

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." Our blessed Lord gave to His Disciples this conditional promise, and in this 23rd verse empowered those to whom He spoke authoritatively to declare the terms on which sins were remitted or forgiven, or the sins were retained or unforgiven.

We find those to whom this declaration was made acting upon it. They understood the authority conferred upon them which was thus exercised.

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," Acts 2:38.

"Repent ye and be converted (or turn again), that your sins may be blotted out."—Acts 3:19.

"Through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."—Acts 10:43.

And John thus obeys the instructions of his Lord: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." It was thought necessary by our Lord to empower in very plain words His followers to declare in their preaching and teaching that instead of the long round of Jewish observances paralleled by those of the Romish Church, that "Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins." God still empowers His ministers to declare and pronounce that all who turn to Jesus and believe in Him shall receive forgiveness of sins.

There is no instance of His messengers pretending to have the power in themselves to forgive sins, or that the authority claimed for by the Sacerdotalist was given to