

THE SOWER.

HEAVEN OR HELL.

Oh sinner bethink thee, time swiftly is flying,

The next fleeting moment may sound thy death knell :
Around thee, on all sides, poor mortals are dying,
And soaring to Heaven—or sinking to Hell.

Hast thou pondered these facts? Canst thou say thou art
ready?

Is it certain, dear friend, that with thee all is well?
Like a river, time bears thee, with course swift and steady,
Right onward to bliss—or the darkness of Hell.

Before thee there lies a dread, fathomless ocean,

Eternity! who can its boundaries tell!

But consider—nor think it a vain, idle notion—

What port thou art heading for—Heaven or Hell?

When, after long absence, he homeward is steering,

The thought of his home makes the sailor's heart swell ;
Thou art bound for Eternity, is the thought cheering?
Say where wilt thou spend it?—in Heaven or Hell?

Christ died to redeem thee, Oh wonderful story,

Ye angels assist us His praises to tell!

Exalted, He seeks thee to share His bright glory

In Heaven, and escape from the torments of Hell.

Yes! His Word sets before us the good and the evil,

Sin that ruins the soul and the Blood which makes well ;
Life and death everlasting : good God, wicked devil ;
And—blest, dread, realities—Heaven and Hell.

Seek peace and pursue it, make Christ thy salvation,

If thou trustest to Him then with Him thou shalt dwell
In Jesus our Lord there is no condemnation,
But peace and bright glory with no fear of Hell.

ETERNAL LIFE.

MANY timid believers are anxious to know whether they possess eternal life, and if it is possible to be certain as to it while in the body. "Feelings can in no wise settle it, yet, in Scripture, it is perfectly settled *to faith*." Eternal life is a gift, "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," (Rom. vi. 23), and it is freely offered to all, "whosoever" is the word; but owing to the necessity of God's nature and man's desperate need, "The Son of Man must be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii, 14, 15). And in connection with this question of eternal life the infinite love of God for the perishing world was manifested, "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." (John iii, 16). From this every believer in the Son of Man, Son of God *has* eternal life *now*: it is simply believe and live. (see John xx, 31). Unbelief alone excludes from this greatest of all blessing for man, (for it is the risen and exalted Christ Himself, Col. iii, 4). But the abiding wrath of God is the sure and awful portion of the rejectors of this love and its gift. "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." (John iii, 36).

Thus life eternal is received by faith in God's Son,

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and the feeblest believer is assured of its possession by His word. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me *hath* everlasting life." (John vi, 47, see also I John v, 13). This is certainty as to its present possession by the believer, as his everlasting security is also guaranteed by the same precious word.

In John iii eternal life is connected with faith, but it is distinctly testified that the believer *should not perish, etc.* In itself the life is "eternal" and of course, unperishable, (see Heb. vii, 16), but this statement makes it divinely certain that the *believer himself can never perish.*

The quibble of unbelief that one may lose his faith, thus cease to be of Christ's sheep, and therefore perish after all, is only trifling with holy writ, and beneath sober notice. (Luke xxii, 32).

In John x it is the divine side where there can be no possibility supposed of failure in faith. Eternal life is the Son's gift with the unqualified assurance that His sheep "*shall never perish,*" and their abiding safety is further assured by the united power of the Father and the Son. "I give unto them (His sheep) eternal life; *and they shall never perish,* neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them to me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. (Vers. 28, 29). And lest Satan should seek to shake confidence in God's word, it is added, (Ver. 35). "the Scripture cannot be broken." The statement often made in certain quarters that this passage does not provide against self destruction on the part

of the sheep is too absurd for anything. (see John xiv, 9). Eternal life then as we have seen is by faith in the Son of God; assurance by His word, and the everlasting security of the believer in Christ is guaranteed by divine power.

It will now be clear that while relationship is divinely assured forever, whatever may be the snares by the way—and there are many—yet the believer's responsibility is to bear "much fruit" to the glory of the Father through a dependent and obedient walk, apart from the world, according to Scripture. (see John xvi).

Let the timid believer then rest on his Father's love, in the assuring certainty of His word, the all sufficiency of His power and be forever settled as to this important matter.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." (Matt. xxiv, 35). "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." (Ps. cxix, 89).

"He will keep the feet of His saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail." (I Sam. ii, 9).



For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him. (Is. lxiv, 4).

But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit. (I Cor. ii, 10).

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HE DIED FOR ME.

