will look at other passages which leave no uncertainty as to this. Even in this same chapter, "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (Ver. 36.) Here are two things equally certain as to present position. The believer hath eternal life as a present thing, and on the unbeliever the wrath of God abides.

As to the believer the Lord makes it most certain. He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, [it should be,] but is passed from death unto life." Have your ears been opened to hear the words of Jesus? Have you been brought, through grace, to believe God who sent His Son? Then the Lord Jesus assures you that you have eternal life; that you shall not come into judgment; that you have passed from death unto life. Why should you doubt Him? He further says, "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day:" only there must be faith in His death, as well as in Him as the bread come down from heaven in His incarnation. "Whoso eateth my flesh and

drinketh my blood, hath eternal life." Nothing can shew more ignorance of His word, or spirit and truth, than to pervert these words of Jesus as though He spake of the bread and wine in the Lord's supper. It is receiving the fact of His death, the shedding of His blood, for our salvation. Whoso does this hath eternal life.

And mark, Jesus does not speak of life that may be lost, or that might be taken from you, or that could possibly cease to be: no, it would not in any such case be eternal life. It is as imperishable as Himself, as it is Himself, and it cannot be lost or taken away. *He says*, and to faith that is enough, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and no man [or one] is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John x. 27-29.)

Satan and unbelief would say, do not be so sure that God so loved you as to give His Son to be lifted up for you, that you might have such certainty as this. Has He said, that you shall never perish; that, as a believer, you not only have eternal life, but none can pluck you out of the Father's hand? "Oh!" Satan says, ever serpent-like, "He knows that if you should sin, you will lose all and pluck yourself from His

hands, then where will your eternal life be?" What a liar the old serpent is! But we have the sure word of God, and has He not made full provision should the true follower of Christ in a moment of temptation fail or sin? Was not that sin borne by Jesus on the tree? What saith the scripture? "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins," &c. (1 John ii. 1, 2.) Yes, "*God so loved.*" Sad indeed it is that so many will not believe that God so loved: they prefer to cling to the dark reasonings of unbelief.

Is it then a light matter to disbelieve God as to this? "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God **HATH** given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Yes, God so loved. Is it dreadful heresy to believe what God so plainly tells us—His very record? And mark, eternal life is in His Son. Can the Son cease to be? can the life He is, then, cease to be? He is the eternal Son. It is not something apart from Himself that we may lose; "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life."

Do you ask, Is it the will of God that I may really know that I have this blessed portion in the Son, even eternal life? "These things have

I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." (1 John v. 10-13.) Oh, how clear the record of God; but beware how you despise it or reason it away.

This is the gospel God was pleased to give to a poor country boy to preach fifty years ago, and this is the same gospel God gave him to preach last night, and gives him now to lay before the reader. That gospel he received not from man. For weary months he was struggling under law, seeking to meet the *requirements* of the law, and ever failing. God the Giver, and God the Producer of all He requires was, as yet, utterly unknown to him. He was returning to his home in a village near Laughton, weary and sorrowful even to despair. He was alone with God in the lane: he fell to the ground in the middle of the road and groaned, "Oh Lord, I can do no more, I can go no farther," and he felt in his soul he was lost. It was there the Holy Spirit revealed to him the true blessed fact that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." And oh, from that day, what mercy, depths of mercy! what failures and chastenings! But the writer has ever proved the truth of the words of Jesus—none, no one, has been able to pluck him out of His hands. Be there few or many days before we see the face

of Him for whom we wait, may we never cease to proclaim the same glad tidings—that the moment a soul is, through grace, brought to truly believe God, he has eternal life, eternal salvation, is for ever perfected by the one sacrifice of Christ, and stands in the full unclouded favour of God in the Beloved. "For we are complete in him." May God, to whom all praise is due—God who so loved, bless these few words to all who read them.

C. S.



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London : G. MORRIS, 20, Paternoster Square.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION.



IT is a mistake to suppose that the great truth of the first resurrection, or the resurrection from among the dead, rests on the interpretation of some difficult passage in the Book of Revelation. So far from this being the case, we shall find it to be the uniform teaching of the New Testament. Neither is it possible to find a single text to uphold the grave error of a general resurrection and judgment. And whilst the first resurrection is the full accomplishment of our salvation : a general judgment practically denies our redemption. The scriptures declare there is none righteous, no, not one ; all have sinned : it therefore follows that if we have to come into judgment for our sins we must all be condemned. As it is written, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified." Is it not evident if we have to look forward to judgment, there must be everlasting wrath before us ? thus salvation is impossible. This is a very solemn question for our souls. If you, and all the world, will rise together, and it is appointed unto you after death the judgment, tell me, how can you be saved ? Is there a single promise of pardon at the judgment ? Not one. Our subject then affects the very foundation truth of the gospel : yes, if the common error of a

general resurrection, and judgment be true, there is no gospel : for none can be saved, all are guilty, and if judged, must be cast into the lake of fire. Is it not then a fearful thing to spend a whole life teaching such dreadful errors ? How many do so, and refuse to hear the word of God ! If you profess to bow to scripture, we ask your solemn attention to the following.

The Sadducees, or Rationalists of that day, brought a supposed difficulty to the Lord. A woman had had seven husbands : whose wife then would she be in the resurrection ? Jesus answered, " But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the *resurrection from the dead*, neither marry, nor are given in marriage : Neither can they die any more : for they are equal to the angels ; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." (Luke xx. 35, 36.) Is not this a resurrection of great privilege ? Will all be raised together equal to the angels, the children of God ? How can there be a general resurrection, when Jesus speaks of those who shall be accounted worthy of the resurrection *from the dead*, or from among the dead ? Rest not until you are assured that this is your privilege.

We will now notice how the Lord Jesus teaches there will be two distinct resurrections. The one of life, the other of judgment ; and the blessed certainty that those who have eternal life shall not come into the judgment. He says that all judgment is committed to Him. That all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father : and further, " Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my

word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment ; but is passed from death unto life." Do you notice that if you hear the words of Jesus, and believe God that sent Him, then even now, you have everlasting life. Surely you have not to wait until the judgment, to know if you shall have it. You both have everlasting life, and Jesus says you shall not come into judgment. The thing is settled now : you have passed from death unto life. Jesus, the very One who shall execute judgment, says these three things to every believer : you have everlasting life, you shall not come into judgment : you are passed from death unto life. Then He says, "Marvel not at this : for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation " (or judgment). (John v. 21-29.) The word hour is used by John to denote a period, as, "The hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit," &c. (John iv. 23, and v. 25.) Plainly "hour" here means the whole of this gospel period of more than eighteen hundred years. So there is a period coming in which there shall be two very distinct resurrections, of those who have everlasting life, the resurrection of life ; those who have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment. Assuredly one of these must be yours and mine.

Now read John vi. 37-40. Here a great privilege is made known for all whom the Father giveth to Christ. "And this is the Father's will which hath

sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day." And to shew the value of this special resurrection the Father's will, that Christ should raise them up, is repeated twice. Is it not evident that if there were a general resurrection there would be no meaning in these words? We shall further find that this first resurrection is at the coming of the Lord, to fetch His saints: and this accounts for the fact, that the resurrection of all given to Christ is so much on His, and on the Father's heart. What tenderness of infinite love in those words as He went to the cross to bear our sins: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv. 1, 2.) Oh the heart of Jesus! oh the Father's will! what rest! what joy this gives.

As the Jews held the doctrine of a general resurrection, at least of themselves, this blessed truth we are examining was very offensive to them, as preached by the apostles. "Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead [or which is from among the dead]. And they laid hands on them," &c. (Acts iv. 1-3.) Do you not see here, the truth of a resurrection from among the dead is the very opposite of the Jewish doctrine of a general resurrection?

Not only is it the joy of Christ to do the Father's will in thus raising us from among the dead, but also this must take place because of the Spirit that

dwelleth in us. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." "But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by [or because of] his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. viii. 11.) What a fact is this, we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. Was He raised from among the dead? then we must be also, we must be like Him in all things. We are waiting for this the full effect of redemption. "Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." If the Spirit of Christ dwells in you, then you must be raised from the dead that He may dwell in you for ever. If a Christian, this must be your destiny.

The resurrection of all that are in Christ, at His coming, is as certain as that all in Adam have died. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." But our question is *when* will those in Christ be raised? "Every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end," &c. (1 Cor. xv. 22-24.) Nothing could be more certain then, than that the resurrection of those that are Christ's will be at His coming. Then cometh the end: we shall see in another scripture when the rest of the dead are judged at the end. But carefully note, that is not the resurrection spoken of here, to the end of this chapter. It is the first resurrection; those that are Christ's. Will the resurrection of the wicked be in power—a spiritual body—in glory. Is it true of them, "And as we have borne the image

of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly"? Is not this the exclusive resurrection of those who are Christ's? The resurrection unto life from among the dead, the redemption of their bodies? When they see Christ they are like Him, they for ever bear the image of the heavenly. What a blessed event is their resurrection from among the dead! Equally blessed for "we who are alive and remain." "Behold I shew you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed," &c. The apostle could not have had a thought of a general resurrection at the end of the world: when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption: for he says *then* shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory," &c. If we turn to the prophet Isaiah xxv. 8, we find the Spirit is there describing not the end of the world, but the beginning of the millennium or kingdom of Christ on earth. Do not forget this; that 1 Corinthians xv. will not take place at the end of the world: but at the coming of Christ to take His saints, more than a thousand years before the judgment of the rest of the dead. For further proof of this further on.

This was no mere doctrine with the apostle Paul. It was the prize at the end of his journey. For this he longed; he says, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of [or from among] the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." (Phil. iii. 11.) Yes, when this body shall be raised in glory, when we bear the image of the heavenly, then, not until then, shall we be perfected. For this we wait, "we look for the Lord Jesus Christ

as Saviour; who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," &c. If there were a general resurrection, why should the apostle so earnestly long to arrive at the resurrection from the dead? Does not this imply that the saints will be raised first? Nay, had not this very fact been revealed by the Lord to His servant: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout... and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) Thus the error of a general resurrection is in direct opposition to all scripture. There is not a thought of any being raised when the Lord comes, except the dead in Christ: or, as we have seen, they that are Christ's at His coming. And this coming is clearly for His saints: for when He comes in judgment they come with Him.

We will now look at what God has been pleased to give us, as His final revelation, on this subject. We shall here see what will take place at the beginning of the thousand years reign of Christ. Evidently this cannot possibly be a spiritual millennium as is so erroneously taught—a time when the great mass of the world will be converted by the gospel, and form the church. The church, as the bride of Christ, has been completed before this; in Revelation xix. the multitudes of heaven had said, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." And more, the marriage of the Lamb having taken

place, the saints come with the Lord under the symbol of the armies which were in heaven. The then imperial head of the Roman empire, is judged, with the confederate kings of the earth. The terrible reign of terror, under the dragon, has been brought to a close. Yea Satan, the dragon, the old serpent, the devil, is cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years. The saints who have come with Christ, are now no longer in conflict, but "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, nor his image, &c. . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Thus we see after the church is completed, and comes with Christ and sits on thrones joint-heirs with Christ, to judge the nations, and to inherit all things : then the remnant also who have been faithful to Christ, during the great tribulation and slain : all these also are raised to partake of the blessedness of the first resurrection "Blessed, and holy, is he that hath part in the first resurrection." This completes the first resurrection. Now as to the rest of the dead, the wicked, we are distinctly told, they lived not again until the thousand years were finished. Then after the thousand years, "the dead small and great stand before God" to be judged. The dead were judged. "And they were judged every man according to their works." And as is evident, every man that shall be judged must be for ever condemned.

Thus a thousand years separate the resurrection unto life, and the resurrection unto judgment.

We have thus gone over the teaching of scripture as to the first resurrection. And we ask where is there a thought of either a general resurrection, or that the Christian should be brought into judgment for his sins ?

There are two scriptures carelessly relied on. Some one may ask, does not the gathering the sheep and the goats, imply a general resurrection ? (Matt. xxv.) But if we read that scripture carefully, we cannot find a word, or a thought, of any resurrection there. It is the judgment of the living nations, and they are dealt with according as they have treated the Jews, now owned as His brethren. At this judgment the Son of man is seen coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory : and all the tribes of the earth mourn. (Matt. xxiv. 31.) "When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory : and before him shall be gathered all nations," &c. (Chap. xxv.) Read from chap. 31 to end. You observe this is the judgment of the quick at His coming : but not a word about the resurrection, of the judgment of the dead. Now let us compare this with the description of the last judgment after the thousand years, millennial rest, and blessing. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead small and great stand before God ; and the books were opened : and another book was opened

which is the book of life : and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Rev. xx. 11, 12.) Thus at the morning of this millennial day, two things take place. The first resurrection is complete : and the judgment of the living nations takes place. The rest of the dead live not again until the evening of that thousand years : and then they are judged according to their works. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." At the one judgment the Son of man is seen coming with the clouds of heaven : at the other judgment, He does not come at all, but the heavens and the earth fled away. Thus we have both the judgment of the quick and the dead : the one at His appearing, the other at His kingdom. "Who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom."

The other scripture, so often misquoted to uphold the great traditional error of a general resurrection and judgment, is this. You often hear these words as though they were scripture. It is appointed unto all men once to die, but after death the judgment. If this were so, who then could be saved ? No living man could have peace with God, if the question had yet to be settled at the future judgment after death. Do you not see that this error strikes at the very foundation of the gospel ? How can there be present enjoyed peace with God, if we and all men have to be judged for our sins ? How can we possibly be now made meet for the inheritance of the saints : if the question has to be settled yet, after death ? How can

we be said to be justified from all things, if we have yet to be judged? This serious error of a general resurrection and judgment, has thrown all Christendom into confusion. Both things cannot be true: the gospel of the grace of God, and the future judgment of all. Take a case: a criminal proved guilty, receives the glad tidings of her Majesty's free pardon, and that the crime shall never be laid to his charge again. Another official declares that he must go to judgment before the judge for his crime. Can both be true? The one is in flat contradiction to the other. So is the doctrine and all who preach it, of a general judgment, in flat contradiction of the gospel. Strange as this may appear to those who follow tradition, and pay little regard to scripture, yet it is true that no one who holds the error of a general judgment, either knows, or ever preaches, the gospel of God in its simplicity and fulness. Let us be candid, and come to close quarters. Do you hold that error, and thus you expect to die, and after death the judgment? "Error?" you say, "It is strange to me if that is not the truth: I shall be greatly mistaken if there is not such a scripture as that it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment."

We will see as to that shortly. But first, what is the effect of the doctrine on your own soul? Is it not that you hope it will be all right at last? You are not quite sure you are good enough yet to die, and go to judgment? Sometimes, as you forget this fatal error, you feel a little brighter, and then dreadful doubts, and uncertainty; if a preacher, you may be trying to keep up a fair appearance before others. But the

blessedness of sins forgiven to be remembered no more : perfected for ever by the one offering of Christ : justified from all things : peace with God. All these you cannot enjoy if you have yet to be judged : for this very simple reason, that all have sinned, all are guilty, and therefore if all have to be judged, then all in righteousness must be condemned.

Now let us read that scripture, "And as it is appointed unto men [not all men] once to die, but after this the judgment ; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." (Heb. ix. 27, 28.) Does not this prove the very opposite of a general judgment ? Just as it is the common lot of men to die, and after death the judgment : so Christ has borne the sins of many : therefore there can be no question of sin to them when He appears. Read the whole context, the very subject is the perfect and eternal redemption believers have through the one sacrifice of Christ. All of which falls to the ground if we have yet to be judged for our sins. It will not do to say it is the doctrine of our creeds, prayer books, and hymn books ; is it found in scripture ? That is the question, unless we are prepared to give up the word of God and trust in tradition, however false. As another has said, think of the childish absurdity of this tradition. Paul and thousands more have been with the Lord eighteen hundred years : have they still to be judged for their sins ? The Lord Jesus assures the believer that he shall not come into judgment. (John v. 24.) And there is not and cannot be a single text to shew that he will

be judged in the proper sense of judgment for sins. That he will stand before, or be manifested before the beemah, or judgment-seat of Christ, and there be recompensed or rewarded according to his works, is a most blessed truth. And also that this will take place at the first resurrection is also plain. "And thou shalt be blessed. . . . for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." (Luke xiv. 14.) Sins are put away by His precious blood. Salvation is wholly of God. We shall be rewarded according to our works. What grace to find anything to reward !

This is the clear doctrine of scripture. Two Christians may both build on Christ, the only foundation—one is rewarded for his works ; all the works of the other be burned up, yet he himself saved so as by fire. Read 1 Corinthians iii. : "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward : if any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire."

It is blessed to know also that we shall not be *rewarded* according to man's judgment, but the Lord's. "Therefore judge nothing before the time until the Lord come." On this very account we are not to judge or despise one another. "But why dost thou judge thy brother ? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother ? for we shall all stand before the [beemah] judgment-seat of Christ." (Rom. xiv. 10.) There is another striking scripture on this subject, and mark, it is in connection with the believer's certainty as to his being with the Lord. "For WE KNOW that

if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God," &c. "We have the earnest of the Spirit. We are always confident . . . it is God who hath wrought us for this selfsame thing," &c., no portion breathes more divine certainty. Yet he says, "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear [or be manifested] before the [beemah] judgment-seat of Christ ; that every one may RECEIVE the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10.)

Thus whilst we have the utmost certainty that if we die, it is to be absent from the body, present with the Lord ; and also that this is not all, but we shall be clothed upon with our glorified body of power, incorruptible, in the image of the heavenly, like Christ : yet this should not make us careless, but diligent that we may be *accepted of* Him. That is, our works approved, not burnt up, and thus be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. To confound this with being judged before the great white throne, is like not seeing the difference between giving rewards at the break up of school, and the boys having to be brought up as criminals at the Town Hall.

The apostle says, "But we are made manifest unto God." Yes we ARE made manifest unto God. Already we have taken our places as guilty, without a hope in ourselves. We are pardoned, justified, sanctified. Our sins have been judged and borne by our holy Substitute. Now pass on, first, our manifestation before that blessed One who has loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. Surely angels

may wonder at the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Now if all from our birth, to that moment when we are manifested in His glory, be brought out before the assembled myriads, yet will it not shew the grace to "Such were some of you : but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified." Yes, every saint will be to the praise of His glory. All this is unspeakably glorious to us, and think of being rewarded, recompensed, in that scene of glory, at the resurrection of the just !

How terrible the contrast in that scene, when the dead are judged ! Every thought, motive, and act, all written in the books : every secret sin unconfessed, unforgiven—all, all, brought out into light. Vain the hope of pardon then. The day of mercy is past. The future, God has said it, is the lake of fire.

If a single believer could come into that judgment, then Christ would have died in vain. Oh rest my soul on the words of Jesus. "Shall not come into judgment." (John v. 24.) The sad error of a general resurrection, then, has taken away all the untold joy, and brightness of the first resurrection ; yea, has robbed the Christian of the blessed hope altogether. So that many do not even know that there is a first resurrection. Is it possible that that for which the apostle so longed, and for which the church waited in the patience of Christ, has been lost and forgotten ? It is too true.

Had we space we should find, that the promise of God to Abraham could not be fulfilled, if there were no first resurrection. "And I will give unto thee the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of

Canaan, for an everlasting possession." (See Gen. xiii. 14, 15 ; xvii. 8.) Stephen tells us Abraham was a stranger, had no inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on. It is plain if Abraham were not raised from among the dead until the heavens and the earth flee away, and he had to stand before the great white throne, then God would have broken His word to Abraham, which is impossible. By faith, they sojourned, and looked "that they might obtain a better resurrection." (Heb. ix.) No ; they shall be raised from among the dead, whether it be Israel for earthly, or the church for the heavenly glory. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, and they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." This must be the reader's portion, or the lake of fire. May the Lord deliver you from the fatal delusion of putting off your salvation to the judgment of the dead.

C. S.



THE

YOUNG CONVERT'S INQUIRY

AS TO

WHERE HE SHOULD GO.

James. If you can spare a little time, I wish to speak with you on a subject of great importance to me. I have through the mercy of God been brought to know the Lord, and I am greatly perplexed to know where to go. Everybody seems to think himself right, but really I cannot find any sect or national church that I am quite sure is according to the word of God.

