

The Sower

A GOSPEL MAGAZINE.

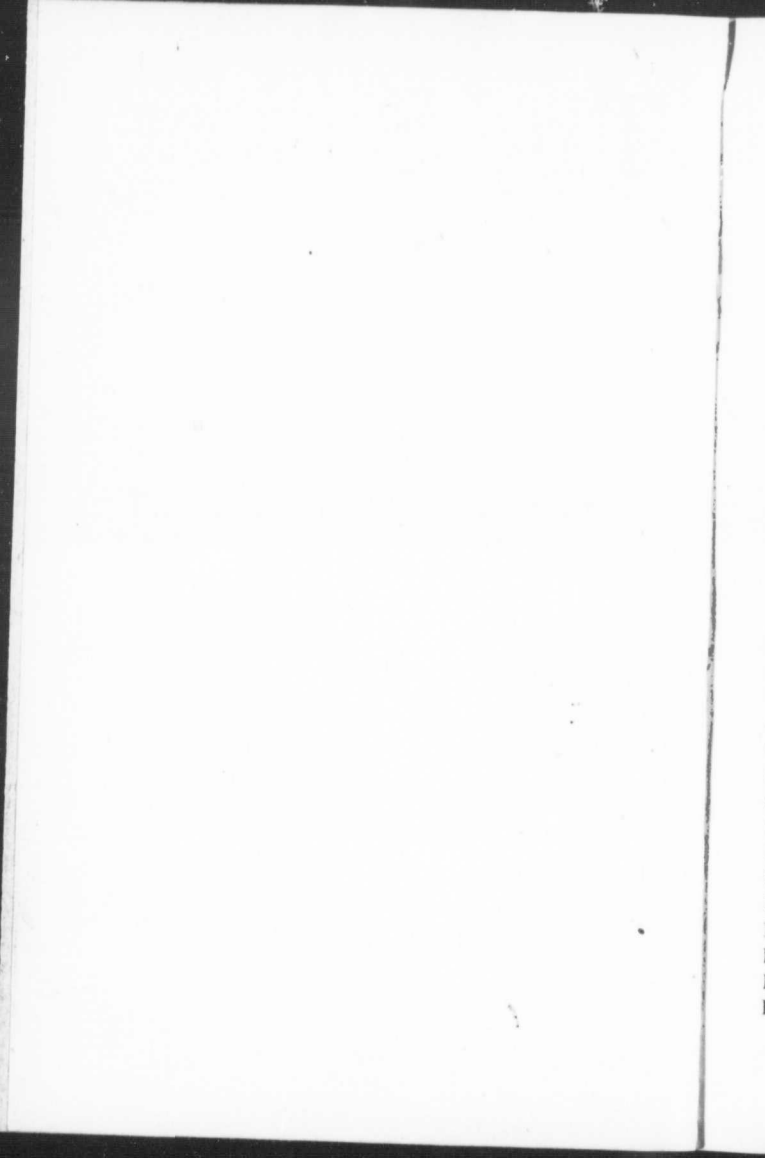
VOL. II.

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In the morning sow thy seed,
And in the evening withhold not thy hand:
For thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that
Or whether they both shall be alike good.

Eccl. xi. 6.

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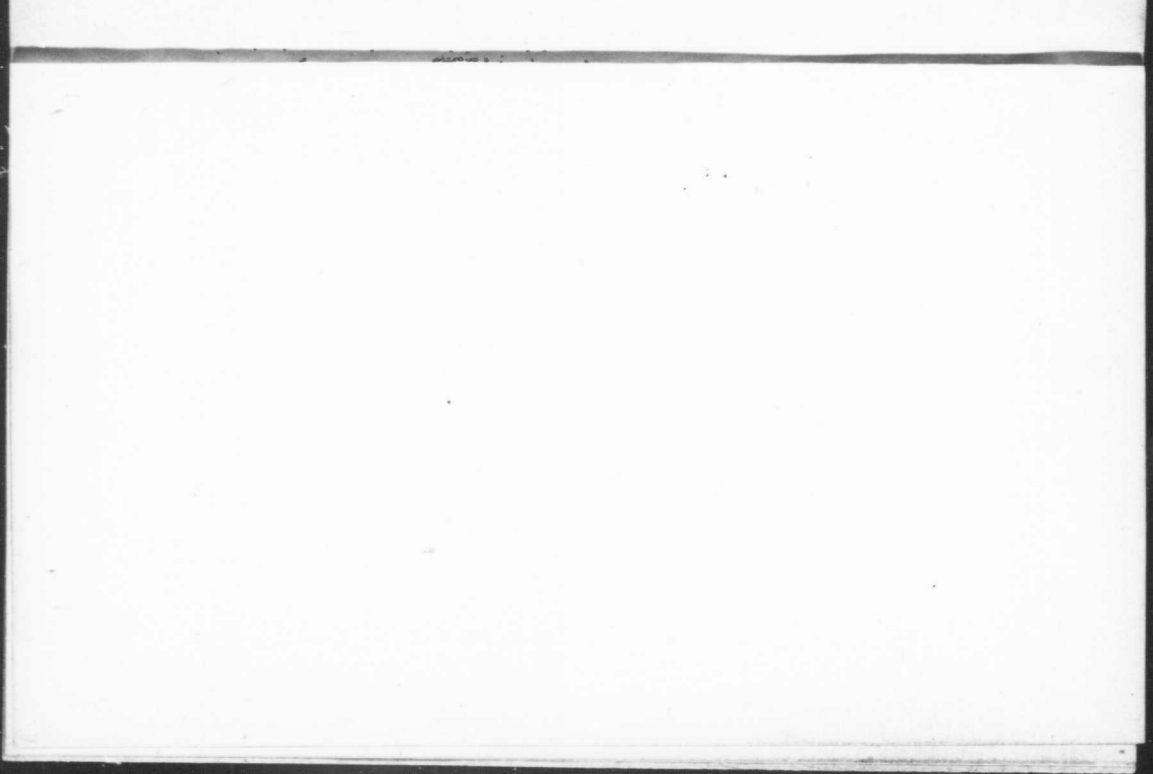
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THE SOWER.

THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE.

I see a Man at God's right hand,
Upon the throne of God,
And there in seven-fold light I see
The seven-fold sprinkled blood,
I look upon that glorious Man,
On that blood-sprinkled throne ;
I know that He sits there for me,
That glory is my own.

The heart of God flows forth in love,
A deep eternal stream ;
Through that beloved Son it flows
To me as unto Him.

And looking on His face, I know—
Weak, worthless, though I be—
How deep, how measureless, how sweet,
That love of God to me.

How deep, how full, the joy of Him
Who sits upon the throne !
The joy the gladness of His heart,
In calling me His own.

And He has sent me forth to tell
Of all that joy above,
The glories where in Him I dwell,
The greatness of His love.

Not of the joy His ransomed know
Within that bright abode,
But, all *His* heart's desire fulfill'd,
The endless joy of God.

The joy with which the righteous One
Can call, with hands outspread,
And welcome to His heart of love,
The lost, the vile, the dead.

"APPROPRIATION ;"

A DEAR child was sorely troubled, for many a day, with this question, "How am I to know that Christ died for *me*?" He knew a great deal of truth. He was, intellectually, so clear and well instructed as to be able to detect any false statement, in a tract or lecture. He was intimately acquainted with the plan of salvation, and much interested in the subject of religion, generally. But he had no personal enjoyment of Christ. He could not see his own interest in Christ. His grand and constant difficulty was embodied in the question. "How am I to know that Christ died for *me*?"