DURING the late disastrous war between the Northern and Southern states of America, a traveller, when visiting these scenes of desolation, entered what may be called a soldier's cemetery. The place where the slain had been buried after the battle of Chickamauga. The visitor's attention was arrested by a man planting flowers on one of its lowly and humble graves. He softly drew near, feeling that the scene was hallowed by such memorials of tender love.

"Is it a son that lies buried here?" kindly enquired the stranger.

"No." Was the reply.

"A son-in-law?"

"No."

"A brother?"

"No."

"A relation?"

"No," was still the brief reply.

"Whose memory then, may I venture to ask, do you so sacredly cherish?"

Pausing a moment to give vent to his emotion, he gave the following account of the young volunteer whose memory and remains were so dear to him :

"When the war broke out, I was drafted to go and join the army. No draft money was given me, and I was unable to procure a substitute, and made up my mind to go. Just as I was leaving home to

report myself for duty at the conscript camp, a young man whom I had known, called on me and offered to go in my stead. You have a large family he said, which your wife cannot support when you are gone. I am a single man, I have no one depending upon me, I will go for you! He went. In the battle which was fought here, the dear generous young man fell dangerously wounded. He died in the hospital, and was buried here. Ever since his death it has been my desire to visit the place of his interment, and having saved sufficient money for the purpose, I arrived yesterday, and to-day found his grave." Having concluded his touching story, he again bent over the grave, planted another flower, and no doubt watered it with his tears.

The enquirer passed on, but his heart was too deeply affected with a sight, such as he had never seen before, and such as he is not likely ever to see again, to go far away. He returned to look once more on that sacred spot. But Oh! what now met his eyes! a sight that Heaven itself would look down upon well pleased to see. Not only was the volunteer's grave now garlanded with flowers, but a rough board was placed at the end of the turf, on which were simply carved these few, but touching weighty words:

"HE DIED FOR ME."

Nothing more. Nothing could be added without marring its perfectness where all is to be so much admired, the grateful love, the refined taste, the sublime sentiment of this remarkable, poor man. It stands alone in its great idea, amongst all the epi-

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taphs in the world. Surely he must have known Him who died the sinner's substitute; and the confession of faith, which has been so long on record, "*Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.*" There is only one great original. But, oh? what a lesson, what an example, what a rebuke, to me, to thee, my reader, to all mankind.

The volunteer died in generously taking his poor neighbor's place and saving him from the consequences of joining the Southern army; but the blessed Lord Jesus Christ died to save us from the consequences of sin—eternal misery. Not merely from poverty and suffering in this life, but from the torments of hell forever; where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched. "If one died for all," as the scriptures plainly teach—though all will not be saved, for all men have not faith, (II Cor. v, 14; I Tim ii, 5, 6; II Thess. iii, 2), who then can be guiltless if grateful honours are not shown to His name? We are not asked to garland His tomb, or to inscribe our faith on His cross; but we are asked to believe in His love, and in His dying in our stead. And faith will always make His love, and His death as personal as Paul did; "who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*?" Not merely, He died for *us* or *them*, but "He died for me."

"Could I grave these blessed words, 'He died for me,'" said one in great ecstasy one evening, "on every tree that grows, on every leaf that quivers, on the face of all rocks; and could I herald them forth on the wings of the wind, I would tell the vast universe of God that 'Jesus died for me'—that I live through His death, and shall reign with Him in glory for ever." Go thou my dear friend, learn of Jesus and do likewise.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

ASTRONOMERS have undertaken to identify the star which guided the wise men of the east to the birth-place of the "King of the Jews," and not only so but to define its orbit and predict its re-appearance. What an under-current of anxiety and fear must be caused in the minds of the unsaved who connect this coming return with the Lord's descent from heaven, knowing well that this great event will separate between the saved and the unsaved, and bring upon the ungodly "swift destruction."

It is said by the scripture that the enquiries about this star at Jerusalem caused Herod and all the people to be troubled, and why when they were looking for their Messiah? because it is written that "a king shall reign in righteousness." And why are so many troubled now when the Lord's coming is spoken of? alas, they know full well that they have "neither part nor lot in this matter;" that while the coming of the Lord will be unspeakable joy to His people, it will be dismay and despair to all who have not accepted Him as a Saviour.

Some try to persuade themselves that it is all a fiction, but scripture is positive. "He shall come as a thief in the night"—"When they shall say peace and safety then sudden destruction cometh upon them * * and they shall not escape." Ah! but says one that is the end of the world; not so, for the Lord says "what I say unto you I say unto all, watch."

