

THE SOWER.

THE QUESTIONS.

What has the world to give thee
That thou holdest its hand so fast?
It gives thee pleasure and laughter,
Can it give thee *peace* at last?
It calls—and thou followest after,
In the track of its car with speed;
Its pathways are strew'd with earth's flowers,
Dost thou know where those pathways lead?

What has the devil to give thee?
Thou hast wrought for him faithfully;
Thro' life's morning, and noon, and even,
None has been thy master but he.
Thou hast worked and hast played—art thou weary?
He will give thee thy wages, he saith;
They come at the end of the journey,
And what are the wages?—Death.

What can thy heart do for thee?
Is it strong enough to save?
Is it wise enough to guide thee
To the land beyond the grave?
Thou thinkest it strong—it is feeble;
Firm—it is tempest-tost;
Free—'tis the slave of Satan,
Thou thinkest it safe—it is lost.

What has the Saviour to give thee?
He gives Himself to thee,
He gives thee peace and pardon,
And life for eternity.
His presence for life's rough pathway,
His voice through the din of the strife,
His smile at the end of the journey,
And His love which is "better than life."

THE OLD ROAD KEEPER.

HOW often it occurs that when two people suffering from the same trouble chance to meet, that, although unknown to each other, they do not hesitate to speak of the means by which they have been helped or cured.

So also dear reader when we present to you an account of a conversion it is always with the thought and the ardent desire that it may be used to some anxious soul seeking peace. It is our wish in showing you how God has wrought towards other souls, to encourage you also to come to Him who has given His life to save sinners; who has borne—He the just One—the burden of the wrath of God against sin, in order that God may pardon the sinner. To this end the simple story of the conversion of a man known to the writer is presented.

R—— was born and brought up in a locality situated at the foot of the Jura mountains where of late years God has several times wrought by His Spirit and Word to awaken souls. R—— was still a young man when one of these “revivals” took place. Many were converted, and he also received serious impressions. During several weeks he was much troubled by the thought of eternity, and the possibility of entering it unprepared. He had at this time a dream which impressed him most deeply. But alas! these sentiments were of brief duration, they vanished as the morning dew. The world and

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its desires again took possession of the heart of young R—— and smothered the effect the Word had produced in him. He again took the broad road which he had seemed desirous to quit, and succeeded in silencing the voice of his conscience which had spoken so loudly at the first.

A little after this period in his life he married a young woman of the same locality, but instead of being a support to his wife, he caused her, by his conduct, the most bitter sufferings. The Lord, however, used these bitter trials to lead the young wife to Himself a few years after her marriage, but this only served to further irritate poor R——.

He had undertaken several trades; in his youth he had worked with his father as a nail-maker; later he became a road-keeper and then, engaged in the sale of milk and groceries. His wife assisted him courageously and they were thus enabled to bring up their four children, and even to lay by a considerable sum.

R—— bought a piece of ground in the outskirts of a pretty little town, and on it built a house; yet when finished it did not suit him, and an opportunity offering, he sold it. He then wished to build a smaller one. Thus occupied with the things of the earth his heart only found its satisfaction in these; all the activity of his nature moved in that direction. His wife seeing him aging, and becoming feeble, wished to stop this new enterprise, but his strong will and enterprising spirit was not to be restrained, and evil was the result.

The spring of that year was cold and wet, and

R—— while laying the foundation of his new house took several successive colds of which the consequences were fatal. He was attacked with violent pains in the head; became deaf, and extremely weak. However the house was finished, and in the autumn of that year he was able to take possession. I met him some days afterwards; in walking, he supported himself upon a stout stick; advancing slowly and painfully. I enquired as to his state of health and he frankly informed me that he did not think it could be re-established, that he quite saw his end was approaching.

"It is a serious matter Mr. R——," I said, "when one has come to such a point. After death comes the judgment which settles all for eternity. If you are not ready to die and appear before God, you should think of it.

"I know it," said he, "and I do think of it, but," he added with a deep sigh, "I have lost my opportunity, but," he continued, "I would like to have a private conversation with you when we have got through with the workmen here."

