

John - Commentaries by Charles Stanley

Some Papers on the Second Coming of Christ and on Prophecy, Part 3 - Questions of Interest Relating to the Coming of Christ and His Reign on Earth (6:39,44)

“Please explain the meaning of the last day in John 6:39 and 44, as compared with the second resurrection.”

In this gospel the word “hour” or “day” is used sometimes to denote a period of time, not a literal hour, or day. “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him” (John 4:21,23). “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.” Now this “hour,” of which the Lord spoke, has lasted more than eighteen hundred years. There is no true worship but that which is in spirit and truth, and still dead sinners are made to hear the voice of the Son of God and live. Now all this is connected with the Person of Christ the Son of God!

The full revelation of the taking of the church as a part of the first resurrection, was not yet given. But the distinction of the two resurrections is clearly implied, “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 5:28-29). Who can describe the immense difference of these two resurrections? Oh, my reader, which will be your portion? Should you die, or fall asleep, will you hear the welcome voice of Jesus calling you to the resurrection of life?

Since there have been eighteen hundred years in the “hour” of worship, and the “hour” of gospel, spiritual resurrection, there is no difficulty in finding a thousand years between the first resurrection to life, and the second, the resurrection unto judgment, described in Revelation 20.

I need not point out how often the word “day” is used in scripture to denote a period of time — the day of the Lord, the day of salvation, and so forth. It was the Jewish habit to use it as referring to the last period of time. As Martha said to Jesus, “I know that He shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day” (John 11:24). You will find “day” used in this gospel the same as “hour,” to denote a period of time. “At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father” (John 14:20). “At that day ye shall ask in My name” (John 16:26). That blessed “day” of intimacy with the Father and the Son continues and will continue all through this period of grace.

Now let us turn to John 6:39. What is the subject? The glorious truth that there is a company out of this sinful world given of the Father to the Son; and the absolute fact that not one of them shall be lost, no, not to the very end of their time here below, even to the last period, the last “day.” A precious privilege is indicated: Jesus says, “I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” What is on His heart is, that He will Himself raise it up again. He uses the usual word “last day,” but what is so dear to Him is that He will do it. As He says again, “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” (vs. 40). Oh, may we not trust this precious Saviour? What joy it gives Him to declare the will of the Father that sent Him for our exceeding comfort. Do you say, “Is it true of me?” He says, “That every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life” (John 6:40), or eternal life. If you believe Him, with what joy will He raise you from among the dead at His coming. Thus, should you die, it will not alter the question of your blessed security in Christ.

Other scriptures will fully explain the difference between the two resurrections. In Luke 20 it is quite clear there is a resurrection of great privilege. Some will “be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead (or from among the dead).” Again, what gave offense to the Jews was that the apostles “taught the people, and preached, through Jesus, the resurrection from [among] the dead” (Acts 4:2). Paul says, “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead,” as it should read (Phil. 3:11). “And the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thess. 4:16). “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection” (Rev. 2:5-6).

May our hearts rest in the sure words of Jesus; apart from Him, what a dark uncertain future. Yes, He will have the joy of raising up from among the dead all that the Father hath given unto Him.

That bright and blessed morn is near

When He the Bridegroom shall appear,

And call His bride away.

Her blessing then shall be complete,

When with her Lord she takes her seat

In everlasting day.

O may this hope our spirits cheer,

While waiting for our Saviour here;

He said, “I’ll come again.”

O may our hearts look for that day,

And to His word responsive say,

“Come, Jesus, Lord, Amen.”

Things New and Old: Volume 31, Words of Jesus as to Eternal Life (6:68)

“Thou hast the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68.)

We propose to examine the words of Jesus Himself, in this short paper on the deeply interesting subject of eternal life.

“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 3:14; 15) In the outset, then, it is something far beyond believing on Him as a prophet because of His miracles; or believing in the coming kingdom; or as the Messiah. The very deepest aspect of atonement is here implied, His being lifted up, as the serpent was in the wilderness. His atonement, to be lifted up, was absolutely necessary.

But then in all this it was the very thought and purpose of God, that the believer should not perish, but have eternal life. “For God so loved the world [not merely Israel] that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” What words of Jesus! What a revelation of God! Dwell on them, oh my soul. How often repeated is that blessed truth, “He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life.” (John 3:36.) This is not mere continuity of existence. The unbeliever clearly has that in the same verse. “And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” He never knows or sees the eternal life in the Son; but he will continue to exist, or the wrath of God could not abide on him.

Eternal life then is the eternal Son. In him was life eternal, self-existent. We will now look at those words of Jesus in John 5:24. “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; but is passed from death unto life.” Now it is remarkable, that these words of Jesus were spoken to His very enemies. To such as sought to slay Him; yes, to those that sought to kill Him. (Vers. 16, 18.)

The occasion was remarkable. The impotent man had heard the words of Jesus, as to his poor infirm body, and was immediately made whole. That was not life to the dead, but healing for the infirm. Something far more wonderful than this would take place, to those who are dead—to man, as God sees him, dead in trespasses and sins. “The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.” And on the assurance of Christ, this life shall not be temporal, that which may cease, or exist for a time only, but eternal. This was beyond all Jewish ideas or thoughts, for they knew not the eternal One in their midst. But the fact, the result, of hearing the word of Jesus is as sure and immediate in one case as in the other. Thousands could bear witness, though they might not be able to explain it, that no sooner had they heard the word of Jesus speaking to them—that so soon as they believed God, that sent Him—immediately they had eternal life. And they rest in the certainty, that into judgment for sins, they can never come. That they are passed from death unto life. Yes, they have passed from the old to the new creation. Do you believe these words of Jesus?

If you never have believed, remember these words were spoken to His greatest enemies, such as thirsted for His death: yea, to those who did not believe on Him. (Vers. 38-47.) Yes, they are the words of Jesus to unbelievers. Oh, what riches of grace!

Now we will look at the explanation of this subject in the words of Jesus, chapter 6.

As in chapter 5, so here, a miracle is the occasion of all the teaching of Jesus on eternal life in chapter 6 Jesus had compassion on the great multitude faint in the mountain. He gave them bread, and about 5,000 were filled. Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.”

This brings out a very important question from the multitude: “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” This is the question of the multitude still, and oh, what answers men do give; but what is the answer of Jesus? “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” So far, then, the answer is most clear, it is faith, to believe on Jesus the sent one of the Father, just as in chapter 3:16, 17; and chapter v. 24. And the miracle of the loaves serves for further illustration. They say, “Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.” Jesus continues the figure and says, “My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.”

How far beyond all human thought or Jewish hopes is this! The loaves they had eaten refreshed and satisfied for a time, but Jesus said, “I am the bread of life; he that cometh unto me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” They did not understand Him. They had seen Him, but believed not Their thoughts were carnal, and only dwelt on temporal things. Jesus spoke of that which is eternal. And of that life that would be fully manifested in resurrection. Again He repeats the all important truth: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath eternal life. I am that bread of life.” They had eaten the loaves which He had given them. Their fathers had eaten the manna and were dead. He was about to give that which would not be for a time, but eternal life.

We now come to those words of Jesus which have been so strangely perverted for centuries. He presents Himself the living bread that came down from heaven. “If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” The poor dark Jews thought in their ignorance, that He meant His literal flesh; but what He did mean was of such importance, that He presses them still more closely.

“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.”

Now first a few words on the awful perversion of these words of Jesus. That which is called Christendom, nay, calls itself “the church,” has sunk so low in superstition, as to suppose, that Jesus meant to teach by these words, a literal eating of human flesh, and drinking human blood. And a priesthood has been invented, which would make men believe that they have some mystic power to change bread, or wine, into the very flesh and blood of Jesus. And this bit of baked bread, they say, is God; and it is worshipped by millions with the deepest idolatry. The highest dignitaries of this world fall down before it in adoration. And this delusion is held out as the salvation of dying men!

Now let us suppose that the priest had power to change the bread or wine into the very flesh of Jesus, true human flesh, and that a poor dying man could actually eat this human flesh before he dies, what would it profit him? “Nothing,” This is the reply of Jesus to these poor deceived men. Jesus said “ What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth; THE FLESH PROFITETH NOTHING: the WORDS that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life.”

Does not the Lord Jesus then say here that all who are trusting in masses, or sacraments, for eternal life, are deceived? For if even the priest could turn the bread into flesh, it would profit them nothing. Sacramental salvation then is all a delusion.

What then do these words of Jesus mean? “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” Most surely the whole teaching of scripture shows, that “his flesh” means His incarnation. The eternal Son of God. “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14) It is then he that believeth the great truth of the incarnation, God manifest in the flesh.

And there could be no doubt that the blood points to the atonement of Jesus, Son of man, on the cross. But why eat His flesh, and drink His blood? Because, that merely to assent to these great truths will not meet the case. One of the 5,000 might have believed, that was fish and this was bread, but would this have satisfied, and refreshed him for a time? Would this have filled him? Clearly not, he must eat. This is a very striking illustration. To merely say, I do not doubt that Jesus was the incarnate Son from heaven; I do not doubt He made atonement for everybody on the cross; nay, many do say so, and yet are not saved and have not eternal life. I must personally receive these two facts for my own life: eternal life. As Jeremiah says, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and they word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.” (Jer. 15:16.)

The great lesson then is that it is not the mere assent to these truths, or the believing in Jesus as a prophet, or as Messiah; neither is it true that going to mass, or taking the sacrament will give eternal life; but the receiving of Him who came down from heaven, became man that He might make full atonement for my sins believing His word as to this, in faith, and repentance, an entire change of mind. We are thus assured by His words, we have eternal life. Peter did not say, Thou hast the flesh of eternal life. May we, with Peter, say, “Lord to whom shall we go? thou hast the WORDS of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ the Son of the living God.”

C. S.

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Things New and Old: Volume 25, Walking With the Lord (6:45)

There is a very solemn truth in these words of Jesus, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” This is so, as it regards the salvation of the soul. Man will not come to Christ; he will do his own will, and that will is sin. But there is another sense in which this is true; “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” We shall see in the next verse that it is written, “And they shall all be taught of God.” (John 6:37, 44, 45.) This is a wonderful promise to those whom the Father draws to Christ. “They shall be all taught of God.” Jesus spoke further on this subject. “And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.” (Ver. 65.) There is then a coming unto Jesus: that no one can take, unless it be given him of the Father. Any other position, a man can take according to his own choice, or will. He can be a Romanist, or a Protestant, a so-called Churchman, or a Dissenter—he can join any of the divisions of Christendom. But Jesus says, “No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.” And, in contrast with all the error and discord of men, it is written of such, “They shall be all taught of God.” They are taught of God to be gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

No doubt this is very separating truth. It is a searching question, Have I been thus drawn to the Lord Jesus Himself? Has this high privilege been given in richest grace unto me of the Father? Is there such a reality in these days of division? There is such a position distinctly pointed out in the very last days of Christendom. In the revelation of the Lord’s judgment of Romanism, and of Protestantism as it now is. (Rev. 2:18-29; 3:1-6.) The Lord reveals Himself also to a feeble company or remnant, as He that is the holy and the true. He says, “Thou hast a little strength, and hast not denied my name.” And this remnant is told, “Behold I come quickly; hold that fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” This is not gathering merely as a multitude professedly to Jesus; but it is holding fast the testimony of Holiness and Truth. To hold His name, or bear His name, with unrighteousness, would be to deny Him who is the holy and the true.