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O! reader be not deceived, God's word cannot fail, Christ is the ark of safety, why not enter in and be safe. Scoffers have arisen saying "where is the promise of His coming."—but scripture told us there would be such and their words whatever may be their position can neither retard nor advance that wonderful day when the Lord Jesus with "all His holy angels," "with ten thousands of His saints," will come with "a great shout" to the air—the atmosphere of this planet—where He will meet His redeemed, His blood bought saints who have been, if dead, raised up, if living, changed amid the acclamations of all the heavenly hosts, who will be the enraptured spectators of a scene, waited for and longed for indeed by His own, but waited for as well by the Great Author of it all, not only since the cross, not only since creation,—“their names were written in the book of life of the slain Lamb from the foundation of the world,”—but from all eternity that glorious day has been in contemplation. Dear reader do you realise that this may be all lost to you, that while many who are near and dear to you shall be in that bright glory you may yourself never see it, or if at all seen from the ghastly and dreadful surroundings of a place of torment, but seen to intensify the awful remorse you will feel as you remember that in times and ways and means without number the realities of these things were pressed upon you only to receive from you a momentary thought, less indeed than you would bestow on the commonest circumstance of life. What infatuation is it that wraps you thus in its

deadly embrace, shake off the fatal torpor—awake, arise, give no sleep to thine eyes or slumber to thine eye-lids, until this momentous, this tremendously important question has been settled—we know neither the day nor the hour, but we do know that a fearful delusion of Satan will be allowed to blind the eyes of them that believe not.

Again reader whoever you are or whoever you may be this word is for you; the Lord is coming; He will receive His own to Himself. He will execute judgment on the unbelieving. Education, social position, religious associations, all will be unavailing in that day. You will not be able to escape in the crowd, vast as it will be, “every soul must give an account of itself to God,” and nothing will then be covered for He judges the thoughts and the intents of the heart. Even now as you read this paper or before you lay aside this book the Lord may come, and then if unsaved what remorse will be yours as you remember in hell the last note of warning that sounded in your ears—The Lord is coming! The Lord is coming!

Not all the gold of all the world,
 And all its wealth combined,
 Could give relief, or comfort yield,
 To one distracted mind;
 'Tis only to the precious blood
 Of Christ the soul can fly,
 There only can a sinner find
 A flowing full supply.

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STAND BACK !

PASSING along a street of wholesale warehouses I noticed in an open doorway the above words in large bold letters. Curiosity led me to stop and ascertain the reason for the warning. I found it was not, as I had supposed, a doorway, but an entrance to the elevator with a considerable depth below for delivery of goods to the basement. The need of the warning was apparent, and as I passed on I recalled to mind another and a deeper pit from which there is no recovery, and I thought too of all that has been done to warn man of his danger and to make a way of escape.

Now dear reader will you with me consider this matter a little. I suppose you are accustomed to deliberate on any thing which promises to be to your advantage or disadvantage, and as this is of vital interest to you why not now in a sensible way consider the whole question.

You have sinned against God—all have sinned—scripture says so ; and while you are not responsible for the nature you have inherited, you are responsible for the sins you have committed, and the judgment is “the soul that sinneth it shall die.” If you had never committed but one sin you are condemned, and if condemned what ransom or propitiation can you offer ? you have none ; God is holy and righteous ; cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance or approbation, and you have sinned against Him

Now we are told "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God," (Ps. ix; 17), and this is no mere figure of speech ; the bible tells us over and over again of the awful fate that awaits those who are the subjects of His just judgments ; and now I ask you again, what are you going to do about it ? Alas ! poor soul, scripture says you are without strength, but thanks be to God ; the God of all grace ; the God of mercy ; the God of peace ; He has Himself found a way by which His mercy can interpose, and turn aside His righteous judgment, and that too without doing violence to His holiness and His truth. Now it may be thought this is impossible ; but with God all things are possible, and in His infinite wisdom He has devised a way by which "mercy and truth might meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other."

God had with Himself a Son ; a well beloved ; an only Son ; unknown indeed to men but One by whom in the past His great works such as the creation of the world, had been wrought. For this His Son a body was prepared. He became a man, yet without man's sinful nature, and in this body He offered Himself a sacrifice for sin. Being a man, a holy and undefiled man, He could take the place of men ; being God as well, He, and He only, could bear the awful load of man's guilt. Is it any wonder that the apostle by the Spirit cries out "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God !" (Rom. xi, 33), and so will you too reader when you come to realise the stupendous work of the cross. But now

as to the individual application of all this; we have seen that all have sinned; that Christ died for the ungodly; and the word is "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, His faith is counted for righteousness." (Rom. iv, 5).