"Wherever you wish," I replied.

"Thank you, thank you," said he, pressing my hand, whilst a tear escaped from his eyes, running down his cheeks upon his beard. A strange sight in one so hard and repelling in appearance. Thoughtful and with emotion he pursued his way.

From this time he was much on my heart. The God of mercy who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live, also

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Several days passed without my having been able to go and see him, but I heard from his wife that he passed nearly the whole day reading his Bible.

About this time I received a post-card telling me of the arrival of two evangelists who wished to declare the good news in our town; and they asked me to call a meeting for this purpose, which I did and went personally to invite R——.

"I would go willingly," said he, "but my head is so sensitive to the cold that I cannot take off my hat even when I read the Bible."

"That doesn't matter," I replied, "come without considering that; when the necessity arises keep on your hat; besides, every one knows that you are sick.

He came and was very attentive; when leaving he said to one of my children, "Tell your papa to come and see me to-morrow afternoon." I went as requested, R—— received me cordially, and I began at once to speak of the meeting, asking him if he had been able to hear anything of what had been said.

"Not much," he replied, "only two sentences which the preacher loudly repeated."

"And what were they?" I asked.

"That is just what I wanted to ask you an explanation of, because, not having heard the rest, I do not know what they mean. The first is: '*You come too late,*' and the second is: '*There is still time.*'"

I remembered these words which the preacher had

repeated several times, and I can understand that having only heard these they would strike you particularly as they seemed to be contradictory. When he said, "*You come too late,*" he spoke to those who think to save themselves, whether by their prayers, their good works, or by any merit they may have acquired. And as Jesus the well beloved Son of God completed on the cross more than eighteen hundred years ago the work by which only we can be saved, it is evident that those who undertake their own salvation have come too late. And when the evangelist said, "*There is still time,*" he spoke to every unconverted soul, for since God has had so long patience towards a guilty world, not only for having sinned, but also for His rejection in the person of His Son, it is certain that there is still time for the sinner to turn to God.

I read to him II Peter, iii. 9 and II Cor., v. 18.

"Yes," said I, "it is still time for all who come to Jesus to have life and pardon; to find in Him a perfect and eternal Saviour,"

"Now I understand," said he, "it is still time for me!"

"Certainly," I replied, "you have only to come to Jesus just as you are."

He remained a moment thoughtful and silent, then he asked me again, "Are you quite sure of going to heaven when you die?"

"Yes, perfectly sure."

"And upon what are you resting for forgiveness of your sins, and the salvation of your soul?"

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“Upon the sacrifice of Christ. In the epistle to the Hebrews, tenth chapter, we learn that the sacrifices offered in past times did not purify the conscience of the sinner. Then we are told, Christ came saying, ‘Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. * * * By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.’ And “after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.” Thus showing us that the work which takes away our sins was perfectly accomplished, since the Lord is seated as one who has finished a task. And as to sinners who believe in Him it is said, ‘For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.’ “Well my friend what more is needed? The will of God and the sacrifice of His Son are both in our favour; and there is, besides, the witness of the Holy Spirit, who on God’s side says: ‘Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.’ This,” I said in conclusion, “is the basis on which rests my salvation and the peace of my soul.”

After a moments silence he said, “Can you show me a verse in the Bible which can give me assurance that these truths are for me?”

I read him in the Acts (chap. x. verse 43,) “To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.”

“Thank you much,” said he, “that is all that is necessary, thank you again.”

It had been a great effort for R—— to follow

what I said on account of the suffering in his head, so I took my leave. The night following he had an interesting conversation with his wife in which he humbly asked her forgiveness for all the trouble and distress he had caused her, and from that time he manifested a deep repentance for having been so unkind to her.

I was obliged to be away for about fifteen days during which time R——— suffered very much through an abscess which formed in his head, but he showed much patience and submission. One night he found himself so ill that his wife believed he was dying, and being still between hope and fear as to his state she said, "My dear husband, are you ready to go into eternity?"