This position then in holiness and truth is to be held fast until the coming of the Lord by those to whom it is given of the Father. We have said before this is separating truth. It did separate. There was a crowd apparently gathered to Jesus and walking with Him. “And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” We have seen this again forty years ago. A testing time came whether the testimony should be to “he that is holy, and he that is true.” And “from that time many of his disciples walked no more with him.” What a warning fact this is to all professedly

gathered to Him. Oh, how many that turned aside then, and since, walked no more with Him.

From time to time profession is tested. Has not such a moment again arrived? Oh, how many that one might have thought would have walked with Him, until caught up to meet Him in the air, are being turned aside from Him that is holy and true! We do not here speak of the question of salvation; but of that unspeakably blessed position of walking with Him and gathered to Him in holiness and truth. Oh let such remember those words, "Walked no more with Him." Some may be deceived by fair words, and turned aside for a moment, and will be restored. But does not the heart of Christ feel the perverse things said to lead away disciples? Let such ponder that verse in the prophets, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight." (Isa. 5:20, 21.)

Some who read these lines may be tempted to say, "that the highly privileged place of being gathered to Christ the holy, the true, is all gone and lost, and that there is nothing left but the individual salvation of God. We might as well give up all else, there is nothing left of that blessed position we once knew." Ah, doubting ones, listen not to Satan. Has not Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them?" (Matt. 28:20.) Is not this as true now, as if the whole church of God was gathered together as at the beginning? Surely His blessed presence in the assembly is enough, both for authority and blessing, however few, even if two or three are gathered unto Him.

Jesus has now a word with us all. He says, "Will ye also go away?" If the reader has been drawn of the Father from all the divisions of men; if it has been given you of the Father, to come unto the holy and the true; if you know Him, and are really not gathered to the multitude, or to men, but to Christ; then surely your reply must be that of Simon Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." If gathered amid the redeemed myriads around the Lamb in the glory, would you then depart from Him? Is not His presence as real to faith now as ever it was, where two or three are gathered together in His name?

May we not only enjoy this wondrous position as given to us of the Father; but may He grant that we may answer to it in holiness and truth. Is there any wonder that Satan should seek to mar, and destroy, if he could, that testimony so dear to the Father's heart? The Father has restored this privilege of being gathered to Christ; may we hold it fast in the peace of His presence; and to any who are tempted to turn aside we would press those solemn words, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Oh, beware of ceasing to walk with the Lord.

C. S.

Things New and Old: Volume 31, Grace of God to the Collier Boy, The (5:24)

"I CANNOT give many details concerning David's conversion. But I well remember aunt J. T. saying to me during the preaching in the old (Pottery) turning-house, 'Have you not a word for this poor lad?' pointing to David. I at once spoke to him, and was delighted to find that he had passed from death unto life, while listening to the gospel that memorable night. His answers to my questions were given with that quiet assurance that ever afterward characterized him."

It is now twenty-eight years since that memorable night, when God was pleased in the riches of His grace, to save every unconverted person present, at that preaching in one of the shops of the old pottery. There was nothing of nature to please or attract, but the quiet presentation of the gospel of God. It was however, as the above writer states, at the meeting after the preaching, or just at its close. Never before had I witnessed such a remarkable instance of divine power, whilst slowly repeating these blessed 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 condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24); and then, "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, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts 13:38, 39.) Yes, these words fell upon the company with the power of the Holy Ghost. Some fell on the forms and seats, and some against the wall. David, then twenty years of age, was leaning weeping against the wall, when the writer of the extract above, said to him, "David, are you anxious to be saved?" "Nay," he said, with that calm and heavenly assurance that so sweetly marks a new-born child of God, "I am not anxious to be saved; I am saved; I have everlasting life."

Never once during his twenty-eight years after, did I know him reason, or doubt these precious words of life. He was a man of no excitement or demonstration, but of calm rest in God. His great delight was to lead the young to that precious Savior who spoke to him on that memorable night. Yes, even to the last, after many months of extreme weakness and suffering, scarcely able to sit up in bed, indeed, propped up with pillows, he had the young men around him, to read the word of God. The love of Christ had impelled him to learn to read after his conversion.

A few brethren had met with him in his chamber for some time, also to read with him John 17 His soul had been filled with adoring joy, as they dwelt on this wonderful unfolding of the Savior's love. They read until they reached the glory in verse 24, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." This closed the scene, "absent from the body, present with the Lord."

We gathered around his remains, soon to be raised in glory, and incorruptibility. True, he had been a child of toil, and had worked in a coal mine all his days, until strength failed. But we felt his dignity as a child, a son of God, a joint-heir with Christ. There was no hearse, or pageantry. Brethren carried him to the body's resting-place, and neighbors wept around his remains; and as they heard of the grace of God to him, twenty-eight years before, all seemed to feel that the funeral of a nobleman, a queen, or an emperor, if unsaved, would have been a vain show, as the body, in that case, would have had to remain until the resurrection of judgment—how terrible compared to the unspeakable joy, at the certainty we had, that David's body would be raised to share forever the glory of Christ!

If called to die, reader, have you that blessed certainty? Yea, have you, like David, heard the words of Jesus? Have you believed on God who sent Him? If so, you have eternal life, Jesus says so. You shall not come into judgment, you are passed from death unto life. Ah! it is no little matter to have eternal life, the life of the eternal Son of God. Have you believed the proclamation of forgiveness of sins, through Jesus? Are you in Him? Blessed truth, "in him, every one that believeth is justified from all things." It was true in David's case. It is true of you if you are a believer. He heard the voice of the Shepherd, and He gave him eternal life. He was not anxious to be saved, or vainly seeking salvation by sacraments or law-keeping. He could say, "Nay, I am saved." Can you say this? If not, whatever your position in this world, you are poor and wretched.

C. S.

Things New and Old: Volume 26, Words of Jesus (5:40)

"And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life."—John 5:40.

Jesus had spoken of two periods—one of wondrous grace, the other of judgment. He had also spoken of two resurrections—one of life, the other of judgment. He had also spoken so plainly, that no one need doubt to which of these periods, or of these two resurrections, he belonged. Of the period of grace he had thus spoken: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." That hour, or period, has lasted nearly nineteen hundred years, and we are in it. In the beginning of the chapter we see divine grace seeking the blind, halt, withered—the helpless. But here grace is seeking its objects amongst the morally dead—the dead in trespasses and sins. Even there the voice of Jesus, Son of God, in freest grace reaches them; and they that hear shall live.

After this hour of richest grace shall come another. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in their 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 judgment." Jesus said it, and the day of grace is now; Jesus said it, and the period of judgment shall surely come. The words of Jesus must be heard in grace, or in judgment. There can be no escape. One of these must be the portion of the reader. We beg, then, your attention as a deeply interested person. Eighteen centuries have run their course, and not one who has heard and received the words of Jesus has been lost; not one who has come to Him has been refused, or cast out. Mark, it is the most absolute grace: "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." There is neither merit nor motion in the dead. And does not the death of Jesus prove the state we were in? "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead."

The reader may say, How am I to know whether I am dead, or have life? I have made many efforts, but am not sure yet. Do you make efforts to be dead? Nay; those efforts rather prove that you do not believe in the grace that reaches the dead; nay, the grace that has reached us by dying for us. "How, then, am I to know?" do you say? Hearken to the words of Jesus. He says, "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." (Ver. 24.)

Is it not thus clear, whether you are still in a state of spiritual death in sin, or have passed from that state to life? If you have heard the words of Jesus, or lest you should say, "I may have been mistaken in the past," then mark, it is, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath." Hath what? Eternal life. Not merely life for a day, or a year, but, hath eternal life. Jesus says, "hath eternal life." Jesus says, "shall not come into judgment." Jesus says, "is passed from death unto life?"

Could Jesus speak more plainly, or make it more clear and certain? To hear Him is to hear God; to believe Him, is to believe God. If you hear His word, and believe God that sent Him, then He just represents these three things exactly as they are: you have eternal life; you shall not come into judgment; you are passed from death unto life. You have now to walk as a new creature in a new creation; yes, passed from death unto life. Now walk as such, alive from the dead, to live unto God.

If, then, you have life, you belong to the resurrection of life. Should you die, or fall asleep, as surely as you have heard the voice of the Son of God, raising you from the death of sin, so surely "all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life." In 1 Cor. 15 this resurrection is fully described. This resurrection of life will take place at the coming of the Lord. "But every man in his own order; Christ, the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." This resurrection of life is very glorious. Believers, we have seen, as to the soul, have now eternal life. But then the body of corruption will be raised in incorruption and glory. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." What tongue can tell, or pen describe, the glory of the resurrection unto life? But, reader, will it be yours? Or, if you are alive and remain, will you be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and be caught up to meet the Lord, with all those who have heard His voice, and come forth from the grave to rise to meet Him in the air?

It is quite certain, as we write these lines, that we are still in that period, or time of grace, which began when Jesus took the book, and proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord. But can you tell when that period will close? May it not be this very year—nay, this very day? And then, if you die, and are not raised at the resurrection of life, you must be raised, or come out of the grave, a thousand years after, at the resurrection of judgment.

Is not this plainly declared in Rev. 20? Remember, all that are in their graves must come forth.... "and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment," "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.... They were judged every man according to their works.... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." At the beginning Jesus said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is blessedly true, after eighteen hundred years. It is also as true that the dead who have rejected this

love, have not eternal life. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Yes, at the resurrection of judgment, every man will be judged according to his works. Well might the heart of Jesus be grieved when He said, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." He knew what would be the eternal consequences of rejecting Him, in the lake of fire.

And now, He gives four distinct witnesses of His Person and work. Jesus says, "Ye sent unto John, and he bore witness unto the truth." Jesus thus pleads with them that they might be saved. They could not deny that they had regarded John as a prophet of God. They had gone out to be baptized, confessing their sins. And John was a burning and a shining light, and they were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But had not John pointed to Him, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God?" And now Jesus had to say, "And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

The reader may have rejoiced for a season to sit under some ministry, it may have been a burning and a shining light; but does Jesus say to you "And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." Are you still without life?

But Jesus had greater witness than that of John: "For the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me." Was there ever another man on this earth that did the works that Jesus did? Where did he live, and what was his name? The men who saw Him do these works bare record, even at the cost of all things, and often unto death. He calmed the raging sea, He gave sight to the blind, unstopped the deaf ear, cleansed the lepers, healed the sick, raised the dead, proclaimed the glad tidings to the poor. But, ah, far more, He offered Himself the sacrifice for our sins, according to the will of the Father. Yes, yes, His own works bear unmistakable evidence that the Father had sent Him. "And ye will not" He says, "come unto me, that ye might have life."

Still further witness: "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me." At His baptism the heavens were opened, "And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Again, on the mount of transfiguration: "Behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son: hear ye him." And again, in answer to that solemn cry of Jesus, "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." But, oh, that still more glorious witness: when Jesus had borne our sins in His own body on the cross, the Substitute for us, God the Father raised Him from the dead, thereby bearing witness that He had accepted the atonement by His precious blood. And still Jesus says, "And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

Lastly, Jesus appeals unto a fact. He does not say, "search," as a command, but, "Ye search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." Is not this equally so at this day? Men possess and read the scriptures; they think the scriptures have the truth of eternal life in them; they send them abroad, they preach from them. Is there any other Savior in them but Jesus? The scriptures are full of Him. Do not all the sacrifices of the law, the tabernacle, and all its furniture; the high priest, and his dress, his breastplate, with Urim and Thummim; the psalms and the prophets, the gospels and the epistles—all proclaim Jesus Jehovah, the Savior of sinners? Every book, every chapter, bears witness to Jesus. "And ye will not come to me that ye might have life."

Oh, by the resurrection unto life, by the resurrection unto judgment, by the witness of John, by the witness of the works the Father gave to Jesus to do, by the witness of the Father in raising Him from the dead, by the whole overwhelming witness of the inspired word of God, scriptures which you profess to believe—we beg of you answer the question, Is it true that you will not come unto Jesus that you might have life? Are you vainly seeking to attain to life by works of law? How can this be, since we have seen that the grace of Jesus comes in the voice now that speaks to, and is heard by, the dead in sins? Do you say, Lord Jesus, I come to Thee now; but I am so bad, I am not fit to come? Do you come? Yes, just as you are! Then hear His words—words of Jesus: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." Do you hear the voice of Jesus? Do you believe God that sent Him? Then remember— "Will in nowise cast out," "hath eternal life," "shall not come into judgment," "is passed from death unto life." All precious words of Jesus. C. S.

Bread Cast Upon the Waters: 16 Title Set, If Thou Knewest the Gift of God! (John 4:10) (4:10)

A WEARY one sat at Jacob's well; He had left the land of the Pharisees. It was JESUS. He came in love to His own, to save them from their sins; but they received Him not. Weary and grieved was His tender heart, as He sat about the sixth hour at Jacob's well.

There is a woman coming with her waterpot to the well. She is one to whom the proud Pharisee would scorn to speak. She is a despised Samaritan, and that is not all; she is a poor wretched being, living in open sin. She little knows that she is about to meet the eye of Him who knows all that ever she did. She arrives at the well, and is astonished that Jesus, being a Jew, should ask her to give Him to drink. "Jesus answered, and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and HE WOULD have given thee living water."

He did not say, If thou wert not so great a sinner. He did not say, If thou wilt reform and become a holy woman, then I will give thee living water. No! No! No! He let her know, that He knew all that ever she had done. But there was such a depth of pity, grace, and compassion in the wondrous countenance; such tender love to the sinner in those words, that it won her heart, it converted her soul. Christ was revealed to her; and leaving her waterpot she went to the city so full of Christ, that forgetting her own shame, she said, "Come see a man which told me all that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

My reader, can you meet the eye of Him who knows every thought of your heart from childhood? All that ever you did, open and naked to His eye! And can you say that you are not a sinner? How was it, think you, that there was nothing in Jesus to repel this wretched sinner? And what can those words mean, think you—"If thou knewest the gift of God," &c.? Is this the one great thing needed by a poor wretched sinner? It is; there can be no mistake about it, for Jesus says it. Of whatever nation my reader may be; whatever the sins you may have committed, the first thing you need is not the waters of the Ganges, or the intercession of saints, or works of amendment; no, the thing you need is to KNOW the gift of God.

Do you ask who and what is that gift of God? The same that met that poor Samaritan sinner; Jesus the Son of God: as also it is written, "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." "The GIFT of God is eternal life." "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life."

My reader, it is a gift, a gift, a gift; oh, if thou knewest this! Thou canst not buy it; thou canst not merit it. He that knows all that ever thou didst, all that thou art; sets before thee Jesus the crucified Jesus the risen one; Jesus the glorified. Dost thou know Him, the gift of all gifts?

Dost thou say, "but my sins are heavy, they press me down, what must I do?" If thou knewest the gift of God! Yes, even though thou hast committed every sin that has been done in this dark world; yet God's gift, "redemption through his blood" abounds above it all. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." His very business was saving just such burdened, weary, heavy-hearted sinners as thou art. Blessed be His holy name, the work is finished. May God reveal to thy soul, my reader Christ Jesus. Change of life and holiness of life will follow. But the first thing is The gift of God.

C. S.

Things New and Old: Volume 28, God So Loved: No. 2 (3:14-16)

John 3:14-16.

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 Savior, 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 Matt. 25:46. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." See also Rom. 2:7. 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 show 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 Lords 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 10:27-29.)

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 2:1, 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 5:10-13.) 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 forever perfected by the one sacrifice of Christ, and stands in the full unclouded favor 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.

Things New and Old: Volume 28, God So Loved: No. 1 (3:16)

John 3:16.

The substance of a first preaching, on Lord's day, March 25th, 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 Eze. 36:22-37 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 3:14-16. 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 Father hood 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 behooved 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 17:3.) "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. 15:3.) "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Pet. 2:24.) "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (Chap. 3:18.) "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. 4:25.)

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 13:38.)

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 show 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. 5:6, 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. 2:4.) "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 microscope 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 for 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 4:19.) We thus see that we cannot possibly be under law and grace. If we are on the ground of love to God has 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.

Things New and Old: Volume 26, Eternal Life: Have You Got It? (3:15)

The writer was visiting a small town on the Lancashire coast, lately, and in conversation with a working man, he asked him, "Could you tell me of any persons in G—that have eternal life, and who know of it?" After some reflection, the man said, "I cannot truly say that I have eternal life myself, but I think there is one man in the town who has eternal life, and I should like you to call and see him." This was, if we may so say, remarkable, as, in walking through the town, the writer had had a strong leading to call and see this very man. Well, he called, and found it was so. Mr. H. had eternal life, and knew it. We soon found we were not strangers. He had written for tracts years ago; God had blessed the truth to his own soul, and he was preaching the gospel to the poor.

The next day we had an hour's conversation with an aged and intelligent man on the same subject. He was quite sure he had not eternal life. He felt the immense importance of having it, and knowing it, but had no conception how this desired certainty could be obtained. He knew well the controversies and contradictions amongst professing Christians, their sad bitterness and animosities, but to the inestimable blessing of the certainty of having eternal life he was as yet a stranger. And more, from long observation of the professing church, he said he felt assured there were comparatively very few that knew they had eternal life. As we passed a little farm, we said, "How strange it would be, if a man was working on that land which a nobleman had given to him, and you asked him if it belonged to him, and he was to reply, "I am not at all sure whether it is mine, or not." We never show such unbelief in the word of a man as we do in the word of God.

Is it, then, really so, in the midst of so much profession? Are there really few that know they have eternal life—that they are eternally saved? What! with the scriptures on this subject in their hands? The last of the inspired writers brings out this great subject most fully. Was it not the very purpose of God in the gift of His Son? For this was He not lifted up on the cross, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life"? Is not this the re-suit of the pure, unmerited love of God? "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." "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." Mark, in both cases this is a present thing. It is not, shall have, but hath, eternal life. In like manner, whatever professions of holiness in the flesh, "he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Surely it is a fearful thing to deny and attack this teaching of Christ, and call eternal life "fictitious life." Nothing is more clearly taught by Christ than this blessed truth, as He says, "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."

But an anxious soul may say, "How am I to know that I have eternal life?" Hear the answer of the Lord Jesus: "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 condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." Now, to such as hear the word of Jesus, and believe God that sent Him, could anything be more plain or certain?

But you say, "I have been taught that a great deal has to be done by us; and if we do it, and continue to the end, we may hope to get eternal life in the next world." We ask you to compare this hearing the word of men with hearing the word of Jesus, and believing God that sent Him. The one is all uncertainty, and in the future; the other, the word of Jesus, gives present certainty—"hath eternal life." Yes, Jesus says, "Verily, verily." If you believe Him, you have eternal life; if you have not eternal life, or deny it, you do not believe Him. Do not reject this great truth, it is the very will of God. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." Is it not most evident that if we have not eternal life, then we have not, and do not, believe on Christ, or receive Him by faith? For He saith, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Thus, to doubt or deny that the believer has eternal life, is to deny, in effect, both the incarnation and atonement of Christ. Eternal life, then, is one of the marks or characteristics of those that are Christ's. He says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." (John 3; 4; 5; 6; 10) It is God the Son who thus speaks, and it would not be eternal life if it could perish.

This brings us to an important point. Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life." (John 11:25.) He did not say, I am the life and the resurrection—He was the self-existent life. "In him was life." But, as the Holy, Incarnate One, He must die, and rise again, and thus be to us the resurrection and the life. In incarnation He was holy, apart from sin, yet He died for us, bearing our sins; being made sin for us; and endured death for us. Without this, there could have been no atonement. In order to meet the case of man, of death, of Lazarus, to take him out of the grave, He Himself must go into it.

In incarnation He must remain alone, as He explains: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Thus the foundation of Puseyism, the communication of life by the incarnation, is all false, and it follows, its continuance by sacraments is equally false.

Thus we now see the importance of the words of Jesus to Martha, as meeting our need, communicating life to us. He is first the resurrection, and then the communication of life to us. As to life, then, resurrection-life is the gospel; and life by incarnation a delusion, which well suits the deniers of eternal life. Let us, then, lift up the eye of faith, and behold the Son of God, risen from among the dead. The life—yes, the source to us of life, but life beyond the reach of sin and death—He dieth no more. In incarnation he died once for us; in resurrection He is alive for evermore. In Him we see risen, glorified humanity, incorruptible, one Person, the Eternal Son. Now all believers, Jews or Gentiles, are not quickened by His incarnation, but with Him, and in Him, risen from the dead. (See Rom. 6; Eph. 1; 2)

Thus the life the believer has is eternal. Christ is the resurrection and the life, and He says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." Is it not wondrous that we should have the same eternal life now as He has, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high? And when we see Him, then, this will be manifested, even as to our raised, or changed, bodies. We shall be like Him. It might be asked, "What will this be the case should we die, and these bodies be dissolved in corruption?" Yes, for Jesus says, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Is there a necessity, then, that the body should die? No, for He further says, "and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die."

This is true of all believers as to the true character and power of death. If, as to the body we should die, it is to depart, and be with Christ. Death has lost its terror and power, and the body shall be raised in the full glory of redemption. Therefore, at that blessed moment, when He shall come, the dead in Christ shall be raised in glory; and those that are alive shall not die at all, but be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15); and also, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, That we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep: for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven 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. 4:15-17.) Thus the precious words of Jesus will be fulfilled at that wondrous moment: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?" He did not reveal all He meant to Martha, as afterward to Paul.

In conclusion, we ask the reader's solemn attention to the record that God hath given on this subject: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: 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. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." Could the teaching of Christ, or the record of God, be more clear on this blessed, all-important truth?

It may not be known to all the readers of this magazine, that one great object of what is called the Salvation Army, is, to train all its officers to attack the above teaching of Christ on this subject, and to deny this record of God. In a tract, written by an admiral, sent to us from headquarters, eternal life is called "fictitious life." It is a solemn thing to make God a liar. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." It is not something that we can lose—it is in His Son. Reader, do you believe the record of God? Do you ask, Can we possibly know that we have eternal life? Is it the will of God that we should know? Hear the aged inspired apostle: "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 5:9-13.) We do not wish you to be occupied with the "army" attack on the teaching of Christ, but we do ask this—Have you believed the record of God, or do you make Him a liar? How wondrous the infinite grace! How stupendous the gift of God—eternal life! There is nothing the proud heart of man rejects with such disdain as eternal life, and that the pure, unmerited gift of God. Believing God, and know-in of that we have eternal life, and that life is in His Son, may we walk as the children of the Father, divinely assured faith sustaining our souls at every step! C. S.

Praise the Lord! He died to save us,

'Tis by Him alone we live,

And in Him the Father gave us

All that boundless love could give,

Life eternal

In the Savior we receive.

Things New and Old: Volume 26, God So Loved (3:16)

We desire to call attention to the place this wondrous revelation of God has. It has been thought by some that God once so loved the world, but that when the Lord Jesus had been rejected, this ceased to be the case. Now, if we remember that the Gospel by John was the last written, long after the Jews had rejected both the Lord Jesus and also the testimony of the Holy Ghost, we shall then see that this wondrous statement of the love of God to the world was not only recorded after He had been rejected, but, consequent on that rejection, this fuller revelation of God was made. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

His own nation rejected Him as Messiah, but as many as received Him were introduced into a far higher place of blessing than the Jew ever had as a servant, even into all the privileges of sonship. And this sonship not of man, either by natural descent, or by any action of man—a new birth, entirely of God. This truth is more fully unfolded by the Lord to Nicodemus. Only we must remember the Lord did not speak to him about the heavenly church, but of the kingdom of God, and this is yet to be set up in power on this earth, according as God had spoken, and promised by all the prophets. No one could see or enter into the kingdom, except he were born again, or wholly anew, as had been fully shown in Eze. 36. They must, and will, have a new heart given to them, and be sprinkled with water that is cleansed from all pollution, as is there explained.

It is a dreadful falsehood to pervert this scripture, as though it meant christian baptism, and that a priest could regenerate a child or a man with water. All who rest on such a new birth are not born of God at all, but simply deceived. But then the question is this: if, through the rejection of the Messiah, the earthly kingdom of God has been so long postponed—for God will yet fulfill every promise—what as to this present time, this long interval? It is just here the character and love of God shine out in all their fullness.

The first thing, then, announced as meeting man's condition is this: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." The serpent was placed on the pole, that every bitten Israelite who looked at it might live. But the thought God had in giving His Son to be nailed to the cross, the sacrifice for sins, went far beyond the type. It was not for that nation only, but, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

What an object set before a guilty world!—before every serpent-bitten sinner on the face of the earth. None can say, My case is too bad, I am too vile. "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Does not this mean the writer and the readers of these lines? Who is the source of this wondrous grace? God! "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Well did He know the nation of Israel would, and did, reject Christ, but this did not hinder His love flowing out to the whole world.

Let us, then, dwell on this wondrous fact, the infinite love of God, revealed by the cross, toward the whole world. What a contrast this is to the law! It demanded most justly the love of man to God, but He had come, and only found hatred, a cross, and a grave. Man so hated God, God so loved. Man's utmost hatred brought out God's utmost love. The law said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God;" Jesus says, "God so loved the world." All this is entirely new, and entirely of God. It is the revelation of God to men. We may also say, not only was this in direct contrast to the law, but it is in direct contrast to every human thought.

The human mind is ever occupied with its love to God, or, at the most, What shall we do that God may love us? But "God so loved" is the exact opposite of all this. The gift of His Son to redeem us by His death, lifted up on the cross, was the gift of pure, unmerited love. "God so loved." God is that fountain of love from which the Son came. The guilt of the world, the loathsomeness of sin, the gift of the Sacrifice to put it away—all this reveals the love of God so as it could not otherwise have been known.

To a careless, deceived soul these words may have little meaning, nay, be utterly disregarded; but to an awakened conscience, oppressed with the shame and guilt of sin, after long struggles on the borders of dark, endless despair, what a burst of light, what a revelation of God! Jesus speaks: let us hear. He says, "For;" yes, well did He know that nothing short of His death on the cross could meet, bear, and put away our sins. He must be lifted up, "For God so loved." "God." Yes, the source of our salvation is in God, not in ourselves, or our love to God. "So loved." It is astonishing how few believe what Jesus says. Let us give an illustration. A fallen and rebellious child has sinned against his parents, and wandered far from home—say from London to New York—and, further still, is sunk in great misery in California. Now many might believe that that parent had so loved the lost child as to send one for him to California, with money to pay his fare back to New York; but he must cross the Atlantic as best he can. But they would utterly deny that the father sent money to pay the through fare, not only to New York, to Liverpool, but even unto home. Yes, many would say, God so loved the world, that He gave His Son, that the sinner might get present deliverance from the wretchedness of sin; but they have no idea that God so loved, that the gift of His beloved Son was that He might pay the through fare from forgiveness of sins to glory. There is forgiveness surely, but, alas! final salvation is made out to be—the believer doing the best he can.

But let us hear His own gracious words. How far do they reach? "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Yes, God so loved the world. And for this He gave His Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life. To deny this, is to deny the true character and extent of the love of God, and also the eternal efficacy of the work of Christ. How many think it most dangerous to believe the full extent of the love of God! Do we receive this revelation of God? Do we believe He has purposed and given His beloved Son, and that He has thus accomplished the eternal salvation of all believers? Is this your happy position? Do you believe in Him, and thus know that you can never perish, that you have eternal life? This must be so if you believe the words of Jesus. Let us neither limit the circumference nor the diameter of this love to the world. It is the love of God—its circumference is as boundless as the world, its duration and effect to whosoever believeth, unlimited; it is eternal life; love that knows neither end nor change—all of God; old things passed away, all become new—a new creation. God hath sent His Son as the revelation of His love. It was not then to judge the world, "but that the world through him might be saved." You cannot be outside the reach of this love, except by rejecting it in unbelief. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Thus, not only is man utterly guilty as a sinner, but he spurns the love of God, and refuses the gift of eternal life. On God's part there is infinite love proved in the gift of His Son. On man's part, Jesus says, "And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." Yet He also says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life." Well did He know the long-continued rejection of the human heart, yet He could say, "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 I pluck them out of my hand."

Thus, whilst the love of God is fully revealed to the world, it is equally clear that the final result of the death of the Lord Jesus was not left to man's acceptance or rejection—to the will of man; or, as all have rejected Him, evidently none would have been saved. Precious words of Jesus, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

Man, through the perversity of unbelief, and the darkness of his natural mind, sees nothing but confusion, where all is perfect harmony. One great cause of that confusion and doubt, is, constantly thinking of our love to God, instead of seeing how "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." a Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Thus, to make our love the motive for God to love us, is to deny the grace of God.

Now, as to believers, they can say, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." His love is perfect, and thus all fear is gone. Yes, His love has been shown to the utmost, in sending His beloved Son to bear the judgment due to our sins. This alone can give holy boldness in the day of judgment. The Judge has borne our judgment! Oh, wondrous, infinite love! Beloved reader, do you believe this love? Can you look forward to that day without fear? In this matter, it is not that we loved God, but that He loved us. But then you say, Our dreadful sins! But we never could have known the depth of His love but for them. He sent His Son to be the propitiation for those very sins. Jesus endured in love the full wrath of God against your sins,

and all this because God so loved you. Will God change, and hate and judge you after this? Oh, begone, dark unbelief! God is love.

If you really know and believe the love of God, there is one thing you can then say, and say it truly: "We love him, because he first loved us." This is the very nature of love. A little child knows, sees, and sweetly confides in the love of a mother. Did that child first love that mother? Did it ever try to do so? No; it loved the mother, because the mother first loved it. It constantly sees the manner of its mother's love. Then let us "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Not only are we brought into this present relationship, but the future is surely as bright and certain as the present. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And mark, it is this very certainty that gives power for a holy walk. "And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." How much, then, is there in those blessed words of Jesus: "For 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 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." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

"God is love." C. S.

Pamphlets, Jesus on the Shore (21:4-12)

Mr. Charles Stanley read part of John 21, and spoke as follows:

A thought connected with the voice of the Lord, to us this morning: "The early morn now breaking" (vs. 4). The morning of His appearing now is near. The present gathering may be the last conference before we see His face. Do we not all feel the force of that word to our souls — what a solemn thing to be brought to the close of the Church's history — and the call to know His xxx1 His will for the few days that may remain,

"The early morn now breaking," Jesus stood on the shore. The disciples knew not that it was Jesus. God has been pleased to reveal to our souls the Person of Lord Jesus Christ, not in Peter's boat, not in the xxxx we were in, fishing, not on the unstable water of, but on the solid shore. And from one to another the word has passed, north, south, east, and west, "It is the Lord." Not, "It is believers," "It is ourselves." Many disciples have not known Him, who He is. Some are at the net, a few fathoms off. I go with our beloved, brother, with every word. In the Gospel, and as an old evangelist, I may be allowed to say it, and often as I have seen the direction of His eye, as to where the net has to be cast, and where many, and great fishes, should be taken; there is something more precious than this to my heart. It is communion with Him; it is His "come and dine"; it is the food He bids us share with Him, — the communion of heart with Himself. This is really the contrast with the fishing. Oh, what a moment this is in the history of saints! The time of man's activity, of human fishing, without the known presence of the Lord ending; and now the known presence of the Lord is given, "It is the Lord." "On this wise showed He Himself." The Holy Spirit is whispering round to heart after heart, "It is the Lord," — but made known not on the sea, but by gathering all those who hear His voice, to the solid shore of resurrection to feast with Himself. I doubt not, we might carry this blessed figure a little further. I doubt there are few here, but can take the place of Peter, whether as to the fishing or the food. Have we not been brought to walk a little more softly than we walked before? Is not that same blessed Lord that disciplined Peter, disciplining us? Now, as the early morning is breaking, is He not in some measure weaning us from fleshly prowess, from fleshly activity; and are we not just in His presence, as Peter was, to hear a few words from Himself?