However, it pleased the Lord, at length, to make use of a very simple incident to answer this dear child's absorbing question. He was sitting beside me in my room, conversing about the matter of his salvation. He told me he felt assured that Christ died for sinners, but that he could not see how he was to appropriate Christ to himself. There was a railway time table on the wall; and at the bottom of the table appeared the following statement. "Children under six years of age travel free." I called his attention to those words and simply said to him, "Now, if you were a child under six years, would you have any difficulty in appropriating or applying that statement to yourself? Would it not rather be a difficulty, yea an impossibility, not to apply it. Before you can refuse the application, you must prove yourself to be

over six years of age. To *any* child under six years of age, the statement applies with as much force as though he were the only child in the world. True, you do not see your own name given in the statement; and even though your name were there, it would not help you in the matter of appropriation, inasmuch as if there were any other child of the same name, the question would be involved in hopeless uncertainty. But when you see your age, your state, your condition, you can have no further difficulty, you may refuse to take your seat, but you cannot refuse the application of the offer.

And now to apply this illustration. I read in the first chapter of first Timothy, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*." Are you a sinner? "Oh! *yeē*;" said he, "that I am in truth." "Well, if you are, in heart and conscience, on the ground of a lost sinner, then did Christ come to save you, just as much as if you were the only sinner in the world. You must prove yourself to be not a sinner, before you can refuse the application of the gospel message. The gospel applies itself, it is for you to believe and rejoice in the application."

The Spirit of God blessed the illustration. The simple truth of the gospel flashed like a sunbeam on the mind of the child, and he was enabled to kneel at my side and thank God that he now knew what he had so long desired to know, that Christ died for him. It was a clear, decided, unmistakable case. Speaking to a friend, shortly after, he said, "Do you

know that all the devils in hell could not shake my faith, now?" "Indeed," said the friend, amazed at this bold decision on the part of one who had suffered so much from doubts and fears, "How is that?" "BECAUSE IT IS FOUNDED ON THE WORD OF GOD." Blessed foundation! Not on feeling, not on reason, not on imagination, not on assumption, but simply on the word of God. This is enough. "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; He was buried, and rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

May the Lord bless this simple incident to many an anxious soul, and His name shall have all the glory,

THE LOSS OF THE KENT.

"ONE young gentlemen," writes Major McGregor, having calmly asked my opinion of the state of the ship, I told him that I thought we should be prepared to sleep that night in eternity; and I shall never forget the peculiar fervor with which he replied, as he pressed my hand in his, "My heart is filled with the peace of God!" Comment would only mar such beautiful testimony to the blessedness of believing in Jesus. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee." (Is. xxiv, 3).

May these words, dear reader, resound in your heart, as echoes of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, that you may find rest to your soul, and

In living or in dying,
All shall be well.

HOW MEN OPPOSE CHRISTIANITY & WHY.

THE love of objections is one of the worst moral features possible. It is quite right to weigh them, and see that one is well founded in what the soul builds on. But there is moral proof in the power of an object to produce (where the soul is capable of feeling) affections which are the moral reflex, in a rightly constituted mind, of the object itself, and which are thus the proof of power, because the fruit of power. Now where this is the case, the love of objections is only the proof of insensibility to the power which attracts and fixes the soul. It is moral incapacity to estimate what is excellent. The qualities displayed in the object do not convince and silence cavil. Why? Because the heart is incapable of estimating, by its own sentiments, these qualities; perhaps it does not like their superiority. This is infidelity.

There is another thing . . . that when the object is known and valued, the moral aim of the infidel is judged. "Their device is only to pull him down whom thou wouldest exalt." The sagacity, and here the spiritual sagacity, of affection easily detects this "Give God the praise!" The modern compliment of infidels also, "As for this man, we know that he is a sinner," will not hide it. There is a kind of reasoning which flows from being the subject of power, which infidel Pharisees cannot reach. Theirs only creates astonishment, by its evident nonsense, to the simple mind who knows the power. "Why herein is a wonderful thing, that ye know not who He is, yet He hath opened my eyes." There is no mistake then.