Turning toward her with a calm look he replied in a firm tone of voice, "Do not fear my dear wife I know that my Saviour is in the glory."

It was about this time that a very religious person visited R———. During their conversation the visitor exhorted the sick man to come to the foot of the cross and find peace and pardon, citing a verse in the song of Solomon which expressed the same thought, adding, "Yes, it is at the cross we will find a Saviour who loves us."

"Well sir," replied R———, "my Saviour is not upon the cross but upon the throne of the Father, at the right hand of God because He has accomplished on the cross a perfect work in suffering and dying for us poor sinners and that is what gives me all my

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happiness and peace." The astonished visitor shortly after retired.

Some months passed during which I often visited R——, other Christians of our town also came to see him. It was joy to him to be in the company of God's children whom in the past he had so much hated. He delighted to hear them speak of Jesus.

One day he had them call me early and said, "I had always hoped for sufficient strength to enable me to go at least once to the meeting with my dear wife to show the world that I think differently now from what I did when I was in good health, but I see that I must give it up, yet I must ask a favour of you and that is that you will come with some other children of God about my bed for prayer and thanksgiving together to the Lord and to sing a hymn to Him."

At two o'clock in the afternoon we assembled according to his desire about his bed. We were a dozen Christians in the little room. He indicated the hymn he wished sung beginning,

"Whom have I Lord but Thee."

We then returned thanks to the Lord and prayed for the family of the sick man. Then we read Rom. viii. from verse 28 to the end and seeing that our friend appeared very feeble we thought best to retire, but R—— making a sign to me, said, "One more hymn;" and we sang again and then retired, each passing near his bed to touch his hand and say "good bye." When it came to my turn, emotion choked his voice, but drawing me towards him he embraced me

and stretched his emaciated hand towards heaven as though to say "we shall meet again above." And indeed so it proved to be our last meeting here.

When all had left, his wife came to him, and feeling her near he said, "I feel the need of something my dear, will you make me a cup of coffee, but before you go arrange my pillow."

She did as requested, kissed him and left to make the coffee. When she had lighted the fire she thought she heard his voice, and returned quickly to him. She found him just as she had left him only she noticed that his eyes were slightly open and turned and that her quick entrance had not produced any movement. She approached and touched him, but R——— was no more. His spirit had quitted his body and taken its flight to his much loved Saviour and Lord in whom was all his trust, "Absent from the body present with the Lord."

May the Lord, dear reader, bless this simple recital to your soul. You see here the ways of pity and of grace. If you are not yet converted may it serve to show you the way of salvation, may it be a voice to you from the Lord, "And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

The cross is the centre of the universe, according to God, the basis of our salvation and our glory, and the brightest manifestation of God's own glory, the centre of the history of eternity.

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A VOICE FROM THE DEAD!

IT is untrue as sometimes stated that "no one has returned from the dead to tell us what is there." Not only has Christ risen from among the dead, but we have the conversation between two there, related by Him who is God and man and never erred, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." In Luke xvi. 19—31, there is the narrative of the life and state of two persons, and their state after death; one in *comfort* and the other in *torment*! This awful wail from hades should cause the sinner to tremble! It is not stated to be a parable. Compare Luke xv. 3, xvi. 1, xviii. 1, xix. 2—11. It is a divine revelation, and men "are without excuse" if they discredit it. Some, while admitting its genuineness, reject it as unreal; but would they seek to convict the Lord Jesus of using a mere fable to frighten people? Nay, this is no myth but sober truth, a terrible reality, and those who take warning and act accordingly are wise. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke xiii. 3—5.) "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," (Gal. vi. 7). It is on earth repentance is pressed. Remorse in hell, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," is of no avail.

This rich man who "fared sumptuously every day" on earth is now wrapped in the burning flame of hades, but he does not mention Satan's wicked fable

of the "wider hope." Perhaps he had a faint hope of a little water for his parching tongue when he saw "Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom," but even this was impossible; the state of both was unchangeable as the "great gulf fixed" between them was impassible--no connection between the two places! Awful possible separation of those who may be the closest friends in life!

Finding no hope for himself, he thinks of his brethren in his father's house. He is anxious that they should escape "this place of torment," but the answer is, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." Here we learn the importance of "the Scripture of truth." "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." He thought they would repent "if one went unto them from the dead," but he was mistaken. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

But after all, One has risen from the dead, and from his position on high has sent down a Saviour's message to the lost on earth; yet is the world persuaded? The "many" are still on the broad way, and the "few" on the narrow way, (Matt. vii. 13, 14.

He says "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death," (Rev. i. 18). And now is preached "unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," "the gospel of your salvation," (I Pet. i. 12, Eph. i. 13). The atonement of Christ is available before God for "the whole world," (I John ii. 2),

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but not for those in hades or hell! There is no hint in Scripture of hope for the wicked *dead*, but a *positive statement against it*: "He that believeth not the Son shall *not see life*; but *the wrath of God abideth on him*" (John iii. 36). Faith in Christ and His finished work, in His precious blood shed on Calvary is the only, but *certain* shelter from the awful doom of the wicked. But this is only for the wicked *living*, and *now*. After death is judgment, the abiding wrath of God!

Hark then, dear reader to the following message and believe it: "There is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," (Rom. iii. 22 and 23). "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.) "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, etc." (Heb. ix. 27 and 28). "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (Christ risen) 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 xiii. 38 and 39). "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." (I Tim. i. 15.) Also, "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21). For "neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name

under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts xvi. 31). "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation" (Heb. ii. 3.) "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold *now* is the day of salvation" (II Cor. vi. 2).

"The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

GOD'S TIME IS NOW.

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." - (II Cor. vi. 2.)

"I must wait God's time to be saved," say some.

GOD'S TIME IS NOW!!

Yes an ever-present "now." To-morrow may be too late. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."—(Prov. xxvii. 1.)

Every tick of the clock,
Every beat of your pulse,
Every breath that you draw,

brings you nearer, *nearer*, and NEARER, and NEARER still, to

ETERNITY!

Where would you spend it if you were to die at this moment?

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In heaven, or in hell?
With Christ, or with Satan?

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"CAUGHT AWAY, OR LEFT BEHIND."

I THESS. IV. II THESS. II.

THESE are the words by which God is pleased to describe the condition of all who shall be alive when the Lord comes; for there will be a people positively alive on earth, some of whom shall be caught up or rapt away to meet the Lord in the air, and some of whom shall be left behind, to be deceived and destroyed, to believe a lie because they would not receive the love of the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness: words fail to describe the blessedness of the one or the terrible nature of the other.

In the fourth chapter of first Thess. we are told the order of the first, viz., the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His own. This might happen *at any moment*, at most a little while, and "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Reader, I challenge your heart, are you ready? Can you say in truthfulness and honesty of soul, "Come Lord Jesus?" I feel this is a searching matter for a Christian, and it ought to be; but if one, whose *title* is clear to say it, hesitates before using such words, with what a chill ought they to fall on the ears of the one who is not ready, and has no title whatever. When the Lord comes and takes away His own, the rest are left behind. What a thought that? To survive all that is worth living for is terrible indeed. To be an inhabitant of the world when Satan is allowed to put

forth his man in unrestrained power will be the lot of all in Christendom who are found out of Christ when He comes for His own. Listen to what is said of Satan's man, "whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." Reader, should Christ come now what would be your lot, your portion? Listen to what is said of the end of such: "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." The blessed contrast is in those who have believed the gospel, the good news of God about His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and who, in consequence, are entitled to look for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, His coming, and our gathering together unto Him. It is said of the Thessalonian saints, that they "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven." Reader, have you?

ETERNITY—WHERE?

"In outer darkness,"*—Lord, the words are Thine,
 This must my dwelling place forever be;
 Or else "with Thee,"† in glory's light Divine,
 —There is no twilight in Eternity.—

* Matt. xxii. 13.

† John xvii. 24.