While, on the one hand, the need of becoming fishers has long impressed us, and may He be with the evangelists always, bid them cast the net, and where the fishes are to be found; yet, He did not say to Peter after His appearing, "Carry the net and cast it in again." It was not the work of fishing but of feeding that specially occupied Him at that moment, and I believe that it is not fishing but feeding that chiefly occupies Him now.

May I ask your attention now, to your own neighborhood, your own towns, and villages. What is the heart of Christ respecting His lambs around you? His sheep? We can say with Peter; and it is an immense favor, softly as we may be called to walk, deeply as we are brought to feel our own nothingness, "Thou knowest that we are attached to Thee." We are attached to Christ. We are linked with Him. To think of this company now; gathered from all parts of England, Ireland, and Scotland too, all attached to Christ — linked to Christ. Having no other interest but to represent Christ, "the bright and morning star." To represent Him, not merely leaving the dark night that is past in Peter's boat, but to see and hear Him at the breaking of morn. Is there a sight on earth, the Father's eye can rest on, like the sight this morning? When in prayer last night, the gravity and solemnity of so many saints, all gathered by Himself; and to Himself, was pressed on me. What a sight! the gravity of it is amazing. But have we responded to the heart of Christ, as to His lambs and sheep?

A word about the villages around our places — I do not mean as to fishing merely, but as to feeding. "Children have you any meat?" The answer from a thousand round our homes would be, "We have not food"; never was there a time when the sheep of Christ were needing food and shepherding as they are at this hour. What is our responsibility? What is yours? What is mine? What is the responsibility of our united hearts? To answer to the word of Christ, "Feed My lambs; shepherd My sheep." It is the will of our ascended Lord that the word should pass from heart to heart, "It is the Lord" gathering His sheep, gathering His lambs, giving the well that is springing up; let us sing unto it. Oh, the all-sufficiency of the Holy Spirit that dwells in us. May He bless this, perhaps our last coming together, to bring us more into unison with His own heart; and let a wave of divine blessing flow out from this meeting, for the refreshing of His own! "The early morning is breaking" and Jesus stands on the shore. Tell it, tell it all around! Disciples that know not "it is the Lord." Solemnly do I corroborate the thought so set before us: it is the Lord's message to us, at the closing hour. May He keep our hearts, through these meetings, in communion with Himself, and to his blessed name be all praise! Amen.

From The Bible Herald, 1877, pp. 35-38.

“We beheld His glory, not of the Son as such, but as of the only-begotten Son of the Father. He, had all the title of that excellency and value in everything. All that that was to the Father was with Him. It is His personal glory made visible in flesh.”

“The difference between *μονογενής* (only begotten), and *πρωτότοκος* (first-born), is that the first is His relationship to God eternally; the second is His relationship to other things. Thus ‘I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.’ (Psalm 89) This is not what He is essentially.” (Notes on John, Coll. Writings, J. N. D., vol. 25. p. 334.)

A comparison of the texts that speak of the Lord as the first-born, and as the only-begotten Son of the Father, will abundantly confirm the above.

We only find the highest title of the Son in John, when the church had failed as a testimony on earth; then the Spirit by John, brings out the glory of the eternal Son, as the only-begotten of the Father,

“And the Word was made flesh, and: dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace truth.” (John 1:14) “No man hath seen God, any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared him.” (Ver. 18,) “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son.” (John 3:16.) “He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the, only begotten Son of God.” (Ver. 18.) “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.’ (1 John 4:9.) We can only worship and adore—He was in this ineffable-relation to the Father the beginning. Such was the eternal Son the Father gave to die for our sins. Amazing grace!

The word first-born, on the other hand, is used by the same Spirit when speaking of his preeminence since, and over creation, in reference to persons or things. “Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For by him were all things created,” “And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.” (Col. 1:15-18.)

So Psalm 89:27 as above, “Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.” This does not speak of His eternal relationship, but His position on or over the earth. And again, “That he might be the first-born among many brethren.” Thus the scripture is perfectly uniform in the use of these two distinctive aspects of His glory. It would be a sad mistake to confound them.

There remains another scripture (Psalm 2:7) which foretells the incarnation of the Son, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” The term only-begotten is not used here. Neither in the quotation of this in Heb. 1:5, but “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” “And again when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world,” &c. How careful the Holy Ghost has been to keep the varied glories of the Son distinct. Whether His eternal relationship as the only-begotten of the Father—the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, and as such sent that we might have eternal life; or as having the first-born pre-eminence over all creation, or as the incarnate Son. May our hearts receive each of those relationships and glories with adoring gratitude and worship.

Things New and Old: Volume 32, Preparation Day, The: No. 1 (19:14)

“And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King.” (John 19:14.)

We have seen that instead of the sixth hour presenting any difficulty, it was the most suited mode of stating time, the common time of the Roman Empire; just as the Jewish mode had been the most suitable for the Jews. Again, the seeker of difficulties may ask, How could this be the preparation of the passover, when Jesus and His disciples had eaten the passover many hours before?

Let us examine this. We read, “And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.” And if we turn to Deuteronomy 16, we have very special instruction as to the passover—the month, and the day, and the place. It was not to be in any place, “but at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou earnest forth out of Egypt.” Thus Jesus was at the place God had chosen for the sacrifice of the passover, and the month, the day, and the hour had come: the going down of the sun. The appointed hour had come. As to the chief priests and scribes they sought how they might kill Him. They knew not that He was the true passover Lamb. They understood not that the time had come that the passover must be killed. But when the hour was come He sat down with the apostles. Thirteen persons, within the prescribed number, according to Jewish history. They sat down on our Thursday, about six o’clock, at the going down of the sun: of Jewish time, that being evening, until six on Friday morning, our time.

Now when we remember the vast numbers that gathered to the appointed place, Jerusalem, and that there were only from ten to twenty to each lamb, the number of passover lambs must have been very great. (See Josephus, Wars, 6, 9:3, and Book 2, chap. 14:3.) 56,000 lambs are said to have been sacrificed. And further, as the passover occupied some considerable time, it would seem that most of the night would be occupied before all had eaten it, only nothing must be left until the morning. There was a division in the service of the supper before the lamb was eaten; so that there is no contradiction or difficulty when we read, “Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not in to the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.” Thus it would appear they returned to finish the passover by eating the lamb at the very hour they delivered Jesus to the Gentile power to be tried and killed. (John 18:28.)

If we turn now to John 19:14 we shall find a still more blessed explanation: one full of the deepest instruction for our hearts. You will notice it is not the preparation for the passover, but of the passover. And even after the crucifixion we read, "And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath." (Mark 15:42.) "For that sabbath day was an high day." (John 19:31.) That is, the sabbath of the passover week was of all sabbaths the highest type of eternal rest. For fifteen centuries the preparation day had pointed on to this day, on which let us now dwell. Jesus, the Lamb of God, had presented Himself at this very passover, when the passover day fell on the day before the sabbath. Alas! the Jews understood it not. Do they who say they are Jews understand it any more now?

The preparation day, then, commenced on the Thursday evening at sunset, and lasted until Friday evening sunset. But what was it, the preparation for? It was God's preparation day for man, poor, lost, guilty man, to be brought into eternal rest to Himself: the eternal sabbath based on redemption. This had long been foreshadowed in Deut. 5:15: "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." The sabbath, or rest of creation, had long been lost, and now God set forth the sabbath of redemption, which never can be lost whilst God is faithful to the claims of the redemption-blood of His Lamb.

Oh that our eyes may be fastened on Him, the Lamb of God, during the twenty-four hours of this preparation day. In this year the passover day was the preparation day. When the hour was come at the beginning of this day (6 p.m. of our Thursday) He sat down. Let us hear His precious words. "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." (Luke 22:15, 16.) Think what He had to endure that day to fulfill the passover, and prepare the sure around of our eternal rest. Yet such was His love to us, He could say, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." Thus began the preparation day. There was no more use for the thousands of dying lambs. No more use for their flesh, nor typical value in their blood. The material feast must cease, and the spiritual now be symbolized by the bread and wine. The Lamb of God presents Himself. "And he took bread, and gave thanks and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." The blessed Lord well knew the way these words would be perverted to a literal meaning of His flesh and blood, and thus He uses a word to show it was not literal: He does not say which shall be, but which is. Indeed, another word also: "This cup." Now the blood was not yet shed, and the cup was not His blood. Did He not clearly mean, that as the paschal lamb had been eaten by Israel, in remembrance of the temporal redemption from Egypt, so it is His blessed will that we should partake of the symbols of bread and wine in remembrance of Him and of our eternal redemption? Nay, He says, "Do this in remembrance of me." We shall find He finished the work of this preparation day, and left no need of another sacrifice to bring men into the sabbath of eternal rest.

Let us turn to John for further details of the preparation day. Chapter 13. Supper, the passover supper, being come, there was Judas, the devil having put into his heart to betray Him; but Jesus knew His own, and loved them with a love that knows no end. "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments." This was probably at the usual break in the passover, before the lamb was eaten, when the head of the household catechized the younger children in the word. Did not the washing of their feet by water signify how He would ever, in love, apply the word? What a precious lesson on the preparation day! He will ever keep us suited to the rest into which we are brought. And thus He would have us serve each other.

He may have felt the first pang of suffering as He washed the feet of Judas; for when He had sat down again we read, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." This produced great consternation. And well it might. And what a remembrance for Judas forever and ever! And what does the tender heart of Jesus still feel as He sees men reading the word, and enjoying every outward privilege of Christendom, and yet hastening on to where Judas went? It will be terrible in hell to remember a father's prayers and the constant reading of the word; and a sister or a brother resting in the love of Jesus, as one disciple leaned on Jesus' bosom. Well may we look round the family, and ask, Lord, who is it? Are you quite certain, reader of these lines, the doom of Judas will never be yours? Oh, what did the blessed Jesus feel when He dipped the sop and gave it to Judas? It was all over for that man. Satan entered into him, he went out, "and it was night." And a night to his soul that will never, never know the break of day. No hope. What a warning on the preparation day!

And the bold and devoted Peter must learn this day, that he has no strength. It is not what Peter can do for the Lord on the preparation day, it must be the work of the Lord for him.

And it was on this preparation day that the veil was lifted up, and the heavenly place and home of the saints fully revealed for the first time. (John 14:1-3.) Jesus would be no longer the object of sight; but the object of faith, even as God. These poor disciples are lifted up, far above the promises to Israel, up to the Father's house with its many mansions. He says, "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." Is not all this revelation suited to be given on preparation day? If on that day He would do the work that redeems us and prepares us for the place on high, then it was the fit time to tell them and us that He would go and prepare the place, and come and take us to Himself.