John. I shall be most ready to hear all your difficulties, and to help, as the Lord helps me to do so. I have sought to know the mind of the Lord on this subject for many years. Why have you not joined some of the so-called churches? The church of Rome? or the church of England? or some denomination?

James. This is what puzzles me. I see so many centres. The Pope or the Conference, Wesley or Baptism. And then the world is called the church, with state, or worldly authority and a King or Queen as head and centre, so that really I do not know what is right.

John. But where do you see all these centres of sects? Not in the scripture, but amongst men. In the scripture there is only one church: the church of

God. There is only one centre, and that is Christ. He is the only Head of the church. Now let us take fast hold of this great truth : even if it prove everything that is of man to be wrong. There is only one true centre—Christ. He says, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt. xviii. 20.)

James. Your statement that Christ is the only true centre to which Christians should be gathered, has caused me very serious thoughts. I find others beside myself are also exercised about these questions ; and if you have no objection I shall be glad to state what difficulties have been raised : and I should much like to hear, if you have time, what you have to say from the word of God.

John. So far as this can be done to real profit, and not for mere controversy, nothing would give me greater pleasure. As I grow older, James, I have less and less desire for controversy. But where the truth of God is in question, one must not be silent.

James. Certainly not. Well, I find one objection, if not the chief one, against Christians being gathered to Christ the only Head and centre, is this : It is admitted there is much evil, many unconverted persons in the national churches (indeed it owns itself to be the world), and in denominations ; but that is said to be no reason why Christians should separate from them, and be gathered only to Christ : as there was much evil in the professing church, even in the days when the epistles were written. There was carnality at Corinth, and gross evil ; false doctrine leavening the assembly in Galatia : enemies of the cross named in the Epistle to the Philippians, &c.

And yet the apostle never once exhorted the true Christians to separate from these assemblies, and form another one around a new centre. Yet surely if it had been right, the Holy Spirit would have guided them to do so. The difficulty is this, John : if it would have been wrong *then*, to have separated from the church of God because evil had come in, can it be right *now* to separate from the various churches because of the evil that abounds ?

John. Well put, James. It would not be very easy, however, for persons holding such a view of the matter, to tell us why they are not in the church of Rome. Let us put it thus : there was much evil in the professing church of God in the apostolic days, but it would have been wrong to separate from the church of God : true. There was much evil in the church of Rome, therefore it was wrong for the Reformers to separate from her, at the cost of their lives. Is it not such confusion as this, that is leading souls to Rome every day ? I say, James, if it is wrong to separate from evil, why are not you and I in Rome ? Anyway we should have evil enough there.

James. Really, John, I do not see through it, will you try to explain ?

John. I think you will have seen that separation from evil alone is not sufficient to guide us in this matter. The above reasoning is based on the fallacy that supposes the church of God (as seen in scripture) and the church of Rome are equally right ; and that therefore to separate from them would be equally wrong. The same fallacy would apply to the church of England, or any denomination.

Now what is the church of God, or assembly of

God, as found in scripture? Who is its head; and who is its centre? Is it a nation? Nowhere. Or a number of nations? No. Who then were its members? Every believer on earth. Who its Head, and centre? Christ in heaven. This assembly is the joint body of Christ, whilst still on earth, gathered to the name of Christ, yet joined to Him by the Spirit, in heaven. As seen in the hands of man, evil and leaven and failure appeared. But whilst gathered to Christ it would have been wrong to separate from it, and form another body. That would evidently have been to separate from Christ. Whilst the true Christ was held as the true centre, there could not have been a thought of separation. We might just as soon talk of the members of the human body separating from the head, to form a new body.

And more, while Christ was thus owned as Head and Lord, there was His power to deal with evil in the assembly of God. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together . . . with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan," &c. (1 Cor. v. 4.) "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (Ver. 13.) Surely it would have been monstrous to separate from Christ because evil came in, and had to be dealt with in discipline, in the power of Christ.

James. Then why separate from Rome?

John. Why? Because, after some centuries, Rome set up another centre. The church having lost its heavenly character, became entirely earthly, and gradually owned another *Head* and *CENTRE* of its own liking. It became an earthly institution with an earthly, human head and centre, the pope.

And now for the first time in the seven stages of the church's history, a distinct remnant is recognised by the Lord Jesus. (Rev. ii. 24.) Now, James, is it not evident to you that to separate from the church of God was one thing; that is, it would have been utterly wrong: but to separate from the church of Rome is quite another thing? In the one case it would be to separate from Christ; in the other case it would be to separate from the pope, who has taken the place of Christ as head. The Holy Ghost did not set up another head: there is no pope at Rome to be found in scripture. Not the shadow of a thought either that Peter was ever at Rome, or that there was a bishop of Rome. The two things are totally distinct. The church of Christ is not of this world. The church of Rome is of this world. The Head of the church of God is Christ in heaven. The head of the church of Rome is the pope at Rome. It would have been wrong to separate from Christ: it is perfectly right and most blessed to separate from the pope.

James. I do not think I ever saw the distinction before, of the two centres—Christ, and the pope.

John. There is no doubt we have been too much occupied with details of evil, instead of looking at the foundation principles. I trust there are many dear Christians in the church of Rome, but it is clear they are not gathered to Christ, the only Head and centre, as the church of God was in the beginning. It is a very serious thing to displace the authority of Christ as Lord, acting by the Spirit.

James. There seems a very distinct reason for leaving Rome, and returning to the ground of the

church of God, gathered by the Holy Spirit to Christ alone. But is there the same reason so to be gathered from the so-called evangelical churches ?

John. It is painful to me to answer this question. But as so many are beginning to inquire into these things (and more, as the inquiry seems to lead many, even the professed ministers of Christ, to go back to Rome), I judge it will be real love to souls to look this matter fairly in the face. We have seen that whilst the church held Christ the true centre and Head, it was impossible to separate from it, without separating from Him. We have also seen that it was quite another thing when the church of Rome set up another centre. In this case, separation from Rome would be faithfulness to Christ as the only Lord. We might dwell on the awful wickedness of these popes. And certainly this would shew the sin of owning such a centre, instead of the Holy, Holy One.

James. How then can a minister of the church of England go back to such a centre—to such a head ?

John. I will tell you. He reflects ; and he reads ; and he sees in history, about three hundred years ago, this country owned the pope as head of the church, the centre around which a great part of Christendom was gathered. He finds a very wicked king in England, determined to be the head and centre of the so-called church of England. He says, can this be right for a man whom all history abhors as a wife-murderer, to be the head of the church ? If any man refused to own this man as head of the church, he must be put to a cruel death as a traitor. He passes on to the daughters of this man. One is on the throne

of England, head of the church, and death to all who refuse to own her the head of the church. Another queen is in Sheffield Castle, ever plotting with the most wicked men of the day, to invade England, and restore the pope as head of the church. I would not dwell on the end of this terrible struggle for earthly ambition, and headship of the church. The inquirer gets perplexed. His choice lies between a bishop or pope, and a king or queen : and no wonder he prefers the bishop and goes to Rome. He says, how can it be right for an earthly sovereign to be the head of the church ? You notice, James, he has lost all knowledge of the only true Head and centre of the church ; and he is perplexed with two false centres. It was a terrible struggle for the honoured Reformers : but we cannot overlook the fact, that they never got back to Christ, the Head and only centre. They saw the pope was a wrong centre, but set up another. Was not this fundamentally wrong ? It is not a question then of separating from the evils in the church of England, and trying to form a true church : to write thus, shews total ignorance of what the church is. There is no such idea in scripture as “a church,” except in the sense that all believers in any given place formed the assembly in that place. “One body.” “One Spirit.” “One Lord.” This is the language of scripture. It would be as scriptural to say the English Lord Jesus, as the church of England, or a church of any other kind. As truly as there is one Lord, so truly do all believers form the one body, the one assembly of God. Let this great foundation truth be seen, and all becomes simple.

James. How do you mean ? I see clearly now

from scripture, that there was only one Head and centre of the church in the beginning. Now I see two other earthly centres : the pope and the queen—long may she live and be increasingly honoured as queen ! but it does seem a sad mistake to put her in the place of Christ as head of the church ; and an earthly government to usurp the authority of Christ. What I should like to ask is, Is this true of all denominations ?

John. Let everything be tested by the word of God. Let us cling to nothing that will not bear that test. Sectarianism cannot exist if Christ is owned as the centre, the only Head. “And he is the head of the body, the church [not *a* church], who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.” (Col. i. 18.) Yes, even to make Christ a centre amongst other centres, is condemned as carnality. “I am of Paul ; and I of Apollos ; and I of Cephas ; and I of Christ.” “For while one saith, I am of Paul ; and another, I of Apollos ; are ye not carnal ?” (1 Cor. i. 12 ; iii. 4.) If we thus discover that we have been utterly wrong in making churches : if it be unscriptural to say I am of Wesley, and I of Calvin, and I of Baptism, nay, if men have set up a hundred other centres, what is to be done ? What is the path of every Christian on earth, but to own Christ, the only true centre ?

James. I see this is quite another matter than merely separation from evil ; important as that is : but if Christians will not give up their other centres, what is to be done then ?

John. I hope you see it is the privilege of all believers to be gathered to Christ alone : just as it

was at the beginning. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Oh ! that every perplexed Christian knew this, and returned to Him alone, from every sect ! But if all will not obey Him, yet is it still most true, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." What can the heart that knows Him desire more ? He, present as Lord, and acting by the Spirit. Yea, even at the very last, when Christendom has come to its worst, and is about to be utterly rejected, as a witness on earth ; yet still He says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock : if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. iii. 20.)

James. Pardon me, John, just one more question on this subject. I now understand where the true Christ is owned as the only centre and Head, and there is His power to deal with evil ; and therefore it would be wrong to separate from Him. I am young in the faith, but I am told that after God had by His Spirit gathered many believers together to the one centre—Christ ; that some, yea, the bulk, separated from them, especially at Plymouth. Was this right ? As you went through that struggle, will you explain it in keeping with all you have just now said ?

John. I was just now thinking about it. If the Lord will, we will take up that wide-spread difficulty.

James. I do assure you it is very hindering to many young converts. They say, how can this be, that a something which happened before we were born, nearly forty years ago, should still separate Christians : yea, even Christians who have professedly separated from all the centres that have been set up

by men ? And I assure you, John, I have heard those who have separated from their brethren spoken about with great bitterness.

John. I am sorry for that, that is indeed sad : we need to approach the sad subject with meekness and lowliness of mind, instead of bitterness and hatred, which is sin. To me, James, the whole question is most simple : and I desire to speak for the glory of Christ and the real good of all persons concerned. Bearing in mind what we have said, then, was it not long before we were born (any of us) that Rome set up another centre, and head of the church ? The pope in the place of Christ as head of the church ? Was it not before we were born that England set up a king, or a queen, as head of a worldly system called the church ? Yea, even so of a Wesley, &c., &c. Now because it happened before we were born, or converted, that the glorious pre-eminence of Christ, the Head of His church, was set aside, and His administration by the Holy Spirit also set aside, for the varied church governments of men : does it follow that we should also give up the holy and true centre of gathering, and join any of these, simply because the thing happened before we were born ?

James. Stay, John, I fail to see what this has to do with the inquiry. Why are those separated who profess to have left all these false centres ? Now do keep to the point. Why did you separate, for you were one of the many who did ?

John. Quite true, James ; and now in a few words I will tell you, and I think you will see its connection with all that has been said. Would you think it, James ? Satan had succeeded in introducing amongst

us at Plymouth not only a false centre, but a false Christ was that false centre !

This was why God in His mercy separated us from that false centre ; that we might still in these last days be gathered to Him that is holy, and Him that is true. We did not see this at first, but God did. We failed, many of us at least, both in spiritual discernment and action. God did not fail to separate us, and to gather us to Christ the Holy and the True. Now, where there is a true centre, Foundation, Head—even Christ, He acts by the Holy Ghost ; and thus there is the liberty and action of the Spirit, seen in the assembly. On the other hand, wherever there is a false centre, and head, the action of the Spirit is never seen in the assembly, but clericalism displacing the Spirit, and resisting the full truth of the Lord's return. I need not give the history in detail : but first the most determined clericalism appeared, resisting the action of the Holy Ghost. Then one, now with the Lord, to his deep grief discovered that a false Christ had been introduced into the teaching and writings. A Christ born at a distance from God, and having to make His way to God. In fact a Christ that needed a Saviour himself. From that false Christ, and therefore false centre, God separated many ; and from those who preached or taught, or sympathised with those who held such a false centre.

James. Tell me how is it possible that any could hesitate. Why, there is nothing so bad as that amongst the evangelical sects. Is there ? Do you think they who remained understood it ?

John. I do not think they did, and many do not even now. Indeed, I trust if they did, they would give up

their neutrality at once. There is not a single evangelical denomination that owns a false Christ as its centre. The foundations were gone. The danger was far greater than Unitarianism ; there it is manifest that the Son of God is utterly denied. But at Plymouth as yet there was much precious truth ; mixed up with a false Christ as the very centre. The truth is, James, if God had not come in, and separated His children from it, do you not see the present blessed testimony to the Lordship of Christ, acting by the Spirit in the assembly, would have been impossible ? Could the Holy Ghost have borne witness to a false Christ ? And no one can deny that this was a false Christ. Thus long ago those separated from every false centre, and systems of men, would themselves have been far the worst system on earth, and gathered around the worst centre, a false Christ. Now, James, what do you say, if it be right to separate from the false centre of the pope, a king, and all the various centres of so many sects ; and all the clericalism flowing from each of those false centres : would it not be sadly wrong to remain with a false Christ as a centre ?

James. I am amazed that any did, or that any could talk of being neutral about it. How was it ?

John. Many had not seen the blessed fact, that all Christians form the one body of Christ. They had never known Him as the Head of that one body, the assembly. They thought that, as they were independent assemblies, though Christ might be attacked at Plymouth, it did not affect them at a distance. They saw much evil in the sects, and they hoped to gather together and make something better. But

that which produced such sad divisions was tolerating persons coming from under the teaching of a heretic.

James. Did you go through all this? It really shocks me. What is the remedy?

John. God brought me through it all in His mercy, I am sure of that. We are all poor things. But God is God, and Satan is Satan, and it is no little matter to know what is of God. The remedy is very simple, if we are only in a truly broken, humble state of soul. Let us have no bickering about details. Cannot all who desire the glory of Christ agree that it was a great mercy, that God was pleased to give grace to judge the evil, and to separate from the false Christ as a centre? If any have failed and used bitterness against those whom God did so separate, can they not confess this to God and to their brethren? If we are not led of the Spirit we shall be sure to err. Is it not most blessed to be gathered to Christ, the true centre, and truly own the action of the Holy Spirit in the assembly? If our brethren really desire this, why then do they not own their past mistake, and be with those who do? Why continue in this sad neutrality?

James. I think I now see how this was, many years ago; but many tell me that they abhor the doctrines then held by some, and that now they would not have fellowship with any coming from places where it is held, just as they would neither receive a Unitarian who denied the Lord, or one from the Unitarians, who maintained they did not deny the Lord, or His true atoning death. Why then are you still separate?

John. I am glad you put the case so simply and clearly. If this is true now, in uprightness and the

fear of the Lord, they now judge this evil doctrine, and those linked with it, just as they would Unitarian infidelity, why not take their places with us at the table of the Lord ? For this is exactly what we did forty years ago. Why continue to blame us for what they now see to be right to do themselves ?

James. Surely that must be so, if it is right to judge such evil doctrine now, it must have been wrong to refuse to judge it then. It does seem to me that this refusal was the chief cause of so much division. They knew it to be poison, but would not allow it to be labelled poison.

John. Exactly so. Now the author of the fearful doctrine was, and still is, under the illusion that it is not poison. I saw a copy of a letter very lately, in which he declares he never held the very doctrines that are in his tracts. Surely those who knew it was poison, and would not have it so labelled, were if possible more to blame than he was.

James. Oh what a mercy it would be, if they saw this and truly owned it, and instead of this long-continued division, so sad and grieving to the Lord, all came together who truly own the Lordship of Christ and the presence and unity of the Spirit.

John. The Lord grant it may be so ; nothing is too hard for the Lord. I do not see why all who desire truly to own Christ the only Head and centre of the one church of God, should not even yet be together.

James. Just another word before we part. Is it true that amongst those who do desire truly to own Christ as the only centre, men arise amongst them seeking pre-eminence, and speaking perverse

things to lead away disciples after them? Some trying to make a party about this, and others the opposite? I have been told this is the case.

John. Quite true at this very moment. Sorrowfully so, as bad or worse than it was in apostolic days. There is scarcely a thing by which Satan sought to mar and destroy the testimony then, that he is not trying now. But now in spite of all the devil could do, the only right thing on earth then, was to be gathered to Christ in dependence on the Holy Ghost. It is just equally so now. Can we not say with Peter, "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." It is an amazing principle to be gathered to Christ as at the beginning. How little is it understood! Is there any marvel Satan should use every effort to destroy this testimony? feeble as it is, he hates it. Did the Lord promise that all should flow smoothly here, to those who are His? Was it so with the beloved and honoured apostle? Read 2 Corinthians xi. 23-28. He could say, "But none of these things moved me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy," &c. (Acts xx. 24.) Truly we need the whole armour of God. What prayer, what watchfulness, what diligence! There may be constant conflict with false profession without, and false brethren within; but if we know what it is to be gathered to Christ, I do not see, James, that these things should move us.

James. I am thankful for this conversation. I see now the only right thing on this earth is to be gathered to Christ, owning Him the only true centre, and come what storms and tempests there may, it is still the only right thing. Every "ism" disappears if the

glorious pre-eminence of Christ be truly owned. This was evidently the ground on which all believers were gathered in the beginning; it must therefore be the only basis on which all believers could be gathered now.

John. That certainly is so. And if you will search the scriptures, you will find that whilst the church owned Christ as the only Foundation, Head, and Lord, all ministry flowed from Him and was used by the Spirit as He would. (Eph. iv. ; 1 Cor. xii., xiv.) But if you examine the ecclesiastical organisation of all the so-called churches of this world, you will find them in direct contrast with the church of God as found in scripture. It is no use, however, trying to reform these : they would still be gathered to a false centre. There is no remedy possible in the present confusion and apostasy, but individual believers being gathered to Christ alone. Then if but two or three are gathered to Him, He is in their midst. Is not this enough ? may not they count on Him ? Oh ! look to Him, to be taught by the Holy Spirit. Look not to the traditions of men, but to the word of God.

James. I thank you : surely my place is where "two or three are gathered" in His name.

C. S.



THE
GREAT TRIBULATION;

OR,

“THE TIME OF THE END.”

BY
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LONDON :
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THE GREAT TRIBULATION ;

OR, "THE TIME OF THE END."

THE end of this age. How much God has spoken about this, and how little attention man has paid to what God has said. As it would be impossible to understand the distance, and relation of different places on a map, without a correct scale, by which to measure those distances: so it is also impossible to understand the relation that one prophecy bears to another, unless we understand the scale of time which God was pleased to give to His servant Daniel. The Lord Jesus points to this when He says "whoso readeth let him understand." (Matt. xxiv. 15.)

It is important to notice that this discourse of the Lord Jesus was His own private explanation to His disciples. He explained the parable of the wheat and tares, privately to them in the house. So it would seem having discoursed in the Temple on these matters as recited in Luke xxi. Now having left it for the last time, and only three days from His own death: these explanations are given in answer to His disciples questions'.

There is one sentence so badly translated that it quite hinders the simplicity of the discourse being understood. They say "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the age?" At the time when our translation was made the whole truth of the Lord's coming, and the end of the age had been so lost: and the strange notion that the coming of the Lord

meant the end of the world, so the translators put their own notion, not the translation of the sentence.

Surely it becomes us to examine with solemnity, that which occupied the heart of the Lord Jesus so near His death. We will now examine the scale of prophetic time.

Read—Daniel ix. 24-27. There is God's scale of time. Just as on a map it may be one inch to the mile : so here, it is one day to the year. "Seventy weeks are determined upon Thy people, and upon Thy holy city," &c. During those seventy weeks, or 490 years, all these great events were to take place. The great work of reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, indeed their whole history up to the anointing of the most Holy. The scale of time is divided into seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week. "And after the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing," marginal reading. We will leave the last week, or seven years, for a moment. There can be no mistake about the sixty-nine thus marked on the scale, and actually fulfilled. There was the starting point "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem." Which took place in the twentieth of Artaxerxes, and the sixty-nine weeks ended at the cross of Christ, when the Lord Jesus, having made reconciliation for iniquity, God raised Him from the dead in everlasting righteousness. But also equally true, though received up to glory, yet as Messiah He was actually rejected, cut off and had nothing.

Now as sixty-nine of the weeks of years have been so distinctly fulfilled, a day for a year, may we not expect the only one remaining week, or seven years, to be fulfilled in like manner? Why do we say one remaining week? You will find there is an indefinite period betwixt the end of the threescore and two

weeks, and the last, the one week. "The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." This agrees strictly with the teaching of the Lord Jesus in Luke xxi. An indefinite period of desolations is foretold. Jerusalem should be compassed with armies and destroyed. "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Then follows the tribulation, distress of nations and the coming of the Son of Man, in the clouds with power and great glory. It is clear then, we are in that indefinite period which precedes the last week. The Romans were the people of that coming prince; as we all know they destroyed the city, and the sanctuary: and from that day the determined desolations have continued. It is impossible to deny this.

And what has God been doing during this unmeasured period? Taking out from Jews and Gentiles the predestined Church.

That church as we learn, not here in the Old Testament, but in the New, will be taken up to be with the Lord before the tribulation of which we are about to speak.

We will now look at the last week or seven years of the prophetic scale. "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, &c." He, the coming prince of the people who destroyed the city, He shall confirm the covenant with the many. All this supposes when this time of the end arrives, that the city and Temple are rebuilt; and Jewish sacrifices restored, and certainly this is so from many other scriptures. "And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the

sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate." (xi. 31.) And mark this wicked one is a Jew. (v. 36-38.) This wicked one comes in his own name, and the many Jews restored to Jerusalem, receive him, and his action marks the last week on the scale: and still more distinctly the last half of that week—the three years and a half, the time of the end. Then the wicked one confirms a covenant with the Jews for seven years, then but not until then Jewish time will be reckoned again. The wicked flatterer goes on smoothly for half the week, or three years and a half: then the sure sign of the great tribulation is given, he causeth the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and sets up the idol of abomination in the holy place. Chap. xii. describes this time of the end. "And at that time.....there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time Thy people (the Jews) shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end." Thus we see these words will be sealed to the Jews unto the time of the end. This is repeated, read verses 9, 13, and mark the setting up of the abomination is the sure beacon, yea, marks the very day from which the Jews who believe God may count the very days from that event, to their deliverance and final blessing. "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." This is thirty days over the last half week: and still fuller blessing a little further on. "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."

Now, as we have said, it is impossible to measure

the distances on a map, unless those places are drawn to a correct scale, and also it is necessary that you understand that scale: just so is it impossible to understand correctly the prophetic periods, unless those prophecies are given on a correct uniform scale. There is no other scale of time given except this, and hence the importance of rightly understanding it. The scale then is this, seventy weeks, on the scale of a day to the year. Sixty-nine have been certainly fulfilled. One only remains. Marked by a covenant for seven years with the Jews; the last half of the seven years, to be marked by the setting up of the idol in the holy place. It must be carefully noted, that if the scale is correct, and uniform, the dates of the period of the end or tribulation, three years and a half, 1260 days, or forty two months must be understood of the same scale; that is, each of these numbers will represent the last three and a half days, (or years as a day is for a year), on the scale. Many writers have made a strange mistake as to these last days of the one week. Not only a day for a year on the scale, the last week seven years, but they have also reckoned each of those literal days of the three years and half as meaning a year also. And also another mistake, they have applied the last three years and half of the Jewish tribulation, as though it described the events of this interval of unmeasured time betwixt the sixty-ninth, and seventieth week.

We trust the reader will understand this: as the Lord Jesus points this sign out *to the Jews* particularly. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand :) Then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains" &c. (Matt. xxiv. 15.)

How correctly the scale measures every prophetic scripture. Take this chapter, Matt. xxiv. In verse

2, Jesus speaks of the destruction of the temple or sanctuary. This we have seen marks the end of the sixty-ninth week; verses 4-14 describes the unmeasured interval of desolations and wars. Then the Lord takes up the distinct mark of the middle of the last week, or seven years. The Jews who believe are then to flee, &c.....“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” Daniel had given the days with a few added to the last three years and a half. The Lord shows as to the dreadful tribulation, those (not years but) days shall be shortened. And as these are the last days before the setting up of the kingdom, the Lord tells us that immediately after the tribulation of those (not years but) days: the Son of man cometh in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Now the Spirit of God is much occupied with those days, the last half of the last week, in the book of Revelation. It will be seen in chap. x. that the unmeasured period comes to a close. The mighty angel does not swear “that there shall be no more time:” this cannot be correct, as time did go on, and will for more than a thousand years. It is well known this should be, that time shall no longer be delayed. The Church has been taken to heaven. The unmeasured period has closed. Prophetic time, even the time of the end, now runs on. There is the temple again. It is measured. But the court which is without the Gentiles trample under foot, forty and two months: or three years and a half. So the witnesses also prophesy the same length of time. (xi. 2, 3.) God has been pleased to give us many wonderful details, about this very time of the end, in Rev. xii. and xiii. Israel is brought before us, in the symbol of the woman that brought forth the man child. The man child has been caught up to God, as foretold by

Micah v. 2. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Thus JESUS born in Bethlehem, rejected, cut off and having nothing on earth, has been caught up to God: and the heavens must retain Him until the times of restitution. (Acts iii. 21.) And though man, He is the eternal God: and He is to be ruler in Israel. Here, as the man child He is revealed as the mystic Christ; the unmeasured interval completed. "And she brought forth a man child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up to God and His throne."

Now the Church is associated with Christ in this, as it is written in Rev. ii. 26. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end; to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron," &c. And when Christ comes to exercise this judgment the Church comes with Him. (Rev. xix. 14, 15.) So that the full ascension of the man child is complete, when the Church, His body, is caught up to be with Him where He is: and to come with Him when He comes.

All this that we may understand where *we are* on the prophetic scale. This, and all that follows shows we shall have now passed the unmeasured interval, and have arrived at the very point marked as the beacon by the Lord: the beginning of the last half week, or three years and a half of the great tribulation. Did He not tell them to flee that very day, not even returning into the house for their clothes? (Matt. xxiv. 16, 18.) So we read here, "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand, two hundred and threescore days." Just again the last three and half years. The saints having been

caught up to the Lord (as revealed in Thess. iv), you may now read of the great war in heaven that will take place: and their great joy in heaven: and how they overcame the accuser. Then Satan the devil, the dragon, is cast down to the earth, and his angels. If there is great joy in heaven: there will be great woe on earth. This is the sure prospect of the dwellers on earth when the devil is come down unto you.

All this takes place, and a great deal more, during these last three years and a half of the prophetic scale. You will notice when the dragon is cast to the earth, he cannot persecute the Church, she is rejoicing in heaven. He therefore brings his whole power to persecute the woman that brought forth the man child. That is the regathered Jews. She has an astonishingly rapid flight. "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time (year) and times (two years) and half a time, from the face of the serpent." The same three years and half the time of the end. Then you may read of the fearful wrath of the devil during those days against those Jews, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. The prophecy of Daniel is to be sealed unto his people unto this time of the end. You may test this if you please: go to a Rabbi and ask him the meaning of Dan. ix. or xii. You will find, to him it is a sealed book. Not so when the time of the end arrives. It will then be unsealed. God can use this very little paper for this purpose if He please. When the remnant see the idol of abomination set up in their holy place, they will flee as here described.

Now if we turn to chap. xiii. (Rev.) we shall read how these fearful judgments affect not only the Jews, but all that dwell upon the earth. We shall find however it is still the last three years and a half of

the scale. Before we do this, we will notice one most serious mistake that many have made. It is something like this. Suppose a surveyor of a new line of railway, say 490 miles in length, draws a plan of the line on a scale of one inch to the mile. The last three and a half miles is a very difficult piece, and will require a vast amount of specifications. He gives them the plan of $486\frac{1}{2}$ miles. This part is to be completed first. He then gives the most elaborate survey of the last three and a half miles. It is on the same scale an inch to a mile: and therefore only three and a half inches on the scale and means three and a half miles. But as the work is so difficult he may describe it by the yard, or even by the inch. The clerk of the works makes this mistake: he supposes instead of the distance being only the three miles and a half which completes the line, that every inch in the three miles and a half means a mile. This would stretch the three miles and half far far beyond the length of the whole line. More indeed than seventy thousand miles; whilst the whole length of the line is only 490 miles.

Strange as it may seem, this is just the mistake often made. The whole length of the prophetic time is seventy weeks, or 490 years, the unmeasured period before the last week not being counted. Now the last half week, or three years and a half, of this prophetic time is so tremendous in its character, that it is described in times, in months, in days: each of these making the correct scale three years and a half. Now writers have, and do mistake these days, as if they meant years, and thus calling them 1260 years! Not noticing that this is far longer than the whole scale of time 490 years. These 490 years close with the anointing the most Holy. And as we have seen immediately after the tribulation of those days, He shall be seen coming with power and great glory. All

sorts of fancies have been invented for the fulfilment of these 1260 years. I well remember American adventists, alarming great numbers, by proving that Christ would come in, I think it was 1843. I will tell you how they did this, or how Satan did this by them in order, after it was past, to drive the excited people to infidelity. A certain year was fixed on for the coming of Christ. They then counted backward and fixed on some event in history as a starting point. In their lectures they started in this way from 6 or 7 different points, and always of course arrived at the same year. Let us turn to the Word, and we shall find that there has nothing happened yet in this interval, at all like what will take place during those three years and a half.

A beast is seen to rise out of the sea: and this beast answers to the old Roman Empire. (xiii. 1, 2.) That beast or imperial form of empire has been destroyed—wounded with the sword. But all the world is to wonder at this beast suddenly reappearing again. And all the world worships the dragon which gave power unto the beast. This has not taken place yet: it will be so during the last three and a half years. “And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.” The exact last measure on the scale again. He can only blaspheme the Church gone to heaven, for ever with the Lord. But dreadful will be the condition of the poor Jews, for this short period of the end, on earth. “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given unto him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations; and all that dwell upon earth shall worship Him,” &c.

And now the wicked one is revealed, the other beast, coming up out of the earth. What power of iniquity

he will have, he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven. He uses one fearful power for evil, in compelling all men small and great, rich and poor, to receive the mark of the beast. Certainly this has not been fulfilled yet: Satan is trying it as a cruel power, for evil at this moment, and it is a new thing in the earth, and bears the name of a living man, one of its cruel victims. It is called Boycotting.

“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” Oh how terrible the state of the Roman Empire when this shall be its universal condition at the time of the end. Talk of 1260 years, if those days first named to Daniel were not shortened, no flesh could be saved.

What a trinity of evil! The dragon, the imperial head, and the wicked one, the man of sin—and this terrible engine of evil, of which we hear of its sad prelude even now. But all compelled to worship the dragon, and the beast or be put to death. What a reign of terror! And who can say how soon the Church may be taken, and it may begin?

It may be asked, how can these things be since the Roman Imperial Empire has been broken to pieces, by savage armies: and does not actually exist? This was answered before its destruction. The angel explained this to John in chap. xvii. The beast or imperial head “was, and is not, and yet shall be.” What a surprise this will be to Europe—that terrible Empire suddenly appearing again. And Satan giving his power to the imperial head. It is perfectly childish to say this has been: either in the days of Napoleon, or at any other time. For not only is there the beast, the head: but there are to be also

ten horns or "kings which have received no kingdom as yet: but receive power as kings one hour with the beast." No ten kings have done what these will do for they will *give their* power and strength unto the beast." This is entirely new: and will take place not now but at the time of the end.

It may be asked what then will become of the false professing church, when the true saints have been taken to be with the Lord, during this awful time of the end, the last three and a half years? She seems for a moment to swell to greater grandeur and iniquity than ever, as the great whore. She even sits on the blasphemous beast: and he carrieth her. This is only for a very short time: for he and the ten kings utterly destroy her. "And the ten horns which thou sawest *and* (not upon) the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." Her utter destruction is then described in chap. xviii. Such then will be the reign of awful terror, the tribulation such as never was, and never shall be again: and then immediately the Son of man shall come, and every eye shall see Him: and all tribes of the earth shall mourn. Then shall take place the judgment of the quick: and the setting up of His kingdom on earth.

How strangely the Scriptures have been misunderstood on these subjects. Take this one. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." This has frequently been referred to as meaning Christianity. The least attention would have shown that those kings had not received their kingdoms when John wrote the Revelation: and as we have seen have not done so yet.

No, it is at the end of the last three years and a half, in the very days of these kings, that God sets up His earthly kingdom. This may be further seen, when the terrible character of the fourth or Roman Empire is seen as foretold in Dan. vii. 13. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven.....and there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people nations and languages, should serve Him, His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Then shall commence that glorious kingdom and reign of Christ on earth. Israel the centre of that kingdom and Jerusalem the holy metropolis of the whole world. We hope to look at those scriptures which speak of that millennial reign in another paper. God could not have given more clear and distinct warning: and the very world seems conscious that some terrible judgment is at hand. Oh, reader, are you ready to go in before the door is shut, are you ready to meet the Lord? To-morrow may be for ever too late. The unmeasured period of grace may close this day. To-morrow may be strong delusion, to believe a lie and to be damned. How Satan can deceive his poor dupes. May God enable you at this moment to flee from the wrath to come. What an end to human pride, and boasting, and progress! God's word will be found true. All these things shall surely come to pass. Men may cry peace and safety: but the sudden destruction shall come. No longer despise the word of God: No longer listen to the lies of men. O God awake men from their fatal sleep. Jesus says, "Surely I come quickly." And hearken to these, His words. He says, "I am Alpha, and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." (Rev. xxi. 6.) C. S.

THE RIBAND OF BLUE AND THE LACE OF BLUE.

NUMBERS xv.; EXODUS xxviii.

IN these two scriptures we have a remarkable contrast. The one, the riband of blue, is a symbol or sign of man fully tested under the most favourable circumstances: what man is to God. In the other, the lace of blue: what Christ is to man.

Let us remember both were of God. Man has been tested. Christ is our great High Priest.

In turning, then, first, to the riband of blue, let us remark that the institution of the riband of blue was of God. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments, throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders A RIBAND OF BLUE: and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them. . . . That ye may remember and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God. I am the Lord your God, which brought you out

of the land of Egypt, to be your God. I am the Lord your God.”

Thus the institution of the riband of blue was of God, and is very beautiful. It was not worn in Egypt whilst they were slaves to Pharaoh, but after God had brought them out by redemption. A riband of blue, worn by a slave of Pharaoh, or a slave of Satan, would be a contradiction, as blue is the heavenly colour, that which is of God.

Who, then, were to wear the riband of blue? The nation of Israel, and the stranger that came to dwell with them, to sojourn in the land. It was the outward visible sign of that one nation whom God had brought from Egypt, and to whom He had made known His laws and commandments. As circumcision was a mark before the eye of God, so the riband of blue was to be a constant sign of remembrance before their own eyes. “That ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them.” “And be holy unto your God.” It certainly was very striking: the blue on the fringe of their garments, almost touching the earth as they walked, with its heavenly colour, ever proclaiming the holy claims of God, He requiring men to walk in heavenly purity and holiness before Him.

The context of the institution of the riband of blue will shew that it was not a sign that Israel did thus walk in heavenly purity, but rather what a holy God must require. He must have a perfect

obedience to all His commandments, if man is to stand on that ground before Him.

The context is indeed remarkable. In chapter xiv. we find Israel murmuring, in rebellion so fearfully, that had God dealt with them in judgment, they would have been destroyed. Then we have the intercession of Moses. The Lord hears and pardons. Still there is continued rebellion and sin. Then grace shines out in chapter xv., and also government. They had pledged themselves to do all the commandments of the Lord, in Exodus xix. Thus the riband of blue was a badge of the pledge they had taken to do ALL the commandments of Jehovah.

The immediate context of this deeply interesting institution is still more remarkable. A man was found gathering sticks on the sabbath-day. If he had kept the law in every other point, yet he was guilty. "And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall surely be put to death." The sabbath-day being a type of the rest of soul God gives through redemption, nothing could possibly be allowed on man's part to pollute that rest. God said to Israel, "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm: THEREFORE the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day." (Deut. v. 15.)

Does not God still speak in this shadow? Peace

with God and rest of soul is only to be found through the redemption we have in Christ Jesus. Hence, nothing can be allowed of our works to touch or pollute the perfect sabbath of rest we have in Christ.

This will be seen in another scripture. Never was the observance of the sabbath more strictly enforced than when Moses was just about to receive the people's contributions for the tabernacle. "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations on the sabbath-day." (Ex. xxxv. 2, 3.)

Does not God say to us in this, The first thing I desire is, that you may have perfect repose in my presence: then I am ready to receive your smallest works and offerings? And does not this explain why God could have no pleasure in those sacrifices which did not purge the conscience, or bring man into the holy presence of God? (See Heb. x. 1-10.) Nay, was not this God's eternal purpose to bring the sinner, perfectly purged from sins, into His holy presence in the perfect and eternal sabbath of rest? We can well see, then, why no work of man could be allowed to mar this rest.

The man had not kindled the fire, but he had presumptuously gathered the sticks. And mark,

that if a man is on the principle of law, of which the riband of blue was the outward sign, he is under the curse; for the least infraction of that law brings a curse. The gatherer of sticks, though he had not kindled the fire, must die. We shall find this fully confirmed in the New Testament.

We will now inquire what was the first thing that took place after the touching and beautiful institution of the riband of blue. The very first thing we find in the host of the riband of blue, is the sin and rebellion of Korah and his company.

How sad this is: instead of looking at the riband of blue, and keeping all the commandments of the Lord, to do them, to be holy unto the Lord, the very leaders, the ministers of the sanctuary, are chief in this fearful rebellion. This was the first act of the army of the riband of blue. Surely it demands our attention, and especially as we know this is one of the great sins of Christendom—the way of Core, or Korah. (Jude 11.)

The sin was this: it was the ministers of God seeking also to usurp the priesthood. There was only one high priest in Israel, type of our only one great High Priest, passed into the heavens. Rebellion against Aaron was sin against the Lord. And what was the righteous judgment of the Lord on these wicked men? The earth was made to open its mouth, and swallow them up. They went down alive into the pit. Fire also came out from

the Lord, and destroyed the two hundred and fifty princes, famous in the congregation, men of renown. And if it was so fearful to sin against Aaron, is it a light matter, O ye so-called priests, famous in the congregation, to sin now against Christ, by usurping the functions of priesthood? We earnestly entreat *you* to repent before the terrible judgment, now so near at hand, overtakes you.

There is but one great High Priest, who has passed into the heavens ; what, then, will be the judgment on those who usurp his place as priests on earth ?

Thus, at the institution of the riband of blue, man was placed on the principle he had accepted, to remember and do all the commandments of the Lord ; but the gathering of sticks on the sabbath, and the sin of Korah and his company, prove, that the least presumptuous breach of that law must be punished with death.

Then, further, what was the history of those marked out from the rest of the world by this badge of blue ? Can we find one person, from Moses to Christ, that kept his pledge—that kept the holy principles of the riband of blue ? No, not one ; for “ all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” What a happy people would Israel have been, had they kept the holy walk of the riband of blue ! But, alas ! judges, priests, kings, people, all are proved, in God’s word, guilty

before Him ! Not one kept the pledge of the riband of blue !

It was to this very nation, who wore the riband of blue on the fringe of their garments, that God sent His Son. Did He find the riband of blue a true sign, that they remembered and did all the commandments of the Lord ? Did He find them a holy people to Jehovah ?

Hear what Jesus says : " All their works they do for to be seen of men : they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments." Yes, the eye of the Son of God saw that riband of blue on the fringe of their garments, as a mark of hypocrisy and self-righteousness.

The two great commandments are—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Now the Eternal God was made flesh, and dwelt among the company of the riband of blue. Did they love Him ? He who created the universe was revealed in love, He had become their neighbour. Did the wearers of that heavenly-coloured riband love Him ? They hated Him without a cause. They spat in His face. They demand that He should be crucified. And as He was offered up in divine love a sacrifice for sins, as He breathed those most tender words, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," they gnashed their teeth with rage and hatred of Him, though every

one of them may have worn the riband of blue. They were pledged by that riband to remember all the commands of that very Jehovah-Jesus, whom, with wicked hands, they crucified, and hanged on a tree.

We do solemnly ask the reader, Has not man been fully tested on the principle of law, of which the riband of blue was the outward sign? Man thus pledged himself to keep the law, but only to break it. Could the wearers of the blue have possibly been more guilty than they were in murdering the Holy One of God?

No doubt, as we shall see, God's purpose of infinite grace shone out in all this. The effect of the blue riband principle and institution was simply this: sin abounded. Sin, man's nature, abounded in open transgression. "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom. v. 20.) There can be no doubt, then, of the utter break-down of the principle of the riband of blue. Man was pledged to keep the law, but all were guilty.

The question, then, now is this—Would there be good or harm in combining the principle of the riband of blue with Christ? Would it be pleasing to God for a Christian to wear the riband of blue, and pledge himself to keep all the commandments of the Lord? As a principle, is it still in force, or is it abolished? What does the Spirit say as to all this in the inspired word?

We will look for a moment at the fairest specimen of man under law that ever wore the riband of blue. Saul of Tarsus, surely, was that man. He says, speaking of the righteousness of the law, of which the blue riband was the sign, "touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless." He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a chief wearer of the riband of blue. If any man could have been justified on that principle, certainly Saul was the man. Now hear him speak, after Christ in glory had appeared to him. He says, "But what things"—yes, blue riband, and all it represented—"were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law." He had sought to stand before God wearing the blue riband, so to speak ; that is, in the righteousness of law, of which it was the outward sign ; but now he counted all this as dung, compared with being found in Christ. Yes, Christ was everything to him now, and the blue riband nothing.

If you had seen him once, how different!—not wearing a little bit of riband, but with his broad fringe, and on it the riband of blue. Thus he went along the road to Damascus, with all good conscience, a blameless man, doing the will of God,

as he thought. But what did that light from heaven reveal to him? A few words from Jesus, the Son of God, and the proud Pharisee was the convicted enemy of Christ. Yes, the wearer of the riband of blue was the greatest enemy of Christ on earth. The very first commandment of the Lord which that riband reminded him he should keep, was to love the Lord with all his heart. But he found, to his horror, that he was a hater and persecutor of that very Lord. Ah, well might he from that day count all that the riband represented to be loss and dung, for the excellency of Christ.

Beloved reader, have you ever, like Saul, discovered the deep hatred of the heart against Christ? And yet in that MAN IN THE GLORY what grace and love! The blue riband persecutor was chosen to be the messenger of Christ, the apostle of the Gentiles. Ever after, to Paul the apostle, the difference between the gospel and that of which the blue riband was the outward sign, was as wide as the poles are apart. Do we hear some reader saying, How can this be? Was not the blue riband instituted by God? Was it not to remind the people under law that they were to do all the commandments of the Lord? And is not the law just, and holy, and good? Would it not be a great blessing to keep all the commandments of the Lord, to be sober, righteous, and holy? Most assuredly this would be the case, if such a person could be found. But not only did this, the most

blameless wearer of the riband of blue, find himself to be the chief of sinners, the greatest enemy of Christ, but let us now hear what the Spirit of God says, by him, as to the whole human race.

First, he shews that those nations, the Gentiles, who, of course, were not under the law, as he shews, and therefore did not wear its sign, the riband of blue—all these were utterly sunk in the deepest lawlessness and depravity. (Rom. i.) Then he speaks of the one nation of the blue riband—Israel—who had received the law, but had not kept it, and proves from their own scriptures that they were as guilty as the Gentiles. Read his words, nay, the words of God. (Rom. iii.) Thus, after fifteen hundred years' trial of the riband of blue, all are proved guilty. This closed the trial of man in the flesh, and proved that, on that principle, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

Apply all this to your own case. Suppose you say, I am a Jew, and I will wear the blue riband, the sign of it, that I may remember all the commandments of the Lord, to do them. Now, if you are a guilty sinner—and can you say you are not?—what good in this case would there be in wearing the riband of blue?

No, we must not look for righteousness and justification on a totally new and different principle, "even the righteousness of God, which is by Jesus

Christ"? It is thus Christ, *or* the blue riband. The accomplished righteousness of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, *or* man working out a righteousness of his own by remembering all the commandments of the Lord, to do them.

It may now be asked, But what harm would there be in adopting both Christ and the principles signified in the institution of the riband of blue? Believe in Christ, and then wear the riband, as a pledge to keep all the commandments of the Lord—of course, praying to Him to help us to keep that pledge? Well, to the natural man, this looks very fair. But have we not an inspired epistle on this very subject? Did the Spirit of God not know that this would be the greatest danger that ever could assail the church of God? And on no subject is the apostle Paul so earnest and vehement.

If the reader would understand the danger of the Christian going back, or combining the principles of the riband of blue, though once instituted by God, with the gospel, let him most carefully study the Epistle to the Galatians. He will find that the very thing symbolised by the riband of blue, that is, righteousness by works of law, is the very leaven that the Judaising teachers wished to introduce, in order to neutralise the grace of Christ. Now mark, deliverance from sins, according to the will of God, is through our Lord Jesus Christ, "who gave himself for our sins, that he might

deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father." (Gal. i. 4.) This is all of grace, free favour. Well might the apostle marvel that they were so soon, and so easily, turned from the grace of Christ unto another gospel, "which was not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." If any man or angel did this, he was to be accursed.

He had not received his gospel from man, or by man, but from the Lord. False brethren had come in, seeking to bring them again into bondage. Nay, in this very matter he had had to withstand Peter to his face, because he was to be blamed. The gospel was endangered. Then the argument of the apostle is very striking; he says, "We who are Jews by nature"—the very people who wore the blue riband—"and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Thus the very wearers of the riband of blue had given up works of law for justification, that they might be justified by faith of Christ. Surely this exposed the folly of those who would persuade those justified by Christ to mix with Christ the principles of the riband of blue. Nay, the apostle says, if I do so,

I make myself a transgressor. He says, "I am crucified with Christ." Now a crucified person needs no blue riband as a sign that he is keeping the law. The old man who wore the blue riband no longer lives. It is now Christ: "but Christ liveth in me." The life he now lives is not on the old principle at all, but entirely new. "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." This is not on the principle of the old man, the old *I* keeping the law. How can it be, if "*I am crucified*"? A dead man needs no riband of blue. To wear it again would be to frustrate the grace of God. I do not do that, Paul says.

But if I am saved by Christ, may I not adopt the blue, and so seek righteousness before God by keeping the commandments? "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." The foolish Galatians were forgetting that the law (or riband of blue) had not been set before them, but "Jesus Christ evidently set forth crucified among you." Yes, it was by what He had done that they had received the Spirit of God. Think of their bodies being the temples of the Holy Ghost, and then so foolish as to seek perfection by works of law for that old man of the riband which had been crucified with Christ. We can only point out a few facts now.

Abraham lived long before the law, and the institution of the riband of blue. He believed God,

and it was counted to him for justification, or righteousness.

As many as are of the works of the law, the sign of which was the riband of blue, are under the curse (see Gal. iii. 10), "for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Christ redeemed those who had been under the law. (Ver. 13.)

The promise to Abraham was confirmed in the Seed, which is Christ, four hundred and thirty years before the law, or the blue riband. The scripture hath concluded all under sin. (Ver. 22.) We are now saved, not by the law, but by redemption. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Chap. iv. 5, 6.)

To return back to the beggarly elements was enough to make the apostle doubt whether they had ever been truly converted. (Chap. iv. 9-11.)

Circumcision was one of the commandments under the institution of the riband of blue. "Behold I, Paul, say unto you, That if ye [the Galatians] be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. . . . Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Thus man has been tried, and found guilty, and, according to the institution of the riband of blue, he cannot be saved. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet

offend in one point, he is guilty of all." (James ii.) The whole Epistle to the Galatians is on this subject, as it was there especially that the false teachers sought to introduce the institution of the riband of blue, that is, righteousness by the law, and man in legal bondage to keep it. Let us examine the blessed contrast of the priesthood of Christ and

THE LACE OF BLUE.

We have seen man fully tested under law, as symbolised by the riband of blue, and found him only guilty. We have also seen that to go back to the institution of the riband of blue is to give up grace, and to make the death of Christ of none effect.

We now desire to consider the priesthood of Christ and the lace of blue. "And they shall bind the breastplate by rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with A LACE OF BLUE, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod. And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually. And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before the Lord: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart continually. And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue."

Here, in this chapter, all points to Christ, the great High Priest passed into the heavens. The riband of blue shewed what we ought to have been to God, and were not; the lace of blue, what Christ is to us, having first glorified God on the cross.

Whatever excellencies and glories of Christ we see shadowed in the dress of the high priest, let us not forget that gold, the emblem of divine righteousness, has the first place. "Gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine-twined linen." He is all this for us. What Jesus was in the flesh was typified in the materials of the veil—as the royal Sufferer, as the Messiah, as the One in whom the Father delighted; all was perfect. But He was not a priest on earth; He must first suffer; the fine gold must pass through the fire. As our Substitute, He must bear *the judgment* due to us once, and then pass into heaven, our great High Priest. "Who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, WHEN HE HAD BY HIMSELF purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

There is another fact of all-importance to Christians expressed in two words—"WE HAVE." "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." We have not to come and pray that He would be our Priest. Whatever tender sympathy, whatever security—all, all we see in our

great High Priest—is ours, whether we know it, or not. (Heb. iii. 1; iv. 14–16; viii. 1; x. 21.)

It is, however, important not only to look at and learn the precious lessons set before us in the dress of the high priest, but also to seek to understand the contrasts between Aaron and Christ.

There were two places on which the names of the children of Israel were set in gold—on the shoulder, and on the heart. (Ex. xxviii. 12, 29.) “Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial.” Thus we see all Israel represented before the Lord on the two shoulders of the high priest. Is not this a striking picture of every child of God placed in security and strength, like the sheep that He laid on His shoulder?

The priesthood of Christ is not to meet us when we sin, but rather to preserve us from sinning, our names being ever on His shoulders, and He having an abiding, unchangeable priesthood. “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost [evermore] that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” What a contrast this is to putting ourselves under law, or taking the pledge, to save ourselves from sin!

But not only were all Israel written, nay, engraved, on the shoulders of Aaron, we must pass on to the *lace of blue* and the breastplate of judgment. The names of all Israel must also be engraved like the engraving of a signet, and placed

on precious stones in that breastplate of judgment on the heart of Aaron. Why did the Lord give such minute instructions as to the materials and the security of the breastplate? What a place gold has in all this! It is like the glad tidings of the revelation of the righteousness of God. What chains of gold and rings of gold! "And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the ephod with *a lace of blue*." Blessed security! fastened on the heart of the high priest with a heavenly tie—the heavenly colour, blue. Thus, whilst the riband of blue reminded Israel of the heavenly, holy claims of God on them*—claims which they never met—the lace of blue points to those who are given by the Father, and ever accepted in the Son. And how secure the fastenings: "that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod."

What a sight! Look at our great High Priest. Who are they engraved on His tender heart? Let us hear Him tell. He says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which

* It may interest some of our readers to know that "riband of blue" and "lace of blue" are the same in the original. How useless, then, for man to be doing his best. If God declares what He requires from man, it cannot be less than what would suit heaven itself, where all is holy, just, and true—as truly "blue," heavenly—as the lace on the forehead of our great High Priest.

he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

Do you not see the lace of blue in all this? All is of the Father's will. Perhaps you say, How am I to know that the Father hath given me to Christ? Have you come to Him, or are you trusting in your own resolutions? He says, further, "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life," &c. Have you by faith seen the Son of God, and believed on Him? Then rest assured you are bound on His heart with the lace of blue. It is the Father's heavenly hand. Again, He says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John vi., x.) Thus have we the answer—ALL that the Father has given to Christ are placed in abiding security on His heart. Rings and chains of gold, and lace of blue—all, all are of God. Now read Romans viii. 29-39. What a chain of pure gold! What rings of everlasting love! Predestinated, called, justified, glorified. Who shall condemn? "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Yes, all is the lace of blue; all is of God—from eternity to eternal glory. Engraved like the en-

graving of a signet—bound with a lace of blue in everlasting security, that they be not loosed.

It may, indeed, be asked, How can such lost sinners as we be placed on the heart of Christ, never to be separated from His love? On what ground can this be in righteousness? For an answer to this question, we ask your careful attention to these words: "And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of JUDGMENT upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually." (Ex. xxviii. 29.) Still more: "And thou shalt put in the breastplate of JUDGMENT the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before the Lord: And Aaron shall bear the JUDGMENT of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually."

Here, then, is the ground of our security on the heart of Christ. He who bears our names on His heart has first borne the judgment due to us; yea, bore that judgment according to Urim and Thummim. He has met the claims of the light and perfection of God. Other foundation for my soul than this would I have none. Before He sat down in the radiance of the glory of God, He purged our sins. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He was delivered for our iniquities. He made atonement for sins. Christ died for the sins of many. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Yea, if we turn to the epistle, on this

subject, we shall find this pressed more than anything else. The infinite value of that one sacrifice, when He offered Himself as the ground of the immutable security and perfection, as to the conscience, of those sanctified unto God by that one offering.

To return, then, to our chapter, and type of our great High Priest, two things are evidently set forth in that breastplate, bound by the lace of blue. Christ, the Substitute, bearing our judgment, and Christ, our Representative, in whom we are immutably accepted.

In the principle of the riband of blue we see man tested, and proved utterly guilty, under judgment. In the principle of divine righteousness and grace, set forth in the lace of blue, we see the Substitute taking our place, bearing our judgment, both as to sins and sin, so that we can say, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" Now mark the order: "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." (Rom. viii. 34.) We say, how beautiful the order: first, He died on the cross; He bare our judgment; God has raised Him from among the dead for our justification. So that God is our Justifier! Then, next, He is even at the right hand of God. There we see Him our High Priest: He maketh intercession for us. So that all is removed that unfitted us, and we are

accepted in the Beloved. We now see Him who was our Substitute, bearing the full judgment of God due to us, now our Representative, bearing our names upon His heart in the full light and perfection of God. Bound by a lace of blue, to be unloosed no more—engraved there, to be never effaced. The robe of the ephod ALL of blue. Yes, all this of God. If the riband of blue shews what we ought to have been, and failed; the lace of blue, and the robe ALL of blue, reveals what God has made Christ to be to us. And He never fails.

We can only, in this short paper, dwell on one thing more. “And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre, upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron’s forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.”

Who is worthy, we ask—who in His own Person is worthy to wear the blue lace before the eye of God? It is that glorious, peerless Man who sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high. He whom God has made to be righteousness unto us—He who has established the throne of God in righteousness, yet perfect grace to us. Oh, Holy, Holy, Holy One, Thou alone art HOLINESS TO THE

LORD, Thou alone art worthy to wear the lace of blue. We bow and adore Thee, and cast the riband of blue at Thy feet. Thou hast borne the iniquity of the things of Thy people, and now they are accepted in Thee before the Lord.

What a wondrous picture! all the redeemed people of God accepted, and presented in the holiest, immutably on the heart of Christ, bound there by the lace of blue.

In considering the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, as set before us in the Epistle to the Hebrews, let us bear in mind the remarkable place that gold had in the dress of the high priest. The names of Israel were set in gold on the shoulder, and fastened by rings of gold and the lace of blue to the heart of Aaron. That lace of blue, as we have seen, by its heavenly colour, speaks to us, and says, all is of God. We are given and fastened to the heart of our great High Priest by the loving hand of God.

This epistle is in perfect harmony with these typical thoughts. It is God speaking to His people, not now by His prophets, as in the past, but God speaking in the Son. The glory of His Person introduces and crowns His finished work. The appointed Heir of all things, He, the eternal, self-existent Son, by whom the universe was made. He did not *become*, but, "who *being* the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power,

WHEN he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Could any mere man, or creature, be the self-existent brightness of the glory of God? Could any mere creature be the upholder of all things? He is truly God! "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." And yet as truly perfect man. "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Thus is the Person of our great High Priest set before us. But mark, before He became our High Priest how completely His atoning work was finished; and, as we learn elsewhere, divine righteousness was accomplished! It was "when he had purged our sins." He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." This was in direct contrast with Aaron, or the high priest in Israel. He never had finished his work. He never could offer a sacrifice that purged our sins. He never, therefore, sat down. Scarcely need we say that the law, as symbolised by the riband of blue, knew nothing of this. Man did not keep all the commandments of the Lord, and the law could never purge our sins, but only curse the transgressor. But the lace of blue points to a Priest who has first of all purged our sins by His own blood. "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Having, then, by that one

sacrifice opened the way for us into the holiest, even into heaven itself, and having obtained eternal redemption for us, it is evident we need no other sacrifice. Can anything be superior to eternal redemption? Can anything be additional to that which for ever perfects? Oh, the blasphemy of the man that can pretend to be superior to Christ! —to pretend to offer sacrifices for the living and the dead. We ask you, reader, Have you eternal redemption through the blood of Christ? Then what other sacrifice can you need?

It is most important to be quite clear about this, that the one sacrifice of Christ is the ground of His Priesthood. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." God had no pleasure in those sacrifices which could never take away sins. (Heb. x. 1-9.) It was the blessed will of God that our sins should be so put away, that He in righteousness should remember them as against us no more.

The Lord Jesus came to do that will. He has done it, and the Holy Ghost now bears witness that God will remember our sins no more. This brings us back to the all-important fact that all this was accomplished before He sat down. "But this man, AFTER he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." Mark, He settled the whole question of the believer's sins before He sat down; in this sense, that they never could, or would, be imputed to believers. The Priesthood of Christ begins there.

But then, is not this the very opposite of all human ideas of priesthood? Of course it is. You see that poor woman, or rich one either. She is going to her priest. What is she going to him for? About her sins. She wants him to intercede for her with God—maybe to offer a sacrifice for her sins. She will pay him to do this. She knows nothing of eternal redemption, nothing of a purged conscience. Her sins, her sins, these drive her to the priest. Or she may have seen the dreadful wickedness of a man pretending to be a priest, and to have power, either to offer sacrifices for sins, or to forgive them. And she may try to come to Christ, that He may do something, as the only Priest, to relieve her. Centuries of false teaching as to priesthood have almost obliterated the truth, that the believer is for ever perfected. (Heb. x. 14.) In ignorance of that fact, a person then looks to Christ to be his Priest when he has sinned, and to intercede with God for him; or to let him have a fresh application or sprinkling of blood; or do something to relieve the conscience as to sins. All this is entirely erroneous, and utterly contrary to the fact that all is done, and the worshipper once purged needs nothing more to perfect that one sacrifice by which he is immutably perfected as to the conscience.

Search through this epistle on the priesthood of Christ, and you will be struck with this—it is not priesthood before God *if we sin*. Should that be

the case, He meets us as Advocate with the Father, not as Priest with God. (See 1 John ii.) But even then it is on the ground that He is our righteousness, having made propitiation for our sins. And mark as to that also, it is not if we repent and come to Him, that then, perhaps, He may be our Advocate, if we repent enough, and so merit His intercession. No, He is our Advocate. We have such an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. It is wholly of the Father—the lace of blue. We repent, utterly judge ourselves, because we have such an Advocate.

Peter sinned deeply, did he not? Had he to repent before Jesus prayed for him? Before Peter repented, yes, before he sinned, Jesus said, I HAVE prayed for thee. Yes, whether it be as Advocate with the Father, or as our great High Priest before the face of God, all is of God; it is the heavenly blue, the lace of blue. The Priesthood of Christ, then, is to “succour them that are tempted,” “to help in time of need.”

Let us now by faith look up, and see Jesus, our great High Priest, before the face of God for us. Let us dwell on the tenderness and glory set forth in the dress of the high priest. The gold is there. The righteousness of God is now accomplished. He is our subsisting righteousness. The purple is there. As the altar was to be covered with purple, so was He, the royal Sufferer. Yes, the body prepared was once covered with purple. Scarlet

was there: David's royal Son, now in heavenly glory. Fine-twined linen was there; the ever-righteous One.