Reader the way of life is clearly defined for you, if you find yourself for eternity in the depths of hell, whom can you blame?

REPENTANCE.

REPENTANCE is an abiding and universal necessity for the sinner. (Acts xvii, 30). It has nothing whatever to do with the ground of a sinner's peace, any more than the feelings of a drowning man have to do with a life boat. But man, being a sinner, must be brought to the moral judgment of his nature and state in the sight of God. This judgment may vary in its measure and character; but it must be, sooner or later, in every case. Man must find out that he is lost, that he is a guilty hell deserving sinner, else what does he want of life, pardon or salvation at all? No doubt there is an utterly false legal way of handling the question of repentance, but at the same time we must never forget these words of our risen Lord and Master, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke xxiv, 46, 47).

THREE THINGS.

A WORD TO THE ANXIOUS.

THREE things; three wonderful things; three stupendous facts; three most precious things; a soul learned, and then rejoiced; and *these three things* souls must learn and that from God through the word, in the power of the Holy Ghost, before they can rejoice in the true sense, knowing themselves eternally saved. (Acts, viii, 26, 39; xvi, 23, 34).

It was a cold, stormy night, in the month of February, 18— when some eight or ten persons, most of whom were anxiously enquiring the way of salvation, were found seated around a farmer's large kitchen table. Meetings had been held in the neighborhood, and God had exercised the hearts and consciences of many as to their sins and lost condition. The preacher who was present, endeavored, again and again to make things as simple as possible, saying, the work is all done, for Jesus on the cross said, "it is finished," and we *know* that He was put in the tomb, and that God raised Him from the dead, thus showing how fully satisfied He was with this *one only, perfect offering* of Jesus, that which alone can, and does, give the believer a perfect standing forever in the presence of a righteous, and holy God, according to His estimate, of the precious shed blood, sins and iniquities remembered "no more." (Heb. x, 1-18). Eternal life also as the gift of God, was much dwelt

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on, together with what we find in I John v, 6-13 verses, 13 in particular. These scriptures, with others, but more especially these, were gone over and over, when at length, one of the company, a stout, elderly woman, addressing Mrs. E—— at whose house we were assembled, said, “you *must* pray for eternal life, you’ll never get it without praying for it;” whereupon instantly she replied, while her face bore the expression of one deeply in earnest. “no Mrs. S—— you don’t need to pray for it, you’ll *never get it by praying*, A—— and I have been praying for it for years, and have not got it,” and now mark reader what comes next, viz., the three precious things spoken of at the beginning. “I see the work is *all* finished, and eternal life is *God’s gift* which we have only to accept in simple faith, and I see we can know we have it;” “that ye may know ye have eternal life;” “that ye may know ye have eternal life;” this she repeated over and over, emphasizing, as she did so, the word, “know.” Assurance she had been longing for, and now, is it any wonder this earnest, anxious, troubled one, found peace in believing that very night, and told out her newly found joy to others? and does not this, ever follow a *real* work in the soul? (John i, 35-42; vii, 37-39). Again dear anxious one, let me repeat these *three precious things* that you too may believe what God says and go on your way rejoicing.

1st. “It, (*the work*, that has glorified God, and saves sinners) is finished.” Have you a doubt about it, then look at Christ in glory. (Heb. ii, 9, Acts xiii, 37, 39).

2nd. Eternal life is a "*Gift* ; and you don't need to pray for it ;" but in simple faith receive it. (Rom. vi, 23, John v, 14). Wondrous truth, God's gift to lost and ruined man, the guilty sinner, the whoso-ers of earth's remotest bounds.

3rd. Assurance or "knowledge of salvation." "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." (I John v, 8-13). What grace ! God has written to all those that believe on the name of His Son, that they (and they only) may (not merely have "a good hope but") know that they have eternal life. What blessed assurance this gives. God has said it, who may doubt it? whodare question it? and what power in heaven or hell can change it. Yes *God has said it*, this gives peace, this gives rest, eternal, everlasting peace and joy to the conscience stricken, sin burdened soul. Reader hast thou got eternal life, God's gift? Judgment's coming.

Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,
 See Him dying on the tree !
 'Tis the Christ by man rejected !
 Yes, my soul, 'tis He 'tis He !
 Mark the sacrifice appointed !
 See who bears the awful load !
 'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed,
 Son of man, and Son of God.