But if a Peter has no strength in the hour of temptation to stand for Christ, and Christ is no longer with us in bodily presence to sustain us, what is to become of us until He comes? He says, on this preparation day, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter [one to take entire charge of you], that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth." See how this is repeated so as to meet our need in every way. (John 14:16, 18, 26; 15:26; 16:7-14.) Nay, all the blessed instruction of John 13; 14:15; 16 And then the claims of Christ for us in chapter xvii. All this occupied after supper the evening of preparation day, and every word is needed for our souls. The great work, however, of the preparation day had not yet begun. Let us carefully notice each stage. The preparation day had advanced " when Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples." Let us go with Him into the garden, and witness the sorrows of our own dear Lord.

Things New and Old: Volume 29, Offerings, Short Papers on the: No. 10 - Propitiation and Substitution (19:30)

We come now to the teaching of the Holy Ghost, on and after the day of Pentecost. It was not until Jesus, our atoning Substitute, was glorified, that the Holy Ghost could come to dwell here in, the redeemed. Jesus had distinctly told them, "For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." His presence here, then, is in consequence of redemption being accomplished by the Son of God.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost used Peter to announce, in the very city where Jesus had been rejected and slain, that God had, according to the scriptures, raised Him from the dead and made Him both Lord and Christ—the very Jesus whom they had crucified. This announcement convicts them of the deepest and blackest sin; and makes them cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They are directed to repent and be baptized in the very name of this once rejected, now exalted, Jesus Christ, the Savior Christ, for the remission of sins—just as was foretold by Gabriel, the angel of God And with many other words did he testify and exhort.

And the effect was marvelous. "The same day there were added about three thousand souls." The day had now dawned, when "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Reconciliation for iniquity had now been made. The veil was rent—Jesus had entered heaven, by His own blood. He entered into the holy place, and now the mercy seat is opened to the whole world. Peter did not as yet fully comprehend this. But the Holy Spirit acted upon this great truth. Jesus had cried, It is finished. God had rent the veil. Here it may be well to be reminded of the contrast between the propitiatory aspect of the sacrifice of Christ, and Christ as His people's Substitute.

Propitiation is what the blood is to God for His people and for all creation. As He said, as to redemption, "When I see the blood." So on the day of atonement, when the blood was first sprinkled before God, He saw the blood. But the blood of bullocks and goats never enabled God to rend the veil. Those sacrifices could not open the mercy seat to the whole world. The blood of Jesus was shed, the veil was rent, the mercy seat is opened to the whole world. Hence the Spirit of God gives the word now, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord." And to show that none are excluded, the first preaching sets the door wide open to the very murderers of Jesus; and three thousand enter in. It is on this ground that all preaching proceeds in the Acts. Indeed, the commission was as wide as the human race. "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47.) No matter, then, of what nationality you are, repentance and remission of sins are preached to you. God sees the blood; He is glorified by the death of His Son. The propitiatory mercy seat is opened to you. Repentance and everlasting remission of sins are proclaimed to you.

In this aspect, as the propitiatory mercy seat, the atonement is, as to the whole human race, unlimited. And thus the gospel is preached unto every creature. God has been glorified on the cross. But the atonement, in the sense of substitution, is limited to believers; to those who have redemption through His blood.

Let us, however, look at the scriptures. We have seen the door opened to the Jews, rejecting, despising Jews, by the preaching of Peter. Let us now see the same door opened to the Gentiles by the same apostle. After speaking of His death and resurrection, he says, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, WHOSOEVER believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." (Acts 10:43, 44.) Thus blessed be God! to both Jew and Gentile, the effect of the propitiation is an unlimited proclamation of mercy and forgiveness of sins. God sees the blood, infinite in value, before Him and thus whosoever believeth in Jesus, shall receive remission of sins. Through the propitiation, forgiveness is preached. And to all who believe the message of God, from that moment they know Jesus as their Substitute, all sins and trespasses are forgiven: to this the Holy Ghost bears witness.

The preaching of Paul is on precisely the same ground. What does he preach to the Jews in their synagogue, and to the crowd of Gentiles? First, the death and resurrection of Jesus. Then the unlimited proclamation of forgiveness, with the absolute assurance that all that believe are justified from all things. Read his proclamation in Acts 13. Does this set aside the sovereignty of God? Not for a moment. Forgiveness of sins is truly preached to all; for the same words were preached to the Gentiles. And what was the effect? "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed."

Now why should Christians differ about these two things? Is it not the clear doctrine of scripture that forgiveness of sins is preached to all, to every creature? Is it not an absolute fact that all who believe God ARE justified from all things? God says so in His inspired word. But if you don't, who do believe? the answer is perfectly clear, "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." We have no more right to deny one of these truths than the other.

Nothing can exceed the importance of the soul clearly. understanding the ground of these two things: the propitiation of the death of Christ by Which He has become the mercy-seat to the whole world, and His substitution for His people's sins, by which THEY are justified from all things. It is the same sacrifice once offered. But, reader, have you the clear certainty in your own soul that, believing God, you are justified from all things? Do you say, "Well, I do not enjoy that certainty?"

It is no use denying the fact that there are many, who we trust are Christians, who do not enjoy the certainty that their sins are forgiven; and that God cannot impute sin to them. We would seek to help such.

Now first as to propitiation—God glorified about the whole question of sin, and sins. What is this? Who did it? and where was it done? Where was God glorified about the whole question of sin? Have you ever thought seriously of those hours of darkness, when Jesus was nailed to the cross, hearing the whole wrath of God due to sin? Have you really thought of the infinite suffering of the Son of God, made sin? Now think of those words, the cry of Jesus, long foretold—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And have you ever thought of those further words: "It is finished; and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost?" Why was He thus forsaken? What was finished, and where was it finished? Solemn questions of eternal moment. Atonement was there and thus made. Propitiation was there and thus, by the Son of God, FINISHED ON THE CROSS, on the cross alone, God was there glorified as to sin. And all that followed, was because He, the holy One made sin, had there on that cross glorified God. The infinite suffering of Christ, because of sin, was the atonement.

We must here notice two most bold errors held by some as to the atonement. The one is, that Christ was making the atonement during His blessed life. The other is, that it was not finished on the cross, but had to be made somehow after His death, now He is in heaven. This has many shades of error, such as Romish masses, fresh sprinklings, making propitiation without shedding of blood, Or the suffering of divine

wrath. For none would be so daring as to say that Jesus is now enduring the wrath of God. Now both views entirely set aside the true character of atonement or propitiation. Both set aside the awful nature of sin. Both are equally false. In truest sympathy He entered into and carried our sorrows, and was thus perfected as the Captain of our salvation. But carrying our sorrows, and bearing our sins, must not be confounded.

It was as He approached the cross, He cried out, "Father, glorify thy name." It was in the garden, with the awful cup before Him, that He sweat as it were great drops of blood. There He said, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Precious Jesus! the cup of wrath was still future, still before Him. It was only on the cross He could say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was in that darkness His soul was made an offering for sin. It was on "the tree he bare our sins in his own body;" yes, on the tree. During His life He was despised and rejected of men; but the Father could say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." But on the cross all was darkness—forsaken of His God! There was the atonement made. There it was finished: there He bowed His head and died. Jesus said, "It is finished." There my soul rests in peace.

To say that He was making atonement during His life, would be to say that, though sin was imputed to Him, though He was made sin, yet sin is not so terrible, but God could have communion with Him when made sin. But on the cross the righteousness of God is fully revealed. Though it be His holy One, yet now sin is reckoned to Him, and He is bearing sins, He must now be forsaken of God until atonement be made. And it was made by Him, the infinite Son, so that God is glorified. Thus two things could He now say, as He bowed His blessed head in death, "It is finished." "FATHER, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Yes, whether as the propitiation, glorifying God; or the substitute of His people's sins, all was over—it was finished. And wilt thou, O vain, reasoning man, say that it was not finished? Wilt thou say that He had still to make propitiation in heaven, and priests to make it on earth? Wilt thou still deny that it is finished? and say that there must be millions of repeated sacrifices offered yet, or one sacrifice offered continuously? Or wilt thou say, it is not finished, for there must be renewed sprinklings if we sin or fail? All the subtleties of Satan and unbelief would deny those blessed words of Christ, "It is finished." Begone; unbelief! God was glorified by the finished work of Christ; propitiation was made by that work of Christ on the cross, so that through Him is preached the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things.

We will next look at what followed the propitiatory death on the cross. But let us hold fast the blessed truth that "It is finished," And ever remember that it was not in heaven, but on the cross, Jesus spake those precious words. It was when He expired on the cross the veil was rent. His entrance into heaven, and sitting down, was in consequence of having glorified God on the cross—of having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Some Papers on the Second Coming of Christ and on Prophecy, Part 9 - Questions of Interest Relating to the Coming of Christ and His Reign on Earth (18:36)

"Is not the coming of the Lord inseparably connected with an earthly millennium? And if the millennium is to be a spiritual one, what hinders it being brought about by means of the various agencies at present at work — missionary, Bible and tract societies? Our Lord distinctly said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). Does not this prove that the kingdom of Christ is a spiritual one, which is now going on, and is extending, and may extend "until the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea?" (Isa. 11:9). And if so, why should we not be looking for this event, rather than for the personal return of our Lord; though surely He will come at the end of the world?" None of the prophecies or the promises of God can fail; therefore we are quite sure that there is a time coming when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, for He Himself has declared it. But let our first inquiry be, By what means is this to be brought about? And is it anywhere stated in the New Testament that this is to be the result of the present preaching of the gospel to every creature?

In Acts 15:14 we read that God was visiting the nations to take out of them a people for His name. To take out a people from the mass is surely a different thing from the whole mass being taken. And this in no way clashes with the gospel being preached to every creature. It is proclaimed to all, but God has taken means by which to ensure some being saved. We read that when the Gentiles heard the gospel, they "glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed" (Acts 13:48). Instead of hindering anyone from preaching the gospel, this is the very thing that makes it certain that some will be saved, and should send forth the evangelist with greater energy.

Again, what can be plainer than the parable of the Wheat and the Tares? We have our Lord's own interpretation of it, and He tells us that He Himself is the Sower: "The good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one: the enemy that sowed them is the devil: the harvest is the end of the world [or, age], and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this age" (Matt. 13:37-40). The question was asked by the servants whether they should gather the tares from the wheat, but the answer was, "No; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest."

Surely the teaching of this parable is quite opposed to the thought of the world being converted (to use a common phrase) by the various agencies at present carried on to spread the gospel. The wheat and the tares are to grow together until the harvest, and that will be at the end of the age. How then can the millennium be inaugurated before that period? It is only at that time that "the Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matt. 13:41). We are compelled to see, therefore, that the state of universal blessedness on the earth cannot be the result of the gospel under the present dispensation.