Now look a little closer, if only a little child whose sins are forgiven; see your name engraved, and placed on His shoulder, set fast there in righteousness complete. Nay, look again, and never cease to look. Your name engraved, set upon His heart, in the light and perfection of the glory of God. Oh, that lace of blue! It is God the Father that has tied you fast with the heavenly lace of blue—no more to be separated, no more to be loosed. It is the heart of Him who has borne the judgment due to you; it is the heart of infinite, unchanging love. Oh, look at the Person of your great High Priest, blessed, only holy One, the plate of pure-gold righteousness before the face of God—holiness to Jehovah. Yes, and—blessed words!—*we have* such a High Priest. Consider our High Priest.

If it be the riband of blue, in our efforts and pledges to keep all the commandments, we have failed, and shall fail to keep them. But it is the lace of blue: Christ, our great High Priest, will never fail to keep us safe to the end. Did He not pass by the angels, and take hold on our nature, that He might be a faithful and merciful High Priest? that He might first make reconciliation for our sins, and also, having suffered being tempted, He might succour us when tempted? We have not

to do one thing that He may become our Priest ; no, "*we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.*" Sometimes we are so tempted, so tried, by the world, and still more by false brethren, that we wonder what will come next. He who watches over and cares for us never so wonders. "All things are naked and open unto his eyes." All is known to Him. He has trod every step of the way. As man He learnt His lesson perfectly. So that, being in that sense made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him. Nothing, present or future, can ever loose us from that breastplate of light and perfection. Nothing can ever unloose those rings of gold and chains of love. Nothing can untie what God has tied, that lace of blue. God gave Him this blessed Priesthood, and God gave us to Him.

Not a temptation can come, not a single need or trial, but He sees it all beforehand ; and He is well able to help in time of need. Yes, He is all we need before the face of God, having borne our judgment once. Having once purged our sins, He is all we need in passing through this wilderness to succour and sustain. And *we have* such an High Priest whose priesthood is unchangeable. "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Thus the riband of blue is a symbol of that which saves

never. The lace of blue shews us fastened to Him who saves to the uttermost, even for ever.

Have you seen the dignity of our great High Priest, the Son of God? Then, also, have you seen the wondrous dignity of those placed, through the riches of His grace, on the very heart of this great High Priest? Think of these words: "For such an high priest BECAME US, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." How we have forgotten our heavenly calling! What has God purposed us to be? Or what the height of His eternal purpose, for such an High Priest to become us? Yes, through infinite grace, we too are to be holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and finally with Him, for whom we wait, made higher than the heavens. (Eph. i.) Who but our great High Priest could thus save us to the end?

How much still remains to be unfolded of the priesthood of Christ in this epistle! However, this is the sum: "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;" and therefore we need no other. Such a High Priest excludes all others. If we believe His one sacrifice has put away all our sins from the sight of God, then such a sacrifice excludes all others. In like manner such a High Priest excludes all need of another.

The priesthood of Israel made nothing perfect with its oft-repeated sacrifices and its annual day

of atonement. These sacrifices could never take away sins. Man was still shut out of the holiest. The institution of the riband of blue made nothing perfect, for no one kept all the commandments of the Lord, to do them. All were guilty. What a contrast in Christ, our great High Priest! By His own blood He has entered in, having obtained eternal redemption for us. The veil is now rent from top to bottom. He ever bears our names upon His heart. He ever liveth to make intercession for us. He ever appears in the presence of God for us. He is ever set down in perfect repose. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Now, if we believe this testimony of the Holy Ghost, we repeat, what need have we of the hosts of pretending, usurping priests?

If God thus spake by Moses, when men sought to usurp the priesthood of Aaron: "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men," what is the wickedness of those now in His sight who dare to usurp the priesthood of Christ, and deny the eternal efficacy of His one sacrifice, by offering false sacrifices of their own? May God, by the Holy Spirit, keep our hearts true to Christ, and deliver His people from every form of deception in these last days. C. S.



THE CONFESSIONAL.

WE desire fairly to examine the argument in favour of the confessional: but if the reader expects sarcasm, or ridicule, we trust he will be disappointed. It is a subject of far too great importance, in our judgment, to be treated in that way. It affects the whole question of peace with God. It is held and practised, more or less, by more than 100,000,000 of the human race, and is sincerely believed by great numbers, as a practice that can be proved from scripture; yea, that it was established by Christ; first to His apostles, and then to their successors.

As we write for plain earnest people who desire to know the truth on this subject, before entering more directly on the argument in favour of the confessional, we will call the attention of the reader to the Person, and words, of the Lord Jesus, in a few scriptures that bear on this question. 1st. Matthew xi., read verses 25 to 30. Are you heavy burdened with sins? What is His instruction to you? Is it that you must go to the priest to confess, and then the priest will give you rest? Very far from this: Jesus says, "COME UNTO ME, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Is it not strange

that millions will believe, and go to the priest, how very few really believe Jesus. Does He not say, "I will give you rest"? Do you believe Him? How few know Jesus, and His readiness, to give them rest. We shall find shortly that it is His joy to give rest.

2nd. In John iv. 7-34. Here we have a sinner face to face with Jesus, God manifest in the flesh. Does He say to this woman at Samaria's well, wait until Peter comes, and confess thy sins to him? Blessed Jesus! He says, "Give me to drink." Yes, He would have the joy of her salvation. Did He not say to her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water"? Is it possible for these words of Jesus, to mean anything else than His utmost readiness to meet the sinner? And mark, He says that which He gives shall satisfy for ever. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." None but Jesus can give that which satisfies for ever. The priest *charges* according to the weight of the burden: Jesus *gives* rest.

3rd. John vii. 37-39. Now look at Jesus: and hearken to His gracious words. Yes, gracious words. The Pharisees and priests hated Him. Oh, think of these religious men, sending officers to take Jesus. In the midst of rejection, He stood and cried saying, "If any man thirst, let him COME UNTO ME, and

drink." No thought in His mind of sending them to the apostles first to confess. No, "Let him come unto me and drink." Could the love of Jesus be more free. Still in His word He cries, "If any man thirst let him come unto me, and drink." But now carefully notice, there is something far more than this. Far more than only receiving, that which gives everlasting satisfaction to his own soul who comes to Jesus and drinks. What he receives, he shall communicate to others. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive : for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given] ; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)." Mark, these words are not in any sense spoken only to the apostles, or limited to them. They are spoken to whom ? "If any man thirst." This then is clear, that if a weary heavy laden sinner, thirsting for pardon, and rest, comes direct to Jesus : he not only receives perfect peace, and rest, but what is most important to know, that now the Holy Ghost has been given : he receives power to be a communicator of peace, and rest, like a river, to others. Is not this a happy privilege of every thirsty weary soul, that comes to Jesus Himself ? Surely no one can deny this.

4th. John xx. 19-23. We now come to the scripture, on which the argument is chiefly based for authority for confession to the priests. "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

It is assumed that these words were addressed to the apostles as such : and power thus given to them, as apostles : as the guardians of the church ; and after them, to their successors. If this be so, the confessional is established beyond a doubt. If this is not so, the whole theory of the confessional is clearly a mistake, so far as this scripture goes. The question is this, who are meant, or included in the pronoun "ye." "Whose soever sins *ye* remit," &c. It is easy to assert anything, and common for those ignorant of the scripture to accept the assertion. We shall find the matter quite clear, if we carefully examine the context of the words of the Lord.

The scene is now changed. The great work of redemption is accomplished. Jesus has died for the sins of many. He has uttered those wondrous words, "It is finished." The spear has pierced His side, "and forthwith came out blood and water." The atoning work is done. The body of Jesus has been laid in the sepulchre. The disciples of Jesus "knew not as yet the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." A report had reached them, that Mary Magdalene had seen the risen Lord : that He was actually risen from among the dead ; yea, that they were now in a totally new position. He had said, "Go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father ; and to my God and your God." They could not have been in this position and relationship, *one with the risen Christ*, before He died and rose again.

Well, the report had gathered them together in an

upper room. Let us here carefully examine who were gathered in that upper room, before we look at the words spoken to them. We are not told here it was the eleven apostles, but simply "The doors were shut where the *disciples* were assembled," &c.

It may be asked, but may not the word "*disciples*" mean only the eleven? No, that is not so, if we turn to Luke's account of this same event. "And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and *them that were with them.*" (Luke xxiv. 33-38.) This gathered company, with the apostles, is spoken of again: "These ALL continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women. . . . And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty)," &c. Thus it is a gross mistake to limit this to the apostles. It was the gathered disciples, men and women: about one hundred and twenty gathered together by the report of the resurrection of the Lord.

Let us return and hear His words to the gathered disciples. Not yet the church, His body: for the Holy Ghost was not yet come down to baptise them into one body. But did not this assembly of disciples rather represent the whole church of God, than any order of separate priesthood? Apostles and disciples were all together, one company. What Jesus said to one, He said to all. And what He said to them, He says to the whole company of believers, from that day to this. That is having made peace by the blood of

the cross : having been delivered for their sins, and raised again for their justification. As once their sin bearer, so now their everlasting righteousness. His first blessed words to them were "Peace [be] unto you." Oh wondrous words to the soul that believes them ! Were they worthy in themselves of these words of peace ? Far from that, they had all forsaken Him ; yes, the very apostles : one had denied Him most sadly. No, they were words of pure, unmerited, free favour. "Peace be unto you." He had made peace by His death on the cross. He did not point to one thing they had done. He could not ; no, it was wholly what He had done. "And when he had so said he shewed unto them his hands and his side." In Luke He said, "Why are ye troubled ? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts ? behold my hands and my side."

Now the company of disciples must be well grounded in this peace. They must know that there is nothing now between them and God, their Father. Sins all forgiven, unclouded peace. Therefore we read, "Then said Jesus to them AGAIN, peace be unto you : as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." They must be deeply settled in His peace to fit them for what He is about to say. Even as He had foretold before His death for them. When He promised the Holy Ghost the Comforter : He also said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." But now having made peace as He shews them His hands and His side,

He proclaims peace to them : to the whole company alike. Just think what an infinite meaning was contained in those few words. Peace unto you : and again repeated.

No doubt we all find it is Satan's one great effort to keep us from believing those words of Jesus, direct from Himself.

But now He tells them a wonderful thing. Just as He had said : not only should the heavy-laden find rest who came to Him. And the thirsty that came to Him should drink, but also, "He that believeth on me out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Not only should he receive himself the living water, but should communicate it, like rivers of living water, to others : so here. Jesus had *been sent to them*. And from Him they had *received* perfect peace. And also in the fulness of abounding grace, He says, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." As they had in mercy received the message of divine grace from Him : even so they were now to be sent by Him to be the communicators of the same peace to others. And this peace would be as solid as was their own. But in order to be the communicators of this peace or perfect forgiveness of sins, two things were needed. They must have eternal life themselves, and they must receive the Holy Ghost. "And when he had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost : whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." Now, though the Holy Ghost when He came, did chiefly use the apostles in this

great privilege : yet we must admit that the commission was given to the assembled disciples : to every individual in that company.

If we turn to the Gospel of Luke we shall find a fuller explanation of this commission had been given : so John, writing after, just names the fact in a few striking words. It was the same occasion evidently : and having spoken peace *to them* (Luke xx. 36-44), and confirmed that peace by the proofs of His resurrection, "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day : and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Both these scriptures being spoken by the Lord to all the assembled disciples : do they not clearly mean that as they had received peace, all sins forgiven through the accomplished work of Jesus : so now they were by the power of the Holy Ghost to preach forgiveness of sins to whosoever should believe the message ? Jesus said, "And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you : but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

Thus if we take scripture, we do not find in this great commission of Christ, a word about confessing to a priest : but remission of sins through *preaching* the glad tidings.

It may be said, but the Fathers entirely disagree with all this. We are sorry if they do ; if the

Fathers disagree with scripture, so much the worse for them.

But further, the disciples did not tarry, until they were, at Pentecost, endued with power from on high. They were baptised by the Holy Ghost. How did they understand sins were to be remitted and retained? Their acts will answer. In Acts ii. we find they were *all* filled with the Holy Ghost. And they began to speak in other tongues, &c. Peter's sermon is recorded. He opened the scriptures to the multitudes, as Jesus had opened them to him. He preached the death, resurrection, and exaltation of the rejected Christ. Great numbers were pricked to the heart, and cried out, "What shall we do?" Did he say you must confess your sins to us, the apostles? He must have done so, had he so understood the words of Jesus. He did not: but in perfect keeping with the high commission of the Lord, he PREACHED TO THEM repentance and forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus. "Then they that gladly received *his word* were baptised." It is sad that the word "repentance" has been perverted to "do penance," and this explained to be in part, confession of sins to a priest. They who do so, well know the Greek word can have no such meaning. God does not need such unrighteousness to uphold His truth. Repentance is evidently that self-judgment, and abhorrence of sins, which always accompanies salvation. This then is how Peter used the keys committed to him. In *preaching*, not by confession of sins to a priest, he opened the door into the kingdom to the Jews. We shall now see how he

opened the door to the Gentiles. (Acts x.) He was specially sent by a vision to do this, to him a very strange work. Here he takes up carefully the question of remission of sins. Cornelius was a devout man, but how often it is the case, the more devout, the deeper the need is felt for sins to be remitted, and also the desire for peace with God. Cornelius says, "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." If Peter therefore believed in the confessional, as one of the things commanded him of God ; nay the great thing to meet a burdened soul ; Christ's appointed means of remission : he must assuredly so instruct Cornelius and his company. Did he do so ? Not a thought of it ! What did he do ? He opened his mouth and preached the word. "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, **PREACHING PEACE BY JESUS CHRIST** : [He is Lord of all]." Just as he had received peace, and preached it to Israel, so now he *preaches* the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Can there be a question how he understood the gracious commission of Christ ? Nay he explains how, "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify," &c.

But it may be asked whose sins does he remit ? Hear his own answer, "To him [to Jesus] give all the prophets witness, that through his name **WHOSOEVER** believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Peter did not remit sins in his own name : neither is there a thought of coming first to the confessional, for, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy

Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." Is it not then sad to displace preaching forgiveness of sins by the confessional? And if we carefully compare every case in the Acts, we shall find it is through preaching the word that sins are remitted. Let us notice one more instance: Acts xiii. We shall find Paul adopting precisely the same means, the preached word. Not an allusion as to confession to a priest. He first preached how God had sent Jesus, His death and resurrection. Then he says, "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is *preached* [or proclaimed] unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him, ALL THAT BELIEVE are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." And as justification is the ground of peace, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Therefore Paul preaches peace to others, just as the Lord had proclaimed it to the gathered disciples. He declares distinctly whose sins are remitted, that is, that *all who believe* are justified. He thus communicated the peace he had received. And whose soever sins he thus declared remitted, were remitted, and they, all who believe, are justified.

But does he as distinctly declare whose soever sins are retained? Yes, he says also, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish." We invite the closest examination of every preaching in the Acts, and it will be found the same. Philip at Samaria. Paul at Philippi, or at Thessalonica: not a thought of the confessional, but in every case the preached word. Is

it not strange, if the confessional were the appointed means of forgiveness of sins, that the apostles should never have once thought of it ?

We will now examine a scripture, often referred to, in proof of the confessional. Matthew xvi. In contrast with the mere opinions of men as to who Christ was : Peter by faith confessed Jesus thus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The person of the Christ, the Son of the living God, was revealed by the Father, to Peter. The Lord Jesus in pronouncing him blessed, changes his name from Simon to Petros (a stone), He said, "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Petros [a stone], and upon this Petra [rock] I will build my church ; and the gates of hell [or powers of death] shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind *on earth*, shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt *loose on earth*, shall be loosed in heaven."

If we compare Ephesians ii. 20, we shall see that Christ did not intend to build His church on a loose stone like Petros : but to him a stone, in Himself, the rock. That is, the revelation of the Person of the Son, by the Father, is the foundation rock. Himself the rock. And, as another has shewn, the keys were not given to Peter to build the church with. Christ builds the church, that which Satan who holds the power of death cannot prevail against. Distinctive power was given to Peter, as to the kingdom, not the church : he undoubtedly had the privilege of opening the doors both to the Jews and to the Gentiles, to

take that new position on earth : in the place of the kingdom of Israel, now set aside : called the kingdom of heaven, whilst the king should be in heaven. It is all a mistake as to this scripture, to suppose that Peter had power to bind, or loose, in heaven. It is "*on earth !*" the sphere of his power was in the kingdom on earth. It may be asked, are not they the same, the kingdom of heaven and the church ? Totally different in scripture. The powers of death cannot prevail against the church, that which Christ builds. Christ distinctly taught that Satan would prevail against the kingdom, and fill it with tares. And these continue in the kingdom unto the end. Have they not abounded in the kingdom, or Christendom, as we say, from that day to this ? But that which Christ builds shall stand for ever. (Eph. v.)

Whatever power Peter had, then, was as to the kingdom, the new order of things on earth. By his preaching we have seen he loosed the door, for both Jews and Gentiles. And the unbelieving Jews have been bound in blindness of heart to this day.

Now as to binding and loosing, or the ordering of things on earth : is there any reference to its continuance, or a succession ? There is a remarkable one, and this demands our close attention : Matthew xviii., " Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Here then at least is the true apostolic succession. The

very words spoken to Peter are given here. Who then are these two or three gathered to the name of Jesus? And what is it that they have power to do, the Lord Himself being in their midst? We find in this scripture, Jesus is teaching the lowliness that becomes those who enter the kingdom. And a forgiving, loving, seeking spirit is taught. A case is then supposed, of a brother trespassing against a brother: mark, it is not a matter of sins against God. Neither is there a thought of man having power to forgive such sins. The brother offended, is first to seek to gain his brother: failing this he is to take one or two more; if he still fails to win his brother he is to tell it to *the church*. He does not say the Church of Rome: or the Church of England, &c., but "*tell it to the church.*" In the beginning this was possible. Now it is not. Where is "the church"? Man has made many churches, but in the present state of division and confusion, what does the Lord consider to represent "the church"? He makes this quite clear: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Yes, that little gathering, which the priest might despise with disdain or persecute to the bitter death, is that to which Christ speaks the same words as He spake to Peter. But the binding and loosing here evidently refers to restoration of an offended brother in forgiveness and in love. Thus Peter understood it, as he says, "How oft shall my brother *sin against me*, and I forgive him, until seven times?" Now is it not most sad to wrest such plain scriptures

as these, and build upon them the terrible mistake that Christ has given power to forgive sins against God ?

Confession of sins is of essential importance : and is connected in scripture with the blessedness of sins forgiven. But there is no uncertainty as to whom we should confess. "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord ; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (Ps. xxxiii.) "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified," &c. (Ps. li.)

And in the New Testament, speaking of Christians, we read, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.) Is "*He*" God, or the priests ? John wrote these words that we sin not. "And if any man sin." Here we come to the very point. If a Christian should fall into sin, those who defend the confessional would say, he must confess to the priest, and in this way receive absolution. The scripture says, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : and he is the propitiation for our sins," &c. Could you tell us of any two things more opposed than scripture and the confessional ? In this paper we do not propose to speak a word about its abuse, but to shew that in principle it is utterly opposed to the truth of God, and has not surely a single text to rest upon. We might refer to every word that came from the lips of Christ in proof. Take the parable of

the prodigal. Would it not entirely falsify the true character of God, who had given His Son to die for the lost one, to say that before the Father could receive the lost son, he must first confess to the priest, and pay for his sins? "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Do you think such a Father needs a priest to soften His heart towards the returning sinner?

We do not for a moment question discipline in the assembly, as 1 Corinthians v., but this is altogether a different matter from private confession to a priest. And if the Lord had a thought of this (discipline) even in John xx. 23, we have seen it was spoken to the company of disciples. And as "the church" is no longer gathered together in separation from the world, the only thing that answers to it now, is that which the Lord still recognises. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, THERE AM I IN THE MIDST OF THEM."

The confessional proves how sadly men have lost the true knowledge of God. The apostle John said, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love." Is it possible to know God and then require a sinful man to stand between us and infinite love?

C. S.



WHAT DOES GOD SAY

TO THE

SWEARER ?

BY

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WHAT DOES GOD SAY TO THE SWEARER?

—:0:—

“**H**EAR the word of the Lord,” do you say; “why what has the Lord to say to me? Certainly I do swear a bit, but what harm is there in that? I think nothing of it.” Ah, that is just why we want you to hear the word of the Lord: we want you distinctly to understand what God thinks about it. God who hears every oath you utter. God says, “There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God, in the land. By *swearing*, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn.”

You say there is no harm in it. God hears you, and says you are linked with the liar, the murderer, the thief, the adulterer. Is not every oath you utter a prayer, that

you, and your friends, perhaps your very wife and children, may be damned? Will it be nothing when those awful prayers are answered for ever? And how soon those prayers may be answered! It is just a week this day as we write these lines, since a youth had been invited to come and hear the glad tidings of salvation. He came and listened a little while. He went out: perhaps he thought, "Cannot a young fellow do as he likes?" He went to his work in a coal-pit: had an accident; was taken out insensible; in two hours he was dead. There he was; the writer saw him go out. We would not limit the grace of God. We know not what took place in that dark pit. Do you think he would have gone out from the preached word of God, if he had known that the sun had set for the last time on him?—that in twenty hours he would have been in eternity?

Oh, swearer! is earnest, constant prayer going out of thy lips for damnation; if thou knewest that in twenty hours thy prayers would be answered, would thou still swear—

pray on ? Says the devil to thee, "Just put that tract on the fire ; all bosh, my friend, swear on." Well does Satan know that every oath is another link in the long chain of sin, by which he is dragging thee down, down to endless woe.

God may spare thee in mercy more than twenty hours. But if for twenty years, what is that compared with eternity ? A woman was listening to the good news of God's forgiveness, to lost sinners, lately in Yorkshire. She became greatly alarmed about her soul. Two years after this, the same preacher was called to see a dying woman. She looked earnestly at him, and said, "Don't you remember me ?" "No, I cannot say that I do," said the preacher. "Ah," she said, "two years ago I was listening to you preach the Gospel in the Mechanics' Hall. I became greatly alarmed about my soul. I felt I must decide at once for Christ, or go out of the Hall. I went out, and now I am dying ; and it is so dark, so dark, so dark !" Never will that preacher forget that sight, or those words, "I am dying, and it is so dark !"

Oh ! careless swearer, think of those words. "Shall be cast into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Yes, those are the words of Him that is the Truth ; of Him who cannot lie. Sad words on a dying bed, "It is so *dark* !"

Is not swearing terrible even in this world ? Linked with lying. Why does that young man swear ? He knows his word is not to be relied on without a profane oath. Poor vain youth, does he suppose that taking the holy name of God in vain, will lead any one to trust his word ? James says to the Jews, "But above all things, my brethren, swear not at all, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath : but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay : lest ye fall into condemnation." Do you ask, "what condemnation ?" The very same as the liar, the thief, the murderer, the adulterer. In God's description of the eternal state there are these words, and they are the last words that describe that state : "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and

idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone." And in Hosea, the swearer is linked with these. Oh, sin-convicted swearer, or liar, murderer, or adulterer, there is yet mercy—mercy yet for thee. Still we can tell how

"God, in mercy, sent His Son,
To a world by sin undone;
Jesus Christ was crucified,
'Twas for sinners Jesus died."

"He looketh upon men: and if any say I HAVE sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not: He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light." (Job. xxxiii. 27.) It is quite true that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But, reader; have you ever been brought before God saying, *I have sinned, I have sinned against Thee?* If not, may this now be thy state, and place, in thorough self-abhorrence, before God. He hath found a ransom: the confessing sinner shall not go down to the pit. God is righteous through the redeeming blood of the Lamb, His own spotless Son, in proclaiming a full, free, present, and everlasting forgive-

ness of sins to thee. “Be it known, therefore, that through this man (Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : and by Him, all that believe ARE justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

But oh ! this day I beseech thee, BEWARE of rejecting this message from God. “Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets, Behold, ye despisers, and *wonder and perish*. (See Acts xiii. 38-41.) Yes, “Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke : then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.” (Job xxxvi. 18.)

An infinite ransom had been given : through His death and resurrection, forgiveness of sins is preached. If thou despisest this great salvation ; there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment.” Yes, how soon you may be taken away with His stroke, and then no deliverance ; no ray of hope. May God now speak peace to your awakened soul, through the blood of Jesus.

Do you say, This is very strange that God should proclaim forgiveness of all my sins, and wish me to know it. And really does God tell me that all that believe are justified from all things? This seems a very easy sort of salvation. Stay, my friend. Harken to those words of Jesus, the Son of God: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (John iii. 14.) There was no cure for the bitten Israelite, but a look at the brazen serpent lifted up. There is no salvation for you, but a look at Jesus lifted on the Cross.

Have you ever looked at Jesus crucified? See the Holy One lifted up between two thieves! Nothing short of this could atone for sin. He must be lifted up. He was wounded for our transgressions; bruised for our iniquities. He must be wounded. He must be bruised. He must bear our sins in His own body on the tree. Was this an easy sort of salvation for you? His blood must be shed or there could be no forgiveness

for us. But, hark ! the words of Jesus : “ It is finished.” God is glorified. God has raised Jesus from the dead. God so loved the world as to give His Son to die for us. The just for the unjust. Oh ! poor swearer, God has borne long with thee. God has waited long for thee. Wilt thou still despise His great salvation ? Wilt thou still reject the forgiveness of all thy sins ? Wilt thou still go on taking His holy name in vain ? Wilt thou still go on madly calling for damnation on thyself and all around ? Be not deceived any longer. But, thou sayest, It is the fashion ! Oh ! yes, let us look at that for a moment. It is the present fashion, in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. Yes, a mark of a fast traveller down to hell. Great numbers of young men swear in the broad road. And wilt thou for fashion’s sake go down to endless woe ? It is written in the Word of God concerning the crowds on the broad road of rejection of Christ, in the last days, “ Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved ; for this cause God shall send them strong delusion,

that they should believe a lie : that they all might be damned who believed not the truth." (2 Thess. ii. 10-12.) Oh ! wilt thou then longer despise the grace of God ? May He bring thee, in repentance and confession of sins, to His feet, and there speak to thy soul, ere it be too late : "Thy sins are forgiven thee;" "Thy faith hath saved thee." "Go in peace!"

The reader of this little book may say, "I am not a swearer, or a profane person." May I ask then are you a saved person ? Have you passed from death unto life ? What does God think about you at this moment and for ever ? Does He see you accepted in Christ ? Have you redemption through the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins ? If you have, that redemption is eternal, and God says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." What a wonderful thing, for a once lost sinner to have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus ! Do you believe God about that precious blood ?

C. S.

THE
DOCTRINES
OF THE
SALVATION ARMY
COMPARED WITH SCRIPTURE.

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not
according to this word, it is because there is no
light in them.”—ISAIAH VIII. 20.

By C. S.

LONDON:
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

THE DOCTRINES OF THE SALVATION ARMY

COMPARED WITH SCRIPTURE.

YOUNG CHRISTIAN.—Good morning, my aged friend, Evangelist. I am glad to see you, as I am thinking of joining the Salvation Army, and I should be very thankful of your judgment on this matter. I really desire to do the will of God; and especially I do wish to obtain the holiness they preach of so much.

EVANGELIST.—If I can, by the help of the Holy Spirit, aid you in reference to such a serious step, it will give me the greatest pleasure. What are their doctrines? What do they say of Christ? Do they teach you to believe implicitly His blessed words? *Do they teach justification by faith?* Do they believe in His finished work? Do they believe in the eternal redemption of all believers by His blood? Do they believe what Jesus says about eternal life? Do they believe the grace of God, the free, unmerited favour of God? Do they teach you to obey Christ? Do they believe the Lord Jesus, as to the necessity of the new birth?

Y. C.—You astonish me, to ask such questions;

surely they believe and teach all these, or it would be a bad look-out for me to join them. But here is the very book; see you! "The Doctrines and Discipline of the Salvation Army." By the General. Head-quarters.

E.—That is the very book that will answer all these questions. Well, sit you down, and take the book in your hand; and I will sit down, with God's word in my hand; and let us calmly, in the fear of the Lord, examine all these questions. Now read on, until we come to these important, vital questions.

Y. C.—Read section 1: "God." Section 2: "Jesus Christ is God." Section 3: "The fall: How we became sinners." Have you anything to say as to all this?

E.—I am thankful to hear very much you have read. So far, I judge, even Roman Catholics would agree: indeed all Christians. The true divinity of Christ is of great, of all, importance, and also the true personality and Godhead of the Holy Ghost; only, if you look at page 3, the Holy Ghost is spoken of as an object of worship. I do not find that in the scriptures. What is your next section on?

Y. C.—Redemption is the next, page 15. I will read on. "1. What is the meaning of redemption? Redemption means to redeem, or deliver, from bondage by sacrifice. To get out of pawn by payment of a price. So Christ seeks to redeem

our souls from the claims of the broken law, and from sin, and Satan, and hell, by the payment of His own blood." Is not this strictly according to scripture?

E.—I have not so read it. What I read is this: "but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." There is a great difference between Christ *seeking* to redeem us, and having obtained eternal redemption for us. My soul rests on the blessed fact that He came to do the Father's will; and He has done it, never to be repeated. "Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others," &c. Yes, the work is done, the will of God is done: "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." He is not seeking to do it. "But this man, after he had offered *one* sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." It may well suit Rome to say He is seeking to do it, and thus make way, by-and-by, for the sacrifice of the Mass, in which He seems to be seeking to redeem us. No, He is not now seeking to redeem—the work is finished; He has SAT DOWN. According to Rome, it is not finished, but is repeated, or continued, in the sacrifice of the Mass. I am anxious we should see distinctly to which side the Salvation Army leans—to Rome, or to the finished

work of Christ, unchanging and immutable. Yes, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Read Hebrews ix., x. May I ask, Do you find anything in the writings of the Army about ETERNAL redemption, or being "perfected FOR EVER"?

Y. C.—No, I cannot say that I do. But surely they fully accept the truth of the finished work of Christ! I will read on. 2. "What does God seek to accomplish for our race in the work of redemption?" Does the scripture speak of the redemption of our race, that is, all men?

E.—Certainly not. Only we must remember the difference between being bought and redeemed. A slave may be bought, and still be a slave. But to be redeemed, is to be not only bought, but actually brought out of slavery into freedom. Redemption of *the race* is again the doctrine of Rome, not of the scriptures. As the propitiation, Christ died for the world. God is glorified in proclaiming pardon to all (Rom. iii. 22), "unto all, and upon all, them that believe . . . being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. iii. 24.) Who are these—the race? Are they justified? "In whom *we have* [the saints in Christ at Colosse] redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Col. i. 14; Eph. i. 7.) Can the race say this? Can any unconverted man say that he has redemption through the blood of Christ?

Y. C.—No, I see that: if all the world were redeemed, all would be delivered from the slavery of sin, and it is plain they are not. It seems almost to make redemption nothing, to say the race is redeemed. It is a most blessed thing for a believer to know that he has eternal redemption. Somehow, I think I should not like to give that up. But what is this (page 16)? 6. “What is the meaning of the word ATONEMENT? The word means, ‘at-one-ment,’ and it signifies the way which Jesus Christ opened, in order that God and man, now separated by sin, may be re-united, and *made one* again.” Is this so? It sounds strange.

E.—This is remarkable. Why it is the very doctrine of Rome again. I have just been reading it in Dr. Döllinger, perhaps the clearest writer the Church of Rome has. It really sets aside true expiation for sin. The word ‘atonement’ is never found in the New Testament, except once, and that is a mistranslation. (Rom. v. 11.) We could not *receive* the atonement, but we do receive its effect—reconciliation. I could understand it, if a Roman Catholic had written this; but surely the writer knows that ‘at-one-ment’ is English, and that the Hebrew word is *capbar*. It is found ninety-eight times in the Old Testament. Get your Hebrew Concordance, and find me one single instance where it can mean ‘at-one-ment,’ or union of two persons, as God and man. It means, “to cover;” hence it is used in the covering of the

ark. (Gen. xxxii. 20.) But in its connections, as you may see in Exodus and Leviticus, it can only mean real expiation for sin ; types of the expiatory death of Jesus putting away our sins—covering them by that death, to be seen no more. All these types were needed, to shew the infinite value of that expiation. It is Christ on the cross, forsaken of God. See Daniel ix. 24 : “To make reconciliation [the same word as is translated “atonement” elsewhere in the Old Testament] for iniquity.” Can this possibly mean ‘at-one-ment’? And so in many other cases. We are reconciled, brought back to God, as the effect of the atonement. But this is not sinful man at one with God; but his sins, borne in awful judgment on the cross, once.

Y. C.—But there are many scriptures quoted, and if the Army believes them, they must hold expiation.

E.—That looks so, but do you not see the false definition? ‘At-one-ment’ perverts every passage, as these scriptures do not mean that at all; just as the redemption of *the race* perverts its true meaning for those who are believers. There are many precious scriptures quoted, and much truth also, but so mixed up, exactly as it is in the records of the Council of Trent, and by Roman Catholic writers. I am astonished at the similarity in some cases.

Y. C.—Well, to return (see page 19). Why, a

number of scriptures are given to prove that Christ is the Redeemer of the race! How are these perverted? I will read a few—those passages which are quoted of Christ as being the *Redeemer of the race*:—"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things," &c. (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) "For ye are bought with a price." (1 Cor. vi. 20.) "In whom WE have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. i. 7.) "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts xx. 28.) "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people." (Rev. v. 9.)

E.—Is it not most careless, or wilful misapplication of scripture, to say that these scriptures speak of the redemption of the race? Clearly each text, and its context, speaks of believers only—the church of God redeemed out of the race. And this is a specimen of the utter carelessness, or ignorance, with which the word of God is dealt with. No intelligent Christian will doubt for a moment that, by the propitiatory death of Christ, God was so glorified as to sin, that the mercy-seat was opened to the whole world, and pardon proclaimed, through Jesus, to every creature. But not one scripture can be found that speaks distinctly of substitution for SINS, or redemption, that does not strictly refer *only* to believers. Read

carefully Isaiah liii. 5, 6, 8, 11, 12; Romans iv. 25; 1 Corinthians i. 30, xv. 3; Ephesians i. 7; Hebrews i. 3, ix. 27, 28, and many others. Indeed, could there be worse confusion than to speak of the church of God as the human race? No doubt this is the principle on which Rome acts, and all who copy Rome. Hence the whole population is regarded as the church; not so by the word of God.

Y. C.—Then, if I understand you, through the death of Jesus pardon is preached to all, and all who believe are surely pardoned and justified; and they only can say, “We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins;” and they alone compose the church.

E.—Certainly; search through each epistle, and see if this is not so. Well, we now come to

ELECTION (page 27).

Will you read through this article. It is exactly as might be expected, just what a Romanist would write, word for word, except those awful words you read (page 34). Surely no Romanist would go so far. “We know He (God) hates sin, and we believe that He is doing His utmost to get people saved from committing it; and we know also that He fails, because He has such a wretched, cowardly set of soldiers to fight for Him. With true soldiers, and plenty of them, we have every reason to conclude that He would soon drive sin

out of the world. Let us help Him." I solemnly ask, Is this holy reverence of God, or is it dreadful profanity? God is represented as a poor thing, that *fails* to do what He wants to do, for want of a better army. And are you going to join this profanity? No wonder that the writer should sneer at Election, and mix it up with the supposed human doctrine of reprobation, which the evangelists, that he most opposes, do *not* teach. I do not feel it would be profitable to follow him in these perversions of holy scripture on this subject.

Y. C.—But what do evangelical Christians teach on this subject—what do you believe?

E. All that God has spoken—both that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16); and also that "God hath chosen *us* in Christ before the foundation of the world," &c. (Eph. i. 4.) The Arminian seems to believe only one of these truths; the Calvinist only the other; but, as a Christian, I surely believe both. As I have lately written a tract on "Election," I would refer you to that small pamphlet.* The gospel supper was ample, and all were invited, but all refused. Then infinite, sovereign grace compels some, even the most hell-deserving, to come in. Oh, the riches of His grace!

* Morrish, London.

Y. C.—We will now read section 8, page 38—
THE HOLY GHOST.

E.—Do you not observe the same mistake again? It is to the race, not to the church; indeed the writer seems entirely ignorant of what Jesus said, when He promised to send the Holy Ghost—“Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.” (John xiv. 17.) Neither does he seem to have the least idea that the Holy Ghost came, consequent on the finished work of redemption, to form the church, the body of Christ, on earth. (John vii. 39; Acts ii. 1-4; 1 Cor. xii. 13.) “For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body.” But, my young friend, are you willing to give all this up?

Y. C.—Well, I must confess there is very much I do not yet understand as to the distinction between the *church* and the *race*, or world; and also as to the Holy Ghost.

E.—I do not doubt that; but is that any reason why you should turn your back on the word of God, and plunge into such ignorance of its truths as this book displays?

Y. C.—But let us now come to a foundation question. I see we have omitted section 6—“THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST”—page 24. I will read it.

E.—Indeed the finished work of Christ—my precious Saviour, Jesus—is what my soul rests upon, for time and for eternity—my only founda-

tion. Take away this, and I have nothing. "It is finished." Jesus said it, and bowed His head, and gave up the Ghost. Yes, so finished is that work the Father gave Him to do, that He, "When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. i. 3.) Yes, "Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. xv. 1.) God hath raised Him from the dead, in proof that His work is finished; so that He is raised for our justification. (See Rom. iv. 24, 25.) And God says, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Read Hebrews x. 12-17. But as Rome throws a doubt on all this, I shall not be surprised if the writer does the same thing. With Rome, Christ offered an imperfect sacrifice, that still needed man's penance, and the repeated, or continued, sacrifices of the Mass. But read on.

Y. C.—I am almost ashamed to read such words, they really do seem to throw a slight on the finished work of Christ. 1. "You will sometimes hear people talk about the finished work of Christ. What is meant by it? That Christ, when He died on the cross, put Himself in the place of the sinner, and bore the exact amount of punishment which he deserved, thus actually paying the debt that the sinner owed divine justice. And if the sinner will only believe this, he is for ever free from the claims of the law, and can never be brought into condemnation, either here or here-

after. Is this so? We think not." Well, I must say, this seems to me dreadful.

E.—These words do not truthfully represent the way in which the gospel is preached; or, if evangelists use the paying of a debt, it is used to illustrate our sins. Forgiveness of sins is preached to sinners: "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things," &c. (Acts xiii. 38, 39); stripped of such words as merely throw dust in the eyes, such as the "exact amount of punishment," words which no Christian should use of the infinite atonement of Christ. Let us, then, put it thus: I, as a sinner, deserving to be cast into hell, believe that God laid all my sins on Jesus; that He bare them in His own body on the tree; that for my sake, bearing my iniquities, He was forsaken of God. He bore the whole judgment and wrath of God due to me, in my stead. My sins were all transferred to Him, as in figure the sins of Israel were all transferred to the goat on the day of atonement. (Lev. xvi.) I am sure that God has accepted that one infinite sacrifice, in that He has raised up Jesus from the dead for the express purpose of my justification. Did He thus put Himself in my place on the cross? Is this so? The writer answers, "*We think not.*" I do not believe him, nor all his Romish reasons for saying, "*We think not.*" Believing God, I have peace with God. Believing the writer, I should

sink into Romish darkness and despair. I say Romish, for there is not an argument used here on these foundation points that is not to be found in the records of the Council of Trent, or other Romish works.

There is not a Jesuit in England that will not be delighted thus to see the finished work of Christ set aside. Once receive the blessed testimony of scripture, that the believer is for ever perfected by the one infinite sacrifice of Christ, and the Church of Rome and the Salvation Army crumble to the dust. Again, I ask, will you give up the finished work of Christ to join the Salvation Army? I do not pursue the reasons *why* they reject the doctrine of "the literal payment of the sinner's debt;" or, in other words, the very real substitution of Christ for my sins. It is enough for me that it is the only scriptural foundation for my salvation.

