

LIFE,

AND

How God gives it.

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NEWPORT (MON.), ENGLAND:

STOW HILL BIBLE AND TRACT DEPOT.

LONDON : 15, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

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LIFE, AND HOW GOD GIVES IT.

LIFE has its source in God. It reaches man in the Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God*. The same was in the beginning with God. . . . In *him was life*, and the life was the light of men" (John i. 1-4). But though the light shineth in darkness, the darkness comprehended it not (John i. 5).

A man sent from God, whose name was John, came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that *all* men through Him *might believe* (John i. 7). The One he bore witness of is *the true Light* (John i. 9).

But men, loving darkness rather than light, refused God's Son and put Him to death. God has overruled man's wickedness in order to carry out His purpose of love towards the world who refused and crucified

Him. The very death of Christ, which filled man's cup of iniquity to the full, has become the channel for the outflow of God's great love to the world, so that the believer might be delivered from the state of death in which he was lying, and *have eternal life*.

This is plainly set forth in our Lord's own words to Nicodemus, "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 everlasting 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* (John iii. 14-16).

Lifted up on the cross, the Son of man was made sin. There the judgment fell upon the holy sin-bearer once for all. The glory of God was thus vindicated, the claims of His holiness maintained, and

His justice fully met by the holy and unblemished Lamb of His own providing. And He is now presented to all as the object of faith, "*that whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God having been glorified in the lifting up of His Son, gives eternal life as His own free gift to every one that believeth. It is no question here of forgiveness, but of eternal life. It is blessedly true that God freely forgives every sinner who believes, on the ground of the finished work of Christ. But here is a blessing immensely beyond even that. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is *eternal life* in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23).

Now, Christ received the wages of *sin*. Not only did He die for our sins according to the scriptures (1 Cor. xv. 3), but He was *made sin*. Sin is the root principle of all the mischief, and of all the guilt that

we have incurred. And He, blessed be His name, came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. "Behold," said John, "the Lamb of God which taketh (or beareth) away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). He has borne its judgment on the cross, received its wages in death, and put it away once and for ever from under the eye of God. And finally, through His sacrifice, at the close of all things it shall be removed for ever from the whole scene, and death and hell (or hades) cast into the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 14).

And Christ, the Son of man, having wrought this wondrous work, for God's glory, *whosoever* believeth in Him shall not perish, but have *eternal life*. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." The source of this immense blessing is the love of God. God is love, and His love has flowed out to the world. To form a true idea

of its fulness and depth one must be able rightly to estimate the gift. God so loved the world, that He *gave* His Son, His only-begotten. Thanks, thanks be unto Him for His unspeakable gift. (See also, John v. 24 ; vi. 47.)

Thus we get the foundation of the blessing ministered to every one that believeth presented from a double standpoint, the lifting up of the Son of man, and the love of God displayed in the gift of His Son. The precious world-wide word "whosoever," immediately follows. "*Whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." For nearly nineteen centuries God has been bestowing this inestimable gift. Have *you* received it?

"All who in His name believe,
Everlasting life receive ;
Lord of all is Jesus now,
Every knee to Him must bow."

We have also the further testimony of the Holy Ghost in the first Epistle

of John, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater" (1 John i. 9). How readily we believe the witness of our fellows in things relating to this life; yet their testimony is often far from being reliable. How much rather may we rest on the witness of Him who cannot lie! (Titus i. 2). What is His witness? "This is the witness of God which he hath *testified of his Son*. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar." Why? Because he believeth not *the record that God gave of His Son*.

Mark well, dear reader, how this rich blessing is connected with God's Son. There we are told what the record is: "This is the record that God *hath given to us* eternal life, and *this life is in his Son*." The following verse, in language which is simplicity itself, tells us how we get the blessing: "He that *hath the Son*

hath life." On the other hand, "He that hath not the Son of God hath not life." All depends upon whether we believe on the Son whom God gave, whether we have Him. He that *hath the Son* hath life. "These things have I written," continues the apostle, "unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know" (not think, or hope), but know "that ye have eternal life" (1 John v. 13). Have you received God's gift in the Son, *eternal life*? Do you *know*?

Moreover, having received it as His great gift, God desires that we should lay hold of that which is really life, and enjoy it, whilst we wait for its full fruition in eternal glory.