What are the means, then, that are revealed in Scripture that will bring about the millennium? They are found to embrace an order of things entirely different from the present dispensation. God's ancient people Israel will be brought into their own land; will pass through great tribulation; will own our Lord as their Messiah; will become missionaries to the nations; and will eventually be the center of universal blessedness on the earth. The nations will bring their riches and their glory to Jerusalem, for that will then be God's center of blessing (Isa. 2:1-3).

From this it will be seen that the millennium will be celebrated on earth. The passage quoted in the question raised at the head of our paper says, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord." The church that is now being gathered is heavenly, and belongs to heaven. God had in time past an earthly people, and they will again be gathered and blessed on earth; for they are only set aside for a time, and if any one of the promises made to them can fail of being accomplished, all God's promises can fail, and we can be sure of nothing. But we know this is impossible. The blessed Lord, who was so ill-treated by man, and turned out of the earth, will yet have glory on earth, and be hailed as King of kings and Lord of lords.

When our Lord said, "My kingdom is not of this world," He did not mean that He had not an earthly people, and that He would not have a kingdom on earth. We read that He came unto His own, and His own received Him not; and they said, "This is the heir: come, let us kill Him, and let us seize on His inheritance" (Matt. 21:38). Of the temple, too, He said, "My house shall be called the house of prayer" (vs. 13). Thus our Lord had an earthly people, and lingered in grace over them, guilty as they were, and died, too, for that nation as well as for those who had never known the true God.

Our Lord meant that His kingdom was not of this world in its origin: notice that He says, "My kingdom is not from hence." But when Pilate asked, "Art thou a king, then?" Jesus confessed that He was, and as we read in 1Timothy 6:13, our Lord "before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession."

Now our Lord is not said to be King of the church, nor, indeed, is He called, "King of saints," for Revelation 15:3 should unquestionably read "King of nations"; but He is called King of the Jews, and will be hailed in the millennium as "King of kings and Lord of lords."

The objections, therefore, raised in the questions are shown to be without foundation, and on a fuller view of the subject they all fall to the ground. There is absolutely nothing that we are taught to look for before the coming of the Lord. He said, "Surely I come quickly, The Spirit and the bride say, Come." How is it that any who form a part of the bride of Christ cannot heartily say, "Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus?"

Things New and Old: Volume 32, Preparation Day, The: No. 2 (18:1)

As Jesus crossed the Cedron and entered the garden of Gethsemane for the last time, in the dark night of that preparation day, no human heart could sympathize with Him. No, to all His disciples it was the day of deepest disappointment. None knew the Father but the Son. None knew what was in the heart of God our Father but He, God is love, and God had sent His Son that man might be brought into the eternal sabbath of rest. This was the purpose of God; and this was the preparation day, fore ordained from all eternity, in which that work should be accomplished; yes, finished that very day. A work that should rend the veil, and remove every obstacle, should open the way for you and me and every guilty sinner that believes God into His own eternal rest—a sabbath that can never be broken—eternal rest based entirely on the work accomplished on that preparation day.

Never was there a day like this before; never can there be another like it throughout the ages of eternity. Every promise, and every sacrifice; yea, all the dealings of God with man had reference to this preparation day. All this was known to Jesus. And when they had sung a psalm they went out and went into the Mount of Olives. Now what was it that pressed upon the heart of Jesus? What was there so terrible before His soul? He said unto them, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." (Matt. 26:31.) It was not merely what He was about to endure in all the mocking, and cruel torment, that men could inflict; but, as the shepherd, though equal with God—His fellow, yet He must be smitten by Jehovah. Oh, think of the holy, holy, holy Son being made a curse beneath the smiting of Jehovah. Must this be accomplished on the preparation day? He would need and would look for sympathy, but all would forsake Him. And all to bring us into rest. How tenderly He said, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." Oh, look at Him there, "And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground." What a cry that the cup might pass from Him! And what subjection to the Father's will. The Lamb must be killed. He gave Himself up.

None but the Father knew how He loved the church, when He thus gave Himself up for it. Deep was the sorrow and anguish of His heart when He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee. Hear Him: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me." In Matthew it is, when He had gone a little way from them, He "fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." In Mark, He said: "Abba, Father." My Father, Abba Father. He appeals to all the endearing affection of that eternal relationship. But He could not be heard. He said: "Our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered; they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man: a reproach of men, and despised of the people." (Psalm 22:4-6.) Oh, the depths into which our precious holy Jesus sank on that preparation day! But there was no other way by which the guilty sinner could be brought into the sabbath of God.

And what was the sympathy of His chosen three? He found them asleep, for their eyes were heavy. But nothing changed His changeless love. Three times did He thus go and cry to the Father, His Father. Three times did He return to find His most devoted disciples asleep. Yes, such is even devotedness, when put to the test. And if such is devotedness, what is mere profession?

A little noise is heard in the garden. The dreadful cup must be drunk. Here comes a very apostle of profession, at the head of a band of men, with swords and staves, from the religious authorities of Israel. Hear what he says: "Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him," or covered Him with kisses. Such is man, whether it be a devoted disciple, or a false apostle. Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou must do the whole work alone on that preparation day!

In John, at this trying hour, the Godhead shone out for a moment: as "Jesus, said unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground." And now the last act of Jesus before He was bound was to heal His enemy's ear. Peter could sleep when he ought to have been watching, and he would fight when the hour had arrived to be yielding. But Jesus was perfect in His deepest humiliation. He who had made all

things gives Himself up to be bound.

We now enter on another stage of sufferings of Jesus on the preparation day. He is bound by His own people, and they take Him, the holy, holy One, as a criminal. They led Him first to Annas, father-in-law to Caiaphas the high priest. We have not much account of what He suffered before him. We read that he sent Him bound unto Caiaphas, the high priest. (John 18:13-24)

Now mark the sufferings of Jesus, God manifest in the flesh, before His own high priest.

What He suffered at his hands was as the Captain of our salvation. Just an example of what His followers have ever had to suffer if the pretended priesthood have had the power, whatever the name by which that priesthood was known. Surely no just charge could be made against the pure and spotless One. And the priest tried to entangle Him in His words. "Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them," &c. (John 18:19-21.)

What a revelation of man: "Now the chief priests and elders, and all the council sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death." (Matt. 26:59.) How often have the priests of Rome, pagan and papal, done the same thing. What parallels we might give from the history of God's real saints. Mark, the sole object of the Jewish Sanhedrin was the death, of the Holy One, Jesus, No false witnesses could be found to agree. Driven to the last extremity, the high priest adjures Him by the living God, that He should tell them whether He was the Christ the Son of God. How blessed the answer of Him who is the truth. "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." The high priest ought to have known that the Messiah would come exactly in this manner, as may be seen in Dan. 7:9-14; Mic. 5:1-3. The word of God was perfectly clear, and the Christ of God stood before him; but he knew it not. All was blasphemy to the high priest. And what was the thought of chief priests, elders, and Sanhedrim? "They answered and said, He is guilty of death." (Matt. 26:66.) All that He had said was the exact truth. Man has no heart for the truth.

Mark well how religious man treated the Lord of glory. "Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands (or with rods)." This gave much torment and extreme suffering. Ah, what would be said in our day if a highwayman was treated as they treated the Holy Son of God, against whom no charge of sin could be brought?

We read further in Luke 22 That the men that held Jesus mocked him and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, "Prophesy, who is it that smote thee?" And in the midst of all this unparalleled outrage and inhuman cruelty, and anguish, and suffering, was there no human heart to pity or sympathize? No; as we read in Psalm 142:4, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul." But what of Peter who really in his heart loved Jesus; Peter, who sincerely thought and said he would die for Jesus. What was he doing when Jesus was blindfolded and cruelly smitten by brutal Jews. Plush, whilst we tell it; he was denying Jesus, with cursing and swearing. Can we desire a greater proof that we cannot trust in ourselves, or our love, or our promises? We have now seen in this first trial of Jesus, what the man under law is with all his privileges. The Jew stands thus before us on the preparation day; he had every possible privilege: the oracles of God and His prophets had foretold these sufferings of the Messiah Never in the history of the Jew had he made greater professions of zeal for the religion of his fathers. The law commanded him to love God with all his heart. And now God incarnate, visible in humanity, humbled, in love to man, love to them: Jesus was delivered up into his hands. And the full character of the most favored man was fully revealed. What is in man came out in all its envy, malice, and hatred, against the Son of God. The chief priests seem to have been the worst. How strange, the greater the pretensions, and the more highly esteemed amongst men, the greater the wickedness and hatred to God.

Thus the midnight hours of the preparation day passed on. Deeper sorrows yet awaited our adorable Lord. Let us trace them; for all hearts must be tested on this preparation day. The whole multitude now arise and lead Him bound, again to tramp the dark streets of Jerusalem. They are taking him to Pilate. They are determined He shall be given up to the Gentile power. They long that He shall die the most cruel and shameful death. Let us follow, and see if the Gentile is better than the Jew.

Holiness and the Second Coming of Christ, Holiness and the Second Coming of Christ: No. 1 (17:17)

The Lord Jesus said to the Father, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17.) There is one truth, perhaps, beyond all others in scripture connected with holiness—it is the blessed hope of the Lord's return to take His saints. This is often little thought of by those who speak and write on holiness.

We must, however, carefully distinguish the sanctification we have, that is, all believers, through the one offering of Jesus for us, and the sanctification wrought in us by the Spirit using the truth.

In the former it is all for us, and of God, in His infinite grace, according to the infinite value of the blood of Jesus. We shall see this very distinctly, if we turn to 1 Cor. 1.

Corinth was a city of Satan, of great darkness and gross iniquity. Yet the Lord told His servant that of that place—sink of iniquity as it was—He had "much people in this city." (Acts 18:10.) And by the preaching of the gospel the Lord gathered them out to Himself; and thus the church of God was formed. Thus the apostle by calling addressed them: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints [holy ones] by calling." Yes, in Christ Jesus they were sanctified. They were constituted holy ones—they were holy. As children of the Father, they must have the same nature as the Father. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

Thus, as to what they were in Christ, Christ was all, so that God can ever speak of them as sanctified in Christ Jesus. In Christ they are constituted holy ones by calling. And this is true of every one whom God calls by the gospel of His grace—he passes from death unto life. Nay, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new; and all things are of God." (Cor. v. 17.) As to his standing, God does not see him in the flesh, or in his old Adam standing, but in Christ; Christ is his sanctification, therefore it must be complete.