Y. C.—Well, it is indeed terrible to set aside the real substitution of Christ for our sins, call them debts, or what you like; and certainly this is so. And yet, you see, on page 26 they speak of their "correct view of the atonement," that the sacrifice of Christ "did make it possible for the love and pity of God to flow out to man, by forgiving all those who repent, and return in confidence to Him," &c. And they still say, further, "The alone ground, or merit, of our salvation, from first to last, is to be ascribed to the love of

God, as displayed in the work and sacrifice of Jesus Christ."

E.—All this looks very fair, but, as with Rome, it is entirely neutralised by other deadly errors. The sacrifice of Christ is said to be of infinite value; and then, instead of presenting the believer for ever perfected, as Hebrews x., as we have seen, it reduces His sacrifice to the lowest possible value. It just, or barely, along with man's repentance, makes *it possible* for God to save the believer. It is the exact opposite of Hebrews ix., x. Then, again, the *love* of God, displayed in the sacrifice of Christ, is not in scripture the *alone* ground, or merit, of our salvation; it is that atoning death, not merely displaying the love, but meeting also all the righteous claims of God on both our sin and sins! It is the mixture of truth with error that makes these doctrines so dangerous. You will see this, if we read

CONDITIONS OF SALVATION.

Y. C.—I will do so. Page 43.

E.—Is not much of this in direct contrast with scripture? And does not the writer take distinct side with Rome, and reject the blessed truth of justification by faith, as restored at the Reformation?

Is not repentance put as the condition, or price, of salvation? Repentance is first; the blood of Christ, second (page 45): "A thorough repent-

ance brings a complete forgiveness." (Page 47.) Thus repentance leads to the goodness of God, and a man believing he has repented enough, may then believe he is saved; if thorough, God will forgive him. By this device of Satan, millions are kept in uncertainty.

Y. C.—But did not the apostles preach the same way?

E.—No, the very opposite. They taught that it is the goodness of God that leadeth to repentance. (Rom. ii. 4.) Did Peter preach repentance first, or the goodness of God in sending Jesus—His death and resurrection? He preached that God had raised up from the dead that same Jesus whom they had rejected and crucified. "God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ." (Acts ii.) The Holy Ghost used this to convict them of the dreadful sin they had committed; and they said, "What shall we do?" After this repentance comes in its true place, or order. "THEN Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . *Then* they that gladly received his word were baptised." Now, is not this the order? The earth rejected Christ—the dead, risen, and ascended Saviour—first. Then the Holy Ghost, convicting of sin; this leads to repentance and confession of Christ in baptism. But their repentance was evidently a complete change

of mind, and a judging of themselves, and all they had done : this will produce self-aborrence, but also an entire change of mind about God. On the one hand, there was their own wickedness, which they looked at with horror; on the other, God's goodness in their forgiveness, which filled their hearts with gladness. But all this was not through feelings of their own, but by *receiving his word*. As Peter says, long after this: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God," &c. (1 Pet. i. 23.)

Y. C.—I never thought before of the order and place of repentance. Is the same order always observed by the apostles?

E.—Invariably it is so. Christ is preached first. "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." (Acts viii. 5.) And what wondrous effects were produced by that preaching! And mark, it is the one sinner who had professed to believe the gospel that is commanded to repent of his wickedness. So Philip to the eunuch : he "opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached JESUS." He did not *begin* by preaching repentance as the price of salvation. So in Paul's conversion, Christ reveals Himself to him; repentance followed, no doubt. So to Cornelius and his company; Peter preaches Jesus to them, and then says, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of

sins." (Acts x. 43.) Yet this is expressly declared to be how God granted to these Gentiles repentance unto life. (Chap. xi. 18.) Surely this is conclusive. Read also carefully Paul's celebrated preaching at Antioch. (Acts xiii.) Again, it is God sent Jesus—His rejection, death, and resurrection; then forgiveness of sins proclaimed to all, and all that believe declared to be justified from all things. (Vers. 38, 39.) Compare also his preaching at Philippi. (Chap. xvi. 14, to the end.) Did he tell the jailer, that before he could preach Jesus to him, or forgiveness of sins, he must repent first? No doubt he did repent, but the message from God was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." But in chapter xvii. 2, 3, the manner of Paul's preaching is distinctly named. Is it not reasoning with them out of the scriptures?—"Opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and have risen from the dead; and that this Jesus [Saviour] whom I preach unto you is Christ." "And some of them believed." If we would see the effect of this manner of preaching Christ, we only need to read 1 Thessalonians i. See what repentance—what a change of mind!—"Turned to God from idols, to serve the living God; and to wait for his Son from heaven."

Y. C.—But do you mean that Paul did not preach repentance?

E.—Far from it. See the very chapter before

us, He says to Athenian worshippers of idols, "but now God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Chap. xvii. 30.) But please notice, is this the beginning, or the end, of this discourse? Is it put as cause, or effect? Before he announces God's command to men to repent, he had so fully preached the gospel, as usual, that they said, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods; because he preached unto them [repentance? No, but first] Jesus and the resurrection."

Yes, this is the divine order—Jesus and the resurrection; forgiveness of sins through Jesus; then God's command to all men to repent.

Y. C.—But what would you make of the great commission of Christ, in Luke xxiv. 45–47? Were not the apostles to preach repentance and remission of sins among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem?

E.—I am thankful you have referred me to that scripture. If we follow this order, all is right; if we reverse it, as Rome and the Army, by placing penance, or the penitent form, first, then all is wrong, as we shall be sure to try to rest in the sufficiency of our penance, or repentance, first, in order to believe in Christ. Now mark the order—it is the risen Christ that speaks: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." This is the first part of the commission—to shew to souls what is written as to the necessity of the death; and

not only the death, but the resurrection, of Jesus from the dead. This the Army never does first. Then the second part is—"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations," &c. Let this order be observed, and then we cannot press true repentance and forgiveness too much. But as Rome denies the free grace of God, by putting penance the first, as a condition of the favour of God; so the Army puts the penance, or penitent form. The result is, their faith rests, first, in their repentance; then, secondly, in the blood of Jesus Christ. Thus they say, "The faith that saves a sinner speaks in this wise: God has promised to forgive those that repent, and come to Him, through the blood of Jesus Christ His Son. I repent, and come to Him, trusting only to the blood of Jesus Christ for mercy," &c. *I repent*: this is the foundation; all that is said of Christ comes on this, or after this. And mark, this is not merely defended in a sentence or two; but perhaps there is not a more able or bitter denial of the free grace of God, in print, than an article bearing the name of Mrs. Booth: "Dealing with an Anxious Soul." She speaks of the bitter consequences of directing a soul to Christ, as having paid their debt, and done everything for them. The *conditions* of salvation now are just the same as under law, the forsaking of all evil, turning the face toward God, and intensely desiring His favour and love, as to

be willing to give up all evil, as a *condition* of attaining it. That Christ only “did His own work, not mine but I nowhere read that He repented, and turned to God, and did works meet for repentance, and believed so for me. This He commands every soul to do for itself, or perish.” (Pages 76, 77.) Eternal salvation, as wrought on the cross, is entirely ignored. “And until a soul is willing to let Him save it from sin, He cannot save it.”

Mark Mrs. Booth’s “Conditions of Salvation:” “Observe here what a deal has to be done in the soul before it *can* receive forgiveness of sins. Its eyes must be opened—to what? Its own sinfulness, and danger, and misery. Then, under the sight of this, it must be turned right round from the embrace or desire of evil, to the embrace or desire of righteousness (though yet powerless to do, it must choose and desire righteousness). The attitude of the WILL MUST CHANGE with respect to evil and good. It must *turn round* from the one to the other in purpose and desire. Then it must be turned from committal to the power of Satan unto God. It must abjure Satan as its rightful sovereign, and at least WILL to put itself under the power of God—and all this *in order* that it may receive forgiveness of sins.”

Y. C.—But does not all this take place at the new birth?

E.—Truly it does. The Holy Spirit using the

preaching of Christ, as we find in the Acts and epistles. But mark the difference. The scriptures make all this the *effect* of the gospel by the Spirit. Mrs. Booth makes it the work of the dead sinner, and she actually adds, "This is made an absolute condition of its receiving forgiveness of sins." (Page 80.) Further, in her attack on justification by faith, she says, "Therefore, when Paul speaks of faith only being necessary to a sinner's justification, he must always assume that these conditions are complied with." And when a soul is turned from darkness to light, then it is to be the privilege and joy to point him to the Lamb of God!! And we are to beware of the opposite of this, as, "with this untempered slime of the old serpent half the superstructure of the professing church is joined together." (Page 79.) I can only understand this article as hatred to the gospel of the free grace of God. But to return to your book—"Doctrines of the Salvation Army."

Y. C.—Yes, I shall be glad if you will turn to page 46. You have expressed the thought that these doctrines are essentially the same as those of Rome. Can you prove it?

E.—If you look carefully at that page, you find three-fourths to be sugar, that the deadly poison of Rome, at the bottom, may be swallowed unperceived. In No. 13, the death of Christ is the only ground of faith for a sinner before God. Very sweet, and also its answer. Then (No. 14) what

is the meaning of the passage, "faith is counted [or] imputed to him for righteousness"? (Rom. iv. 5, 22.) I suppose few Protestants would care to object to the answer: "These expressions simply mean that, being without any righteousness in which to appear before God, He accepts our faith in Christ instead. That is, that as God treated Christ as the sinner for our sakes, so He treats those who believe on Him as though they were righteous, for His sake." This is not, however, as scripture puts this great question. In this explanation it is something of our own—"our faith"—that God accepts. In the word it is not so; but God has accepted Christ, and the work He has accomplished; and it is believing THAT. It is believing, in this case, not Christ, but believing GOD, "that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." It is thus we are justified, or accounted, reckoned, righteous before God; and on this ground we have peace. (Rom. iv. 24, 25.) God raising Christ from the dead for our justification, is a very different thing from accepting *our faith*.

Y. C.—That is very important. If Christ was raised from the dead for our justification, it is strange that that is entirely omitted in their doctrine. But now for the poison.

E.—You will now read No. 15, page 46. "Is there not another higher meaning than this?"

Yes. These (Rom. iv. 5), and kindred passages, also teach that faith is counted for righteousness, because it is God's means of making us actually righteous. In this sense we are justified, that is, *made just by faith.*"

This is the exact doctrine of Rome: "The sole formal cause is the justice (righteousness) of God; not that by which He Himself is just, but that by which *He maketh us just.*" (Council of Trent, sess. vi., chap. vii.) Thus the doctrine of the Army and of Rome is identical. Now compare this with Romans iii. 19-24. Here we are all guilty; and the righteousness of God is what *He is*, through and by the redemption and propitiation of Christ. God is righteous in justifying us *freely*, not by any conditions imposed on us, but by His free, unmerited favour. "*Being justified freely* by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. iii. 24.) Could there be a more flat contradiction to the word of God? The scripture says the righteousness of God is what He is, and how He is just, and the Justifier. Rome and the Army say the opposite. It is not what God is, but what we are, "made just." And mark, everything in Rome and the Army rests on this setting aside the true doctrine of justification by faith.

Y. C.—You surprise me. Do you mean to say that they deny that beautiful definition of justification in the Thirty-nine Articles?

E.—Entirely. There it is truly said, “We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith,” &c. They say we *are made just*, and if you read Romans iv. you will see which is the truth, not one word about our being *made just*. There is a singular audacity in this book of doctrine. Scripture is quoted to prove the very opposite of its plain meaning. Study carefully this text, which is said to mean, “*We are justified, that is, made just.*” “But to him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Then read the full proof of this. Abraham and David believed God. Faith was reckoned for righteousness. Abraham believed the promise of God. Righteousness was reckoned unto him. We believe the promise of God has been fulfilled. We believe God has raised up from the dead the very One, Jesus our Lord, “who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Righteousness is reckoned to us—that is, we are accounted righteous before God. This being the case, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus faith rests in God, through the finished work of Christ. Nothing of the kind, say Rome and the Army; and they practically set aside this blessed truth, so fully set forth in this scripture, by teaching it is not at all what Christ is to us, but God’s way of actually making us right-

eous. In this sense we are justified, not made just by faith. Thus the eye of faith is directed to self, as the higher meaning of justification. But the absurdity of this doctrine will be seen in the next section.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS (page 47).

Y. C.—I will read it.

1. "What is justification? The act wherein God, for Christ's sake, pardons our sins, and receives us into His favour. 2. Do pardon and justification mean the same blessing? Yes, always in the Bible, when used in reference to our salvation," &c.

E.—Here, observe, all is confusion, and contradiction to what has gone before. Is forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake the same as being made actually righteous, made just, by faith? Neither is it at all true that pardon and justification always mean the same thing, as stated here. Justification includes pardon, but goes beyond it. Hear how David describes it: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." But is that all? No; he goes on: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom. iv. 7, 8.) And again, what is justification of life? (Rom. v. 18.) Though *our* life has been forfeited through sin, as explained in verse 12, yet now we have another life, a justified life, even the eternal life of the risen Christ—the same life as

that risen Man seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high; and to every believer, looked at as in Him, *there is* no condemnation. In Him, nothing to forgive, nothing to condemn. (Rom. viii. 1.) Justification reaches up to that point. It must be perfect, for whatever is of God must be perfect, and it is God that justifieth. Oh, the riches of His grace—free, unmerited grace! I shall not be surprised to find in this book, as with Rome, that justification is an imperfect thing, and may greatly be improved by our own holiness—just as we find it in the Council of Trent.

Y. C.—But do we not fail? May not a believer, in a moment of temptation, even commit sin?

E.—Indeed he may; that we know, as to our walk, to our deep sorrow. But the question is this: Has that sin still to be condemned, judged, on us; or has it been judged, condemned, and borne by Jesus, our propitiation? Our justification is of God. The risen Christ is our righteousness—nothing can ever touch that. As to our walk and communion, and our Father's discipline, we need constant confession and forgiveness; and, through the intercession of our Advocate with the Father, this will always be the case, if we sin. (1 John ii. 1, 2.) But this must not be confounded with the believer's complete justification in the risen Christ. How little the difference between these two things is understood—our accept-

ance in Christ, and our walking acceptably to Him!

Y. C.—What, in a word, is the difference, then, on the subject of salvation between the Army and the word of God?

E.—The scriptures represent the grace of God bringing salvation to all men, and grace teaches godliness, &c. (Titus ii. 11, 12.) The Army teaches, as we have seen, an act of their own will, their own repentance brings salvation. “A thorough repentance brings a complete forgiveness.” (Page 47.)

Y. C.—Well, I hope to search the scriptures on this most important subject. I will now read the section on Conversion, page 49. Do you think they are sound and scriptural as to the new birth?

E.—I am compelled, in faithfulness, to say, on the new birth they are most unsound; indeed, though they quote the very scriptures that speak of it, yet they misunderstand, or misapply, them. With them, as with Rome, again, there is no new birth, no real new creation, but a change of the old man. “He makes him a new creature.” “It is like being made over again; like becoming a new creature; like being born again. . . . It is very imperfect.” “Regeneration is the change of our nature . . . is a change in our character,” &c. Yet all, bear in mind, very imperfect, sin still left hanging about the soul. (Page 50.)

Y. C.—Well, what, then, is the scripture truth as to this foundation doctrine of the new birth?

E.—We will take the very first scripture they quote. (2 Cor. v. 17.) “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature ; old things are passed away ; behold all things are become new.” And notice the next words, which they do not quote—“and all things are of God.” Is this like being made over again, &c., and very imperfect ? It is charging imperfection on God ! for whatever the new birth, or new creation, is, it is wholly of God. If I take an old watch to the first firm in Liverpool, and I say, I want a new watch ; and they, instead of this, make the old watch up over again, and give it a new start, if even a new cover ; that would be the old made over again. They might give it a good polish, but would that be wholly a new watch, a new creation, or the old thing, still very imperfect ? It might be *like* a new one, *like* the new birth, as they say. Would it not be a disgrace to the firm ? Is it not, then, a disgrace to any man thus to misrepresent God ? The new birth is that which is born of the Spirit. Is that imperfect ? It is not the old watch made over again, the flesh made over again. Read the words of Jesus : “That which is born of the flesh, is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.” (John iii. 6.) Not a thought of the flesh being changed, but an entirely new birth of the Spirit. A new heart, as in the scripture plainly referred

to. (Ezek. xxxvi. 26.) And so, in 2 Corinthians v., is it the old watch made over again? The old things are passed away, like an old watch that will not go, and behold, all things are become new; and all things are of God. No; the patchwork, the imperfect work, of the Army, being *like* a new creation is utterly false. It is the old watch made over again, that will not go. But the most serious thing is, that it so dishonours God. Can He do that which is imperfect? It is God who has begotten us again. (1 Pet. i. 3.) And again, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (Chap. v. 23.) Satan may say, "Do not believe it is of God, and so incorruptible. No, it is corruptible, imperfect, sin hangs about it, and you may soon loose it." Am I to believe Satan? God forbid. The new creation, or new birth, is of God, and therefore perfect. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." (James i. 18.) It is not the will of the flesh, the will of man, turning itself to God; it is not of man, and imperfect. No, the sons of God are those "which were born, not of blood, NOR OF THE WILL OF THE FLESH, nor of the WILL OF MAN, BUT OF GOD." (John i. 13.)

Indeed, the patchwork, *like* being born again of the Army, is as opposed to scripture as darkness is to light. It is darkness; and I grant, how great and how common in this day is that darkness!

How few in this day hold the true scriptural doctrine, that the new birth is not the improvement of the old nature, the flesh, but a wholly new creation, and that of God; and therefore the child partakes of the divine nature. One would think that every Christian would see that the child always has the nature of the parent. How fully this is brought out in John's first epistle (chap. iii. 9): "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin [or practise sin]; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." This could have positively no meaning whatever, if the new birth is not of God, but of man's will, and therefore imperfect. But, oh, how blessed, looked at as the new creation, wholly of God, born of God, having the divine nature. What a motive for holiness is here given! The Father is holy—it would surely be blasphemy to say He could practise sin. Thus, as born of Him, we have His nature, and as such cannot practise sin; and therefore, they who practise sin are not born of God. Many other scriptures shew the believer to be a responsible person, who has yet to contend with the flesh in him, and to gain the victory through faith.

Y. C.—That just brings us to the question I desire to be clear upon above all others—"holiness," as taught by the Salvation Army. But perhaps, before we enter upon it, we might stop here for the present. I should like prayerfully to consider

all you have brought before me. It certainly seems very serious to put repentance before Christ, and forgiveness of sins and faith—the very reverse of scripture; and then to explain away true justification by faith in God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. According to this, a sinner is only justified so far as he is actually righteous. And then to say that the new birth, or new creation, is “very imperfect.” It certainly seems like taking away all that is essentially christian on these points. I am therefore most anxious to know if their teaching on holiness is scriptural, or not.

E.—As to all that has come before us, I only ask you to compare the doctrine of the Army with the word of God, even with the texts they themselves quote, or misquote. I have said I will not go over their profane way of handling the scriptures on Election. The same method of perversion would enable them to prove anything, or disprove every truth of God’s holy word. For the present, then, farewell. In our next conversation, if the Lord will, we will compare their teaching on “Holiness” with the word of God. We hope also, to examine other doctrines—such as their denial of the two natures, or the fact of the old nature remaining in the believer; eternal life as the present possession of the believer, &c. In all things may our God give us, by the Holy Ghost, unfeigned subjection to His word.

HOLINESS.

EVANGELIST.—Good morning, my young friend. I hope you have well and prayerfully considered the great truths on which we conversed lately—especially the important truths of justification by faith, the finished work of Christ, and the true doctrine of the new birth. I do not forget your desire for holiness, and that was your chief object in thinking to join the Salvation Army; but I am sure, if we have not right views of these foundation truths, we shall never have right thoughts of holiness.

YOUNG CHRISTIAN.—I am glad to have the opportunity of freely conversing with you again; and more so, because I see your object is not to attack the Salvation Army, but to defend the truth from the attacks of the Army.

E.—It is exactly so. I assure you I desire, by the help of the Lord, to keep you from the fatal mistakes and false teaching of the Army on almost every revealed truth. Then let us understand: I trust you have believed God, as we have seen in Romans iv. 24, 25; Acts xiii. 38, 39, and that you know you are, on the testimony of God, justified from all things; and being justified, accounted righteous before God, you have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Have these glad tidings been applied to your soul by the Holy Ghost?

Y. C.—Yes, yes, bless God, they have, or I should not be a Christian—should I?

E.—Quite true. Then it would not be a light matter for you to give up simple faith in the *finished work of Christ*; His actual, infinite substitution for your very sins, and His actual resurrection for your justification. For my part I rest on this for eternity.

Y. C.—And so do I; and I am sure God, as you said, is my Justifier, and therefore my justification is perfect. Oh, what blessed peace!

E.—I rejoice to hear you thus speak. My reason for asking these questions is this: it is no use going on to the question of Holiness, or Sanctification, until you are quite sure you are a saved Christian. This being settled, and quite sure, then the first, or next, question is this: What is a Christian—holy, or unholy?

Y. C.—What is that? Holy, or unholy? I want to be holy in my walk.

E.—Surely you do, and so does every Christian. But I will illustrate what I mean. You say, I am quite sure I am an Englishman—I was born, as to my nationality an Englishman. But could you then say, I am most anxious to be an Englishman; I am thinking of joining some society to be an Englishman? Or take another illustration. A man says, I know with certainty that I am a soldier—I know the day I was enlisted; I wear the uniform: but, oh, I do so long *to be* a soldier.

Would not the desire to be an Englishman, or a soldier, be a total mistake? If the one said, I long to acquit myself as an Englishman; or, I wish, said the other, to be an efficient soldier of Her Majesty's army—*very, very* good. This, my young friend, was the mistake of the early earnest Jesuits. This is the mistake of the Salvation Army. They do not know what a Christian is; they are like the man longing to be a soldier, when he is one. They first charge God with effecting a very imperfect work in regeneration. (Page 50.) They then try to ridicule the scriptural doctrine of the two natures (pages 51 to 56); and then, from page 59 to 91, they tell you what Holiness, or Sanctification, is, and how it is to be obtained. The whole thing is as great a mistake as the soldier seeking how he may get to be a soldier.

Y. C.—I do assure you this is very new to me; do try to make it as plain as you can. Is not a Christian called *to be* holy?

E.—Just as a soldier is called to be an efficient soldier. But he must be, and is, a soldier by calling or enlistment first. Just as the Englishman is called to act as an Englishman; but he must be an Englishman first by birth or adoption. Let us now turn to scripture. We will take the apostleship of Paul to explain this matter. “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.” (Rom. i. 1.) Do you notice the words, “to be,” are in italics;

that is, they are not in the original. The literal translation is this—"an apostle by calling," just like the soldier, "a soldier by enlistment, or calling." Paul was not enlisted by the Lord to attain to apostleship at some future time, but he was there and then constituted an apostle. Surely he was called to act as such. Now look at Romans i. 7: "To ALL that be in Rome, beloved of God, called [to be] saints," &c. It is the same here in the original; that is, just as with Paul being an apostle by calling—not called to attain to it; so here they were saints, "holy ones,"—for that is the meaning of "saints"—by calling. Thus, then when God calls or separates a sinner to Himself, He constitutes him there and then a holy one by that very act of separation. An Englishman, then, is so by birth. A Christian is holy by the new birth. In neither case is this a matter of attainment; and you will find the same truth in many other scriptures. "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints." It should be, "saints (holy ones), by calling." This must be so, as they are sanctified in Christ Jesus. (1 Cor. i. 2.) "With all the saints [holy ones] which are in all Achaia." (2 Cor. i. 1.) "To the holy ones which are at Ephesus." So at Philippi, at Colosse, &c.

Y. C.—I begin to see it. They—that is, all Christians—are looked at as in Christ. Tell me, is

this perfection in which they stand as sanctified in Christ Jesus so complete as to fit them for heaven? And is this true of all Christians?

E.—It is written, “Giving thanks unto the FATHER, which *hath* made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” (Col. i. 12.) “And you . . . *hath* he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight.” (Vers. 21, 22.) “And ye *are* complete in him.” (Chap. ii. 10.) Such is the standing of every regenerate soul in Christ, although the General calls it “very imperfect.” The dying thief did not find it very imperfect. “To-day,” says Jesus to him, “shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

Y. C.—What is the difference, then, between the scriptures and the Salvation Army?

E.—In the scriptures all Christians are born of God, and are made the partakers of the divine nature. And because they are born of God, they must have a standard of walk, or practical holiness, suited to their new holy nature. With the Army, both the nature and the standard is imperfect. We have seen, regeneration, though of God, is very imperfect, they say. And now I ask you to read their standard of holiness. (Page 63.)

Y. C.—I will begin with this question :

“What is sinless perfection? Such a state as that of Adam before his fall, wherein, he being a

perfect creature, was enabled to render a perfect obedience to the *perfect law* of God.

“Is it possible to attain to sinless perfection in this life? No! An *imperfect* creature cannot *perfectly* obey a *perfect law*, and man being *imperfect*, both in *body* and in *mind*, is plainly unable to keep the perfect law of God.

“Does God require obedience to a law, the keeping of which He knows to be utterly impossible? No. We cannot imagine a benevolent Being requiring from us that which is impossible, and then condemning us for not doing it, &c.

“What, then, is the law that He expects us to keep?

“The law of love, as laid down and described by Jesus Christ, when He said, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart;’ or, in other words, love and serve God according to your knowledge and ability, and He will be satisfied.” (Page 63.)

E.—I ask you, did you ever read anything more contrary to scripture than this? And this the vaunted holiness of the Army! God is too good to expect anybody to keep the law. Yes, a standard lower than the law. What would the apostle James say to this? And a man doing the best he could, and God would be satisfied? Would he not say, If he offend in one point, he is guilty of all? (James ii. 10.) The finished work of Christ is thus set aside, that which presents the believer

holy and unblameable before God. And what have you instead of this?—a man doing his best, and God will be satisfied! Dare you trust your salvation to such teaching as this?

Y. C.—Indeed I dare not. But tell me, since the Christian is born of God, and has the nature of God his Father, and is meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, what is his standard of practical holiness?

E.—Turn with me to a few scriptures, and you will see that the standard to a Christian who is born of God is far higher than the law. In Matthew v. you will find the standard of the law fully explained, up to verse 43. Then the Lord Jesus says, “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you,” &c. . . . “That ye may be THE CHILDREN of YOUR FATHER which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust.” Thus grace is seen to be a much higher standard than law. The law was a righteous rule for man in the flesh, but grace is the display of the Father. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Oh, compare this with God not even expecting man to keep the law, but doing the best he can, and God will be satisfied! Again, “As obedient children. . . . But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because

it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy ; and if ye call on the Father," &c. (1 Pet. i. 14-16.) " Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us." (Eph. v. 1.) Look where you will, it is the relationship that gives the responsibility and the standard of obedience. And the power for that holy obedience is the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. " For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. viii. 2-4.)

Surely it is not worth while to wade through all this reasoning how to obtain this sanctification ; such a holiness, that is even below the standard of the law, is not worth having.

Y. C.—But whilst they take so low a standard here—the lowest I ever heard of, except the Jesuits—yet they speak in other parts as if sanctification meant the very eradication of sin from the old nature. Do they not quote very blessed scriptures?

E.—The scriptures are surely all right; but it is what they say about them that is all wrong. Their doctrine is the restoration of man to his Adam state. As in many places, page 77 is occupied in shewing how man may get back to that state. They seem to have no knowledge of the infinitely superior place the believer has in Christ. (See Eph. i. 1-12.)

You will also notice that most scriptures they quote, as describing a sanctification to be *attained*

to, is the sanctified *condition* of all believers, such as Romans vi. 6-11; Ephesians v. 25-27. Do not these scriptures describe the blessed position of all believers? Are not all believers addressed, "Elect of God, holy and beloved"? and every exhortation to practical holiness is on the ground that they "*have* put off the old man with his deeds, and *have* put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him." (Col. iii. 9-12.)

Y. C.—But would you not say that the Holy Ghost is a seal, or witness, to our devotedness and perfect love to God?

E.—Nowhere in scripture. No, He is a witness of the finished work of Christ, and that by it we are for ever perfected. (Heb. x. 12-15.) If I, then, seek for the Holy Spirit to bear witness to my self-righteousness, or my devotedness, I must set aside the infinite and eternal value of the one sacrifice of Christ. And this is the tendency of all this self-occupancy, called entire sanctification. And finding, when thus occupied with self, still much imperfection—indeed, nothing else in the flesh—then, as we have seen, the standard of holiness must be lowered—yes, even below the law!

Y. C.—Really it would seem as if the whole thing was a system of error. A very imperfect regeneration; an imperfect justification; the finished, infinite, all-sufficient work of Christ set aside; and, as with Rome, only justified as far as

we are made just. But now, granted that the scripture doctrine is the opposite of all this—born of God; partakers of the divine nature; reckoned righteous before God, through our Lord Jesus Christ by faith, by grace, and not by works; sealed by the Holy Ghost, He dwelling in us—what should be the character of our obedience?

E.—Just that to which we are sanctified, or set apart: “Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.” (1 Pet. i. 2.) Thus the Spirit separates us, ALL believers, to the *obedience of Christ*. Now the obedience of Christ, surely, was not like the obedience of the Army, to a lower standard than the law: it was the obedience of *delight to do the will of God*; not merely doing the will of God, but delighting to do it. And, oh, what that will involve! Is this your standard of holiness—delighting to do the will of the Father, your Father? You may live to have three children. Let us say, John delights to do your will, you are so dear to him. James barely does your will, because of your authority. Peter says it is a matter of indifference, and yet is constantly talking of his great goodness, devotedness, and sacrifice. Now which is most like the obedience of our blessed Lord? And which is most unlike Him?

Y. C.—Certainly John is most like Jesus, in all His delight of heart to His Father’s will, and

Peter most unlike Him. But what has this to do with the Salvation Army? Do they not teach the most implicit obedience?

E.—Yes, they teach in these books sent to me unquestioning, absolute obedience. *But to whom—to Christ, or to the General?* If the General orders a sanctified officer from one place to another, he must instantly obey. If he orders him to a town, he must not preach until he gets orders from head-quarters. He or she must not marry without the consent of the General. Obedience to **THIS MAN** must be absolute, exactly after the model of the Jesuits. But with all this talk about entire sanctification, or holiness, what is the measure of obedience to be rendered by the Army to Christ in His word? I crave your attention to that question. No one who reads with reverence the word of God can question that baptism is commanded by the Lord.

Now mark section 26. “3. Does the Army consider Baptism as a duty that must be performed?

“**DECIDEDLY NOT.** The Army only considers one baptism essential to salvation, and that is, **THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST.**” Think of this, dear young Christian. Are you to obey Christ? “**DECIDEDLY NOT.**” You are to act as the Army considers, treating Christ with indifference! If this be their holiness, the less of it you have the better.

Y. C.—You must misunderstand them. How could any person having the least pretension to Christianity speak in this manner? Can you give another instance of such disrespect for Christ?

E.—I am sorry to say the whole thing is in direct opposition to the express teaching of Christ. Did He not forbid His disciples to act as the kingdoms of this world, in taking the place of lordship over one another? Jesus said, “It shall not be so among you.” The General says it shall be so, and obedience to this unscriptural, forbidden lordship over a vast Army shall be a great fruit of your entire sanctification. Here you have pages of instruction of obedience to the antichristian lordship of the General.

Now we will compare this with the way the Lord’s dying request is treated. Was there not one request, above all others, that our precious Jesus gave, a few hours before He died for our sins? Oh, how tender the love that said, “Do this in remembrance of me.” Now read section 26. 8. “What is the teaching of the Army on the subject of the Lord’s Supper?”

“When such an ordinance is helpful to the faith of our soldiers, we recommend its adoption.” Is there anything in print to surpass this for wickedness? The audacity for a mere man to tell his soldiers that when it is helpful to obey Christ, he recommends them to do it!

“7. Is the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper

essential to membership of the Army, or salvation? Certainly not," &c. Put this plainly. Is loving obedience to the tender request of Jesus necessary to membership in the Army? Certainly not! Is it not evident, with such awful principles as these, the quotation of scriptures that speak of real holiness is only a blind?

Y. C.—I must say that is dreadful; and, just think, I was about to join all this. How different from the obedience of Christ! That is a precious thought, or rather scripture. It is beautiful to have Christ as our copy and example. But now, tell me, do we not often fail? Nay, in our obedience, do we ever come up to our copy? Like a child writing a copy, can we say *we are like Him*, then, if we fail?

E.—Oh, how perfect is the word of God! You notice, we are not only sanctified by the Spirit unto obedience of Christ, but also unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. The heart delights in holiness, delights to do the will of Christ. But we fail; and mark, as the sprinkled blood of the type was on the mercy-seat a year, so the blood of Jesus, sprinkled on the mercy-seat, is ever there; and we know, that our failings and sins were met by that blood. Yes if we are in the light, we know that the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.

Y. C.—I am glad you refer to that scripture. Does it mean, if we sin, the blood cleanses us

again; or does it mean a certain class of holy persons, and the blood of Christ has eradicated all sin from them, even from their flesh, or old nature?

E.—Let us read it carefully. Mark, it does not say, if we sin, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 John i. 7.) Clearly it is not a question of cleansing us afresh if we sin—that thought is not in the text at all; but if we are in the light of God, this fact is then known in happy fellowship. The glorious characteristic of the blood of Jesus Christ, is, that all sin is gone, that is, is not imputed to us. The very next verse proves it cannot mean that sin is eradicated from our old nature. It is, however, judged, even the sin of our nature, so as never to be reckoned to us; as is distinctly taught in Romans viii. 3; 2 Corinthians v. 21. But you will see the Spirit distinctly guards against the false doctrine of our having sin eradicated from our nature, in the very next verse: “If *we* say that *we* have no sin, *we* deceive *ourselves*, and the truth is not in *us*.”

Y. C.—I will read you what is said (page 86) on this very verse. He describes the folly of those who believe their sins were imputed to Christ—then says, “By this they mean that, no matter how *worldly, selfish, or even devilish*, they may actually be, their sins were so dealt with by Christ,

that they are not imputed to *them*, and that, therefore, while full of sin, they are WITHOUT SIN.

“Actually, this doctrine is known as perfection in Christ; and it states that when God looks at His children, He looks at them through His Son, and cannot, or does not, or will not, *see* their *sins*. . . . Now John says in this text, to those who hold these views [mark, he says John says], ‘If any man say he has no sin, when he is actually committing sin . . . he is deceiving himself, and the truth is not in him.’ ”

E.—It is very sad for me to have to ask, but really is not this intentional perversion of scripture? John says, “If WE say that WE have no sin, WE deceive OURSELVES, and the truth is not in US.” The writer knew that the beloved John did not practise sin every day, as the result of believing the love of God in giving His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. No, John declares that such as practise sin are of the devil. Yet John does say, If WE say we are without sin. But the writer does not scruple to alter the text of holy scripture, and make John say, “If any man say he has no sin, *he* deceives himself,” &c. I do not remember reading a more shocking perversion of scripture. It is a difficulty which none of the teachers of this doctrine can get over—that John should put himself in this place. Surely any Christian who knows the plague of his own heart

will say the same thing. The whole passage is a most deadly attack on the solemn truth that our sins were borne by Jesus. He implies that to believe this, is to lead people to practise sin. It is the charge the haters of the grace of God have ever made.

Y. C.—I certainly can have no confidence in the reasonings of a man that can pervert scripture in that manner. It is quite plain now, that, whilst our sins are cleansed, so as never to be laid to our charge, by the blood of Jesus once shed, once sprinkled; yet, if we boast of ourselves as though we had no sin left to watch against in our old nature, it is simply to deceive ourselves. I am afraid I am taking up too much time. But there is just one more subject I should like us to look at, and that is ETERNAL LIFE—eternal life as the gift of God. Can it be possessed here now in this world? The preachers of the gospel I have heard always told me that Jesus meant what He said. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting [eternal] life.” “He that believeth on the Son, HATH eternal life.” (John iii. 16–36.) Then, again, Jesus speaks so plainly and assuringly: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life.” (John v. 24.) Over

and over again Jesus says so. (John vi. 47.) "And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish," &c. (Chap. x. 28.) He says to the Father, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." (John xvii. 2.) And the Holy Ghost tells us, that to doubt this word of God is to make Him a liar. "And this is the record, that God HATH given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE." (1 John v. 10-13.)

E.—Well, all this is plain enough, is it not? Jesus assures us of all this. How can we doubt the blessed fact? And mark, it is whilst He is away that He says, "because I live, ye shall live also." (John xiv. 19.) "The GIFT of God is eternal life." Yes, it is His gift, in free, unmerited grace. We do not deserve it, or merit it, but we have it on the double testimony—the word of Jesus, and the record of God; and all is written that we may know we have eternal life. The life of the risen Jesus must be eternal, and He is the eternal life we have. But does the Army deny this?

Y. C.—Well, will you look at section 22? What do you think this means? "and that He gives these

FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS eternal life when this short life is over, and that they shall never perish.

“God may agree to give eternal life to those who are His sheep, who are faithful, who persevere.”

E.—I see it is most sad; the true grace of God is entirely set aside, and the record of God is entirely denied; as John says, they make God a liar by denying the present possession of eternal life. Nothing can be more blessed than to believe Jesus, and thus know that we have not a life that may be lost, or perish, in a day; but eternal life. And they try to make it appear that those who do believe God, think that by *believing* they perform an act that secures to them eternal life. This is not so. For instance, if you, out of pure kindness, give a poor man a hundred pound note, and you assure him its value is a hundred pounds—he believes your word. Would his believing you be the performing of an act that secured the note and its value? It is true he believes you once and for ever, and begins to enjoy it. It is also true, that if he did not believe you, but some one persuaded him it was a fictitious note, he would then have rejected it. I know many who call themselves Christians would try to persuade you, so to speak, that the note was not worth half so much as it says. They would say, No, it is not eternal life; that you may have in heaven, if you deserve it by faithfulness. Jesus says it is eternal; they

say it is not, it is only temporal, and may be lost at any time.

Y. C.—Stay; I think I have seen a tract, written by an ADMIRAL for the Army, sent out from head-quarters, in which eternal life is spoken of as fictitious life!

E.—Is it possible? I never heard of such a thing; it is often explained away, to the great loss of souls. But let us look at your tract.

Y. C.—Here is the tract: “An Answer to a Question by Admiral Fishbourne.” (Page 7.) He says, “The greatest crimes and sins that have scandalised the reformed church, have been enacted under cover of this fictitious eternal life.” Again, speaking of “tens of thousands . . . who are living in gross sin, seeking to shelter themselves under the idea of this fictitious eternal life.” (Page 13.)

E.—Let me read the connection. It seems that the Admiral feels quite sure that those who believe the record of God, and the words of Jesus, and know that they have eternal life, which he calls FICTITIOUS ETERNAL LIFE, live in gross sin. Now, even amongst Christians, there are comparatively few that fully believe Jesus as to this one point, and know that they have eternal life. And I would ask the Admiral, did he ever know one that was living in gross sin that enjoyed the blessed certainty that he had eternal life? Oh, let us flee from these defiling errors, and cling, in childlike

simplicity, to the teaching and words of Christ: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH eternal life." Blessed Jesus, I rest on Thy precious words. I do not think there would be any profit in following further the various wanderings of the Army's doctrine—their setting aside all that God has been pleased to restore to His people, in these days, as to the coming of the Lord Jesus to take His saints, &c. If the Lord will, you will find papers in "Things New and Old"* on the connection there is between true practical holiness and the second coming of Christ, as connected in scripture. I know it is often said the Army is doing a great deal of good, and many souls are converted through them. I can only say, I have made many inquiries, and have not found them, but who would limit the grace of God with them, or in Rome? Outward reformation there may be, but can the soul rest on that? Was there not this amongst the Jesuits? Indeed, there is a great similarity between them, both in doctrine and practice. After three hundred years, they have succeeded in filling the country again with flags, and banners, and processions. And where have the Romanists opposed them? It is a vast confederacy under military organisation, and may one day prove itself a powerful ally of Rome.

* "Things New and Old," 1884. G. Morrish, London.

Y. C.—I can only thank you for pointing out to me these great and dangerous errors, but more especially for leading me to Christ. I do desire to know more and more of that “obedience of Christ;” to delight to do the will of God, and ever to rest in the finished work of Christ, who ever may set it aside. To think that I was about to give up the only sure foundation! I thank God for His deliverance. C. S.