The sceptic may ask, "What has this to do with scripture, or an historical document?" *He* is found there. No doubt the sceptic has not found Him there; he does not know Him. He says, indeed, to the evangelical—imitating language he has heard—that he has tried both; he has a double experience—the believer's and the infidel's. But this is poor imitation (of what converted persons, who have come to the knowledge of Christ, have said) is too miserably transparent to be anything but the shame of him who uses it. What did he experience at the first? The effect, on his own shewing, of believing a lie—of supposing true what had no existence in truth. "A deceived heart hath turned him aside: he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?" Let not the language seem hard. The sceptic declares it is a lie; and that Jesus is not the Messiah. What was his first experience? "To any 'evangelical' I have a right to say, that while he has a *single*, I have a double experience." Now how can he tell what the effects, "the spiritual fruits," of a living knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ are, since he does not believe there is such a person at all? His only past experience was, as he avows, a wholly false one: I ever hope it may not have been. "Spiritual fruits," in his case, are not those of the true knowledge in power of the Lord Jesus. He never had such; for if he really knew Jesus to be the Son of God, it was and must have been because He was so—if He was so, He is so. Now the sceptic declares it is, and hence was, all a delusion. His "spiritual fruits" were the fruits of a delusion, of believing in an imposture. Think of a person coolly speaking of this in his own case! To what a state of moral reasoning, of moral susceptibilities, must he be reduced!

PEACE AT LAST.

A NOBLE-LOOKING soldier lay in the ward of a military hospital. "I want to speak to you about religion," he said, as I stood by his bedside. "I have made up my mind," he continued, "with an earnest resolution, to serve God and do my duty—not with the feeble resolution of a boy but with man's determined purpose, that henceforth I will do right." At some length he told me what he was going to do; he spoke about his vows, his purposes, his plans. All was about himself, not one word about Christ the Saviour.

Having listened to him quietly, I said at last, "Then you are at peace, my friend."

"Oh no," he said, "my agony of mind only increases."

"Why so? Have you not kept your vows?"

"No, I cannot," he answered despairingly.

"Had you not better then try again? or can you think of no way of making up the account?"

He shook his head hopelessly and said, "I know not what to do."

"My friend," I replied, "stop your vowing. Satan has enticed you on to one of his quicksands, where you are fast sinking down to hell. Your house is on the sand. You cannot be your own Saviour. Listen to God's way of saving sinners. Jesus Christ—God manifest in the flesh—came into the world to *save sinners*, not to *help* them to save themselves. His work was finished on the cross over eighteen hundred

years ago, and He has left you nothing to do but to receive by faith the benefit of what He has done. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (John iii, 36; Acts xvi. 31.

"But must I not do something?" he asked. "Can I believe on Christ and become a child of God, and to-morrow go back to the world and live like the other soldiers?"

"God forbid," I cried. "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" When you become a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus, God gives you the nature, the heart of a Child, and the Holy Spirit to dwell in you, so that you no longer love the sins you once delighted in; and you have the power of the Spirit to resist the flesh, your old nature."

After some other questions and answers, the Lord gave him to see, not only that he was a lost sinner, but that Christ had borne the judgment of sin on the cross, and that all who believed in Him were saved. Still his mind was not clear, for, though he lost confidence in vows and resolutions, the enemy had thrown him on his feelings.

"Must I not have happy feelings," he said—as thousands say—"before I know that I am happy?"

"No," said I, "On the contrary, you must believe before you can possibly feel happy. Peace comes from believing, and not believing from peace. You are to believe *simply because God says so*, and not because you feel happy. Were happy frames and feelings the foundation of your faith, you would drift about at their mercy. But God's word is a rock that

cannot be moved. It is when we are dwelling, neither on our feelings, nor our faith, but on the *object* of faith, Christ Jesus, that we are brought into peace and joy."

It was now evident that the Holy Spirit had led him to the Saviour, though he still inclined to look into his own heart for happy feelings. This led to the close of our conversation.

"Do you believe the testimony of God concerning Christ?" This is the question, and not the evidence of happy feelings. These are changeable as the wind. Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and that God gave Him to be the Saviour of the world—the great propitiation for our sins? Take your thoughts completely off yourself, and look to Jesus. Do you believe in Him?

Now he answered earnestly, "With all my heart I do."

The Lord's name be praised—to Him alone be all the glory. And now, "Can you believe what God says concerning them that have this faith?"

"What is it?" he asked eagerly.

"He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." "He that believeth hath everlasting life." And observe, my friend, it is not *can* have, *may* have, or *shall* have, but *hath* everlasting life. When we believe in Jesus, and surrender the heart to Him, we have perfect peace, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. What a salvation! Full pardon, everlasting life, peace with God, and only waiting for glory. In parting, I said to him, "May I not leave you now with the happy assurance that you know, on God's testimony, that you have eternal life as a present possession?"

After a pause, he raised his eyes and said, with deep feeling, "Yes, you may. I have eternal life through faith in Jesus."

TIME AND ETERNITY.

I HAVE read of a man who was brought to the knowledge of the Lord by reading the fifth chapter of Genesis. Perhaps you may not see much converting power in that chapter for it largely consists of a list of names of men that lived before the flood with a general sameness in each of these little biographies, but what struck him was the fact that notwithstanding the great ages to which they attained—one of them living 930 years, another 912 years, a third 910 years, a fourth 895 years, and in one case 969 years—yet it is said regarding every one of them except one, "*And he died.*" while regarding the exceptional, it is recorded that "he walked with God, and was not, for God took him." The thought that impressed itself upon the mind of the man was this, that if men who lived for centuries, all died at last, excepting the one who was taken to heaven, then no lapse of time can save us from death and so it is well to be prepared.

What do you think of this man? Was he a wise man or a fool? God says, "It is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment." (Heb. ix, 27). And this man believed Him. The solemn truth that death was the appointed doom of man was brought home to his conscience by the case of the antediluvians, and so he bowed the knee and thankfully accepted the salvation of Christ. Now I

again ask you if he was a wise man or a fool for so doing, and trust that you will agree with me in thinking he acted wisely.

Turning from the case of the antediluvians to that of our own times let us see what the word says upon that. In the first place it lets us know that immediately after the flood the limit of human life began to contract, first coming down to 600 years, then to 438, then to 239, and then it tells us that Abraham died "in a good old age, an old man and full of years," although he was only 175! But in the days of Moses it was sunk still lower, for then we read, "The days of our years are three score years and ten and if by reason of strength they are four score years, yet is their strength, labor and sorrow." (Ps. xc, 10). And there it has remained ever since. A few may go beyond these narrow limits but the mass die much younger, so that the average life of man only amounts to $33\frac{1}{2}$ years, the number of years which the Saviour saw betwixt the manger and the cross. What a little span! Dear reader are you living for it, or do your thoughts stretch forth to the eternity that lies beyond? For an intelligent being to live in a world full of suffering for a possible chance of enjoying it, as men say for 70 or 80 years, and a far greater likelihood of dying much sooner, while at the same time he is neglecting eternity, argues the most singular want of intelligence that can be conceived.

The lapse of time and rivers, says the poet, is the same. The rivers flow steadily on their downward course and no wealth can bribe them, or prayers per-

suade them to stay ; when their waters are past you cannot recall them, and the whole of them are finally engulfed in the ocean. It is the same with time. It rolls its ceaseless course, and all endeavours to stop it are unavailing. Its precious moments when once they are gone can never be recalled, and ere long, all of them are engulfed in the ocean of eternity. And this restless stream, which cannot be delayed far less stopt, is bearing us all steadily onwards to that great ocean, that illimitable, vast eternity. Eternity ! What a contrast to that little driblet of time which is spoken of as "the days of our years." that petty, yet most important span of three score years and ten, or it may be of four score years. Nay, what a contrast even to the years of a Methusalah. Withdraw three score and ten drops of water from the Atlantic, would that great ocean be diminished ? Take away 969 drops, would the difference be perceived ? If Methusalah had known that he was to live so long as he did and yet had made up his mind to live for time and neglect eternity, would he have acted wisely ? I am sure of this that none would regret it *now* more sincerely than he would, for he has been in eternity for upwards of 5000 years. But suppose that you, my dear unsaved reader were to follow his example and, putting aside all thoughts of eternity, were to occupy yourself exclusively with the thoughts of time, and that although the allotted span is not nine centuries but seventy years, would that be a proof of wisdom ?

A child being asked the question "What is eternity ?" answered and said, "It is the lifetime of God." "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." The lifetime of God ! Our lifetime is but a little span of three score years and ten. He is "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth

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eternity whose name is holy." (Isa. lvii, 15). Verily His is a long lifetime. The mind fails to grasp it. It is the ages of ages, it is perpetual, never ending duration, it is forever, and forever, and forever. How happy is the lot of the man to whom it can be truly said, "The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." Can we then, when our brief term on earth has run its course, can we secure an interest in the eternal inheritance, a dwelling place with God? That some can is plainly taught in the word, for therein we find it written, "And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be with them, *and be* their God: and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things have passed away." (Rev. xxi, 3, 4). But how can this be done? The word tells us "many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and *that believing* ye might have life through His name." (John xx, 30, 31). But can we attain to certainty in this all important matter? Yes, this certainty is the happy lot of all who have the full assurance of faith for it is written, "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 and, that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." (I John v, 13).

Unsaved reader, a parting word with you, where will you spend eternity? Enter it you must, as must all of us but what place in it will be your destination? Oh the heart sinks and the blood runs cold at the thought of the fate that awaits the Christless soul.

THE RESURRECTION GIVES ASSURANCE.

IT is a solemn fact, that judgment is hanging over this world, for the rejection of the salvation that is offered in the death of Christ. "For this is the condemnation that men loved darkness rather than light." And what is still more solemn is that men are being deceived by Satan, and in turn are deceiving one another. (II Tim. iii, 13).

Are you, unsaved reader, being deceived? God has given *assurance* that this world is to be judged, "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given *assurance* unto *all* men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." (Acts xvii, 31). Did you ever think what the raising of that blessed One from the dead, means for this world of rejectors. It means that He, the One, who was put on the cross is to be judge, and God has given you and myself *assurance* thereof, in that He has been raised from the dead.

How are you to escape this judgment? How be righteously shielded from the effects of it? There is one way, and that is indicated in God's word and only there. "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* (or *judgment*); but is passed from death unto life." (Jno. v, 24). Thank God he has provided a way of escape in His Son.

“He that heareth my word;” His word is that “the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke xix, 10). Dear reader, if unsaved you are lost, for “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. iii, 23). That means you and I have sinned and if not sheltered by the blood of the Lamb, lost and condemned already. (John iii, 18). Now the Son of man came not only to save, but in His love goes and seeks the sinner and then saves him. You have heard His word, and the word says that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John iii, 16).

Do you believe in him? if so you shall not come into judgment but have passed from death unto life.

The *assurance*, that one who believes will not come into judgment is because God judged His Son on the cross and He suffered for the sins of all who believe in Him. He was also buried but rose again, and we who believe are justified thereby. So surely as His resurrection gives us assurance that we are justified, so it does that He is going to judge this world of rejectors.

As assurance that He is risen, read I Cor. xv, 1-8, there it is said He was seen several times after His resurrection, also read, Acts vii, 56, there one sees the Son of man in the glory.

I would again ask you are you being deceived? as long as you delay the salvation of your soul you are

being deceived. Think what it will be to delay too long, (and this may be the last time the gospel will be put before you). If you delay it may mean that you are to be judged by that One at God's right hand in the glory.

Remember God is not mocked, if you reject now you will have to spend an eternity of woe.

Just think after a thousand years of torment have passed, you will be no nearer the end than when first cast into the lake of fire; but will be tormented forever and ever, day and night. But to-day there is mercy if you will believe. "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). You are either one of those who believe on the Son or one who do not believe. There is no middle class, you are either sheltered by the blood or the wrath of God abideth on you. Did you ever try and think what God's wrath is. You cannot begin to think what God's wrath is, but you will know what it is if you reject Him and are cast into the lake of fire.

Then you will wish for mercy but you will be there not to receive mercy but to be tormented FOREVER and EVER.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you he that believeth on Me HATH everlasting life." (John vi, 4-7).