But does this imply that his walk also is perfect? Far from it. Nay, these very persons who are addressed as sanctified in Christ Jesus, as holy by calling, are declared to be carnal, in the same epistle. (1 Cor. 3:3.) It would be utterly impossible to understand this, if we did not see the distinction between sanctification in Christ, and sanctification of walk. It is not that we must understand the word, "carnal," here as meaning sensuality, or persons practicing sin. No person practicing sin can think for a moment that he is sanctified in Christ Jesus. He that practiceth sin is of the devil. The carnality here spoken of was that which grieved the Spirit, and grieved the apostle. They were forming divisions in the church, and walked as men, showing that they who are sanctified in Christ Jesus may need much correction as to holiness of walk. No one can deny that the same persons are addressed as those that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, holy by calling, Christ Jesus made unto them righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; and also as to walk: "For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men."

And further, before, or in order to rebuke them because of this low walk, he speaks of them thus: "so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the end; that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 1:7.) Now, what a motive this is for all believers to seek unity, instead of division; one saying, I am Episcopal; another, I am Presbyterian, &c. If we were really waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ, and assured that He will confirm us unto the end blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, should we not be ashamed of our divisions? Thus the Spirit of God brings before us the riches of the grace of God to these Corinthians.

Read their previous character, in chapter vi. 9, 10. And then, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (Ver. 11.) Do not reverse this order. Do you say. Justification is an imperfect thing, and after that comes sanctification? Depend upon it, God knows better than we do, and He says, washed, sanctified, justified. Thus, if you are a believer, you are washed—yes, whiter than snow—set apart to God; yea, accounted righteous before God, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And "God is faithful."

Bear on, and you find that all this blessed certainty filling the soul, waiting for the Lord Jesus is the ground on which he rebukes them for their divisions. Thus the knowledge of the sanctification of every believer in Christy is not that he may sin, but that he may not grieve the heart of Christ. Do you really believe this? We are sanctified and holy by calling; therefore we should be holy in walk, and work, and devotedness to Christ.

We will now turn to 1 Cor. 15 Is not the great subject of this chapter the resurrection of those that are saved, that are Christ's at His coming again? "But every man in his own order; Christ, the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." (Ver. 23.) Some had said that there was no resurrection of the dead. But the resurrection of Christ—which none could deny—had made the resurrection of ALL that are His an absolute certainty; just as His resurrection makes the fact of our sins being forgiven an absolute certainty. How wondrous! how blessed! If He be risen, we are forgiven. If He be raised in glory and incorruptibility, so must we be raised in glory and incorruptibility. "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." What an event! so near, and so certain! Mark, it is, "at his coming." And not only so as to the millions who sleep with Jesus, but also, "Behold I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Yes, all, all in Christ who are alive when He comes. Death shall then, to us, be swallowed up in victory. Yes, "thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Oh, all ye holy ones, sanctified in Christ Jesus, this is your glorious, soul-sustaining hope. Oh, think of that glorious moment! But what is the application of this blessed certainty as to our walk now? "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Weigh every word; could anything be more calculated to stir up our souls to devoted, steadfast, abounding service to our Lord, than the blessed hope of His coming again? Who can tell how near that day is!

Now turn to 2 Cor. 5:9. "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear [or, be manifested] before the 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/" Mark, we do not labor to be accepted in Christ We have seen that all the Christians at Corinth were sanctified in Christ. Like all others who are in Christ, they were accepted in the Beloved. But we labor that? whether we are absent from the body (that is, have died), or still present in the body, when He comes, and are changed in a moment; we labor that we may be accepted of Him. If we compare this with 1 Cor. 3:11-15, we see that some may have walked so as to please Him, and have a rich reward; and others may be saved so as by fire, like Lot, and lose all their labor. But what a motive here again for practical holiness, for diligence in seeking to please the Lord, is the solemn thought of soon being manifested before His judgment-seat! Not, surely, for our sins, or we are lost. No, He is the blessed One who has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. But should that infinite love make us careless whether we do the things that please Him, or not? The more we know His love, and the certainty of His promise to come, and receive us to Himself—and the more we dwell on that scene of promise, not of dread to us; the more we shall desire to obey that word, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." And though we are sanctified in Christ Jesus, yet shall we seek, with all diligence, to walk in practical separation from the world. a Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." But let us ever remember, this diligence is not that we may be sanctified in Christ Jesus, but because we are holy by the call of God—sanctified in Christ Jesus.

May our God and Father use these divine certainties as motives to stir up our hearts for a separate, holy walk with Himself! How blessed to know we are not only thus, if believers, sanctified in Christ, but shall be confirmed to the end, blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us not, then, live to please ourselves, not even in our religious matters, but to be accepted of Him in that day. Have we ever truly asked the question, Am I doing that which is pleasing to my Lord? What will He say to me before His judgment-seat? All must be manifested there. How exceedingly important then, for practical holiness, is the coming of the Lord! We shall find it increasingly so as we examine other

scriptures.

First Years of Christianity: And What Is the Church?, First Years of Christianity, The: Gospel of the Glory (17:24)

We shall better understand the wondrous character of the gospel of the glory, as preached in the First Years of Christianity, if we dwell briefly on the gospel of the kingdom, which preceded it, and which, when the Church has gone to glory, will succeed it on earth.

In the preaching of John the Baptist, the heavens were only opened to one Person, the Son of God. He was the beloved Son, in whom the Father was well pleased. The heavens were opened to Him, and on Him the Holy Spirit could descend (Matt. 3:16-17). John's testimony was the last and greatest of the prophets to Israel. It was the ax laid to the root of the trees—to all Jewish prejudices and self righteousness—and was a solemn call to repentance and confession of sins; and finally he announced the Messiah. There was no opening into the heavens for sinners, but only for the one Man who came from heaven.

In the preaching also of Jesus to Israel, it was not the gospel of the glory, but of the kingdom. Several bright gleams shone forth, shall we say in the prophetic version of the Mount, foreshadowing the coming glory? There were two men with Him in the glory. During His last night before His death, there were wondrous words from His lips, both to the disciples and to the Father. He spoke not of Jerusalem, nor this earth, nor the kingdom on the earth, but of the Father's house, and many mansions, and of His going to prepare a place for them; and He said, "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."

And He said to the Father, when about to be with Him, in the glory that He had with Him before the world was, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory" (John 17:24). Yet even after His resurrection the apostles did not understand this. They were still occupied with the promised kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6).

It is also very remarkable, that during the forty days Jesus remained with them, we do not read that He spoke to them about the Church, or the gospel of the glory, but "being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." When the Holy Spirit had come down, Jesus having ascended up into heaven, and the new company of believers having been baptized by the Holy Spirit—the Church being thus formed—the preaching even then was chiefly what characterizes the kingdom. Very distinctly so in Acts 3:17-21. Peter unlocked the door, so to speak, by repentance and baptism into the kingdom of heaven—the kingdom on earth, while the King was away in heaven. The preaching went thus far, the apostles saying, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:30-31).

As yet the preaching is limited to Israel, and to the promises made to their fathers—very much, indeed, to the kingdom to be set up on this earth. Not a word yet of the gospel of the glory. Jesus was gone up into heaven, and He would come again. But the gospel preached did not reach up to heaven opened to man.

In Acts 7 there was an immense change. Israel, in the murder of Stephen, committed their final sin as a nation, in rejecting the Holy Spirit. All is now over with them for the present. All is over as to restoring the kingdom to them now; and at the same moment the heavens are opened to man, to the believing, dying Stephen. Full of the Holy Spirit, he "Looked up steadfastly into heaven, AND SAW THE GLORY OF GOD, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Alas, from that day they have stopped their ears.

From that moment, though the earth has rejected the Son of God, the heavens have remained open to man, to every one who believes. That day there stood near a young man, at whose feet were laid the clothes of the murderers. We shall hear of him again. That young man, Saul, was consenting to his death; that young man was the chosen instrument to go to the nations and proclaim the gospel of the glory.

In Acts 9:22, 26, we have another most remarkable advance. This very young man, Saul, mad with persecuting rage, was on his way to Damascus, with authority from the chief priests to bring believers bound to Jerusalem. A stream of glory shines right down from heaven. He says, "At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me." And he says, from that heavenly glory, "I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" What amazement seized that young man! Heaven was opened, and the glory descends, comes down to man, to man the sinner, the enemy. And that voice from heaven, from the brightness of the glory, speaks to the sinner mad with persecuting rage, and asks a question which implies that those believers whom this young man persecutes are one with Himself, who speaks from the glory. Astonished, he asks, "Who art Thou, Lord?" Who can this Lord of glory be? And he hears the wondrous reply, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

Now it was from the glorified Jesus Saul received the commission to go forth as His chosen witness and heavenly messenger, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." You will see that this was greatly in advance of all that had gone before. The gospel of the kingdom of God to be set up on this earth, most true in its time, was altogether different from the gospel of the glory and the heavenly vision. Discipleship by repentance and baptism was most prominent as the entrance into the kingdom, in John's preaching, in the Lord's also, in Matthew and Mark. But Paul was not thus sent. Indeed, as we have said, his preaching was far in advance of that of the twelve, as seen up to Acts 9. He is sent from the vision of the heavenly glory to both Jews and Gentiles, to turn them from darkness to light. It was to take out a people for heaven, from the power of Satan to God. And what he preached was not what man must do, but that Christ must suffer, and "be the first that should rise from the dead, and should SHOW LIGHT unto the people, and to the Gentiles." And he could say, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

Now while the twelve preached Jesus as the crucified, dead, risen, and exalted Lord and Messiah, Paul at once proclaims Him the Son of God. There was now nothing more to be expected from man. It was no longer what he must do, but what Christ must have done, who had appeared to him in heavenly glory. Thus he opened the Scriptures: "opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ." To him it was the Son of God who had thus died for him, who had been made sin for him, who had put away sins by the sacrifice of Himself, and had sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Could he doubt the perfection of that work which Christ must do, and had done? No; He who had once been crucified for him, had appeared from heaven in brightest glory—in light beyond the eastern noonday sun. God had raised Him from the dead, who had been delivered for our offenses, and raised Him for the very purpose of our justification. Thus he preached, and thus, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote. This was his gospel of the glory. Let us hear him.

He says, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not. So that the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine forth for them.... Because it is the God who spoke, that out of darkness light should shine, who has shone in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:3-6; Literal Trans.). Thus the glory of the gospel of Christ shines down from heaven on a lost and guilty world. All is darkness here. Man is darkness. Satan, the god of this world, has blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving; he presents every form of false religion and dark superstition to hinder the rays of heavenly glory shining into the poor dark soul of man.

Has the radiancy of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ever shone into your soul? Has that risen and glorified Jesus ever spoken direct to you? Can you say, I have heard His voice speaking to me? What a color the heavenly vision gave to all the preachings of Paul, that once fiery young persecutor! When he preached forgiveness of sins to guilty sinners, it was straight from the glory. Nay, the inspired writings of Paul will be all fresh and new, and heavenly, if we read them as in the First Years of Christianity, in the warmth and brightness of the heavenly vision. They will indeed be like a river of life, and light from the throne of glory, of God and the Lamb. Let us remember the power of that vision of the glory which attracted Paul from everything under the sun. May it be so with us.

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