

THE SOWER.

LORD, in the trophies of Thy grace,
Many a gem will shine ;
Revealing, in Thy lustrous love,
Depths from earth's darkest mine.

Thy Spirit works in wondrous nooks
Of unbelief and sin,
And Thou hast bowed o'er hell's dread brink
Thy priceless pearl to win.

We praise Thee that Thy work's the same,
Whether the light may shine
On hearts grown hard in Satan's ways,
Or those men call divine.

Thy blood can cleanse from every sin ;
Thy heart present each one
Spotless and faultless in Thy sight
When Thy blest work is done.

We cannot measure all Thy power,
We limit not Thy grace,
We only ask that hearts may bow
Before Thee, face to face.

SIN PARDONED BY JESUS CHRIST.

How encouraging are the invitations in the bible to come to Jesus and be saved! We read of some who came, who doubted His willingness, but believed in His power; of another who doubted His power, but reposed in His willingness. We read of some who asked earnestly, and of others who never uttered a word, but only touched the hem of His garment. We read of the bruised reed, the smoking flax, the little faith, and the strong. Yet all had their need supplied, none were sent away. And what do all these varied and expressive figures teach us? Just this,—that it was not the way in which they came that was of any moment; it was that they came, and they came to Jesus. Their believing was not what it ought to have been; their asking was not what it ought to have been; all was faulty, yet Jesus sent none away.

Yet how often do we hear people say, "I am afraid I have not come, or believed, or asked, as I ought!" This is quite true, and all is faulty; but it is not your coming rightly, or believing rightly, or asking rightly, that saves you. It is Jesus—Jesus only. You are making a saviour of these instead of Christ. The Lord says, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." Look not at these, but at Christ, and believe. "Only believe."

But you say, "I do believe; yet I cannot feel that all my sins are forgiven, and that I have eternal

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life." Now you are making a saviour of your feelings. You would believe what God says if you could only feel. Does not this show that you do not believe? The Lord Jesus does not say, "If you feel it, you have everlasting life," but, "if you believe." Here is your stumbling-block; you do not believe Him. If you would only believe first, you would feel afterwards; this is God's way. You want to feel first, and then you will believe, this is your own way. You will never have peace till you reverse the order. "Only believe."

"But I cannot believe that I have now eternal life, because I have been, and I am, such a sinner." "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." It is just because you are a sinner that He died for you. Your sinfulness is your title to the Saviour's mercy. * You could have no claim whatever to eternal life if you were not what you are—a sinner. Perhaps you think within yourself, "Well, if I were only better than I am, I could believe." You would believe if you were better. You would be more pleased with yourself if you were better. Is not this self-righteousness? God's desire is to make you displeased with yourself, in order that, looking away from yourself to Jesus, you may be pleased only with Him. "Only believe."

"But my faith, my prayers, my love, my holiness, —how cold, how sinful, how dead they are!" You wish you were better, don't you?

Now honestly ask your own heart, why do you wish this? "Why, if they were better I should be

more satisfied with myself." Oh, what self-righteousness! God's design all through life is to make you dissatisfied with yourself, and more satisfied with Christ and His work for you. It is this ever-deepening sense of your own sinfulness alone, that will drive you out of yourself to look at Jesus. The more sinful you see yourself to be, the more precious will Christ appear; the less precious Christ appears, the more will you become satisfied with yourself. Look to Jesus.

Perhaps you say in despair, "What an I to do? I have no peace." Do nothing; only believe that Christ has done all. He has done the work of salvation, and done it for you. "Only believe." A father sends a letter full of good news to his child. What will make the child glad and happy? Simply believing it. God the Father has sent you a message—"He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." What will make you glad and happy? Simply believing it. Salvation does not consist in feeling certain influences on the soul, but in believing the Spirit's testimony of Christ in the word of God. It is the Spirit of God showing to the soul the Lord Jesus and His finished work.

But is it not presumptuous for any man to say that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from every sin;" to say, in other words, that he stands before God free from every charge of sin? A man is not called presumptuous because, when God tells him that the world was drowned by the flood, he believes it: and yet if a man, on the same testimony, believes that he has the pardon of his sins, and

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acknowledges it, he is called presumptuous. Is not this inconsistent?

In both cases it is simply the testimony of God's word. Only believe that testimony, and you have eternal life. Remember, however, this is no mere head knowledge. Thousands there are all around you who have this intellectual belief, and are still unbelievers. "The devils believe and tremble," and their intellectual belief makes them no better. It is the work of the Spirit of God—of Him only. He goes before the Lord in every case of real conversion to God, to prepare His way. He first makes a heart dissatisfied with itself. He creates a desire to come to Jesus, to believe in Jesus, to pray to Him, and to strive after salvation. Then He makes the heart dissatisfied with its coming, its believing, its praying, and its striving, until it sees no goodness in any of these things. Thus does the Spirit of God take from under the soul every prop on which it would lean. Then He presents Jesus to it—His finished work for it, His righteousness to cover it, His love to preserve it to the end; and all this without anything in the sinner to merit. Thus, by turning the eye away from itself to Jesus, does He bring peace to the soul. And the first words as well as the last, which the Spirit of God utters to that soul, the echo of which is to ring in its ears forever, are, "Look off from yourself unto Jesus—Jesus only."

Reader have you received Him? (John i. 12-13). If so you are a son of God, and if a son, an heir. Surely, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.

THE WAY OF LIFE.

A short time back I was requested to see a poor woman, who was said to be dying. When I spoke to her respecting her hope of eternity, her answer was, "I think it will be all right with me; I am doing the best I can."

I replied, "If this be your state, I am very sorry, because I am sure it will be all wrong; for if you leave this world doing the best you can, you will most surely perish—there is no hope for you. But if you rest in what another has done, even the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who left His throne in heaven, to come upon earth and die in your stead, you will be saved, and as safe as God Himself can make you (John iii. 16). There is not one promise in all God's word for those who are doing the best they can, but quite the contrary. For as long as we think we can do anything in any way toward our salvation, we are rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ, and turning our back upon what He has done, as if His blood did not cleanse from all sin and as though He had not fully paid the debt we owed, and therefore not satisfying God. This is to disbelieve God, who had raised Him from the dead, setting Him at His own right hand, and telling us in His word how pleased and satisfied He is with what His Son has done, and is now offering forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who feel their need of it; and though you may have come to your last hours with all your sins upon you, the precious blood of Christ can make you clean

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in God's presence—whiter than snow—meet to dwell with him in everlasting glory (Rev. i. 5). But it is very sad and sorrowful for any one to leave these things till they come to their last hours. Few there are who receive the blessedness of salvation at such a time."

And in this case it was with great difficulty that the poor woman was made to understand that she had nothing to do, that the work of salvation was already done by another, and He, the only One who could do it, the only man who was without sin—the man Christ Jesus, who offered Himself without spot to God. This He did on the cross, where He bore the judgment which was due to us. He was condemned, and died in our stead, but is alive again for evermore, having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and now God is waiting with open arms to receive all who come unto Him by Jesus Christ, however vile they may have been; and those who come He will in nowise cast out.

I am sorry to say that this class of individuals who are doing the best they can, is a very large class, they are to be found everywhere, and it is very difficult to shew them that they are without strength, and can do nothing, but must be saved wholly through what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for them, without any goodness of their own in any way whatever. Should my reader be one of such, let me tell you, that you are making a great mistake—you are on the wrong road, and it will lead you to everlasting shame instead of everlasting glory, if you continue in it.

God cannot give this great blessing to those who think they can do something to obtain it. If it were so it would not be a gift at all, it would be something you had obtained by doing. This God cannot have. He will not allow anyone to glory in His presence. You must have it as a free gift, or it never can be yours. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Not of works, or doings, lest any man should boast. But when you have received eternal life at the hands of God, then doings begin immediately; and the more you can do for Him who has given it to you the better, because you have a foundation to build upon—you can work and never tire, and God can accept it. Let me give you an example: when the apostle Paul first preached the gospel at Thessalonica, he found them worshipping idols. There were some of them no doubt doing the best they could, and thought it would be all right with them at the last. But they were serving Satan and not God, and when they received the Lord Jesus Christ they cast away their idols to serve the living and true God, and waited for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivered them from the wrath to come. Now let me beg of you to do likewise. Receive the Lord Jesus, and eternal life and glory will be yours (John i. 12). You can then cast away every idol from your heart, and like these Thessalonians, you will be glad to see His face whenever that happy moment comes.

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NONE TOO BAD FOR JESUS.

A WOMAN came to beg me to go and visit her sister who was very sick. I took her address, and as soon as I found an opportunity I went to see her. The room where the sick woman lay was simply, but comfortably furnished and everything indicated a diligent and careful supervision.

On approaching the bed, I recognized in the one who was lying thereon, a face I had seen more than once at our gospel meetings—It was a countenance which still retained traces of a beauty now faded; but it bore an expression of intense suffering; her parched lips; her painful respiration; and her extreme weakness, all indicated that she was approaching her end. Bending over her, I expressed in a few words my sympathy; and then affectionately asked her; “Are you ready to die?” She fixed her eyes upon mine as she answered with difficulty: “No; I have been a great sinner.”

I was thankful to see that the Holy Spirit had wrought in her the conviction of sin, for He only can give a soul a real sense of its unfitness for the presence of a Holy God. Merely accepting the fact as is so often done, “that we are all sinners,” is not enough. A sincere conviction, and from the heart, which leads to the confession: “Behold, I am vile,” always accompanies a true conversion. In this case it was not necessary to strip a soul of its pretended righteousness; she sought the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, “for there is none other name under

heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

I read to her some passages from the fifty third chapter of the prophet Isaiah, touching the Man of sorrows, who was wounded for our transgressions, who was bruised for our iniquities, upon whom the Lord laid the iniquity of us all, and who having once suffered for sins, has been raised up from the dead by the power of God.

Like a thirsty traveller drinking from a fresh and pure spring, this poor dying woman received the gospel, the good news of Christ. With the simplicity of a child she believed the words of God. Seeing that she was exhausted, I left her, after commending her to the Lord, promising to return later.

I came back in the evening ; she was not suffering, and was expecting me. The room was filled with friends ; her husband, a man of rough exterior, but with a tender heart, was seated near her, whilst the aged mother silently watched near the bed that nothing might be wanting for the sick one. From time to time a tear rolled down her wrinkled cheek.

God was about to give a touching witness of His grace, and of His power, in this one who had no more hope for the world, and who was so soon to take her departure from its griefs and misery.

"She longed greatly for you," said her sister, "and feared you might not come."

I opened my bible at the seventh chapter of Luke's gospel and read: "And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an

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alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears." While I was reading, I noticed that the eyes of the sick woman were fixed upon me, and that she listened with intense attention. I continued to the end of the chapter, emphasising especially these words ; "Thy sins are forgiven * * * thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace."

I then asked her, before all in the room ; "Are you a sinner like this woman ?"

"Yes," she replied.

"And you trust in Jesus only for your salvation ?"

"Yes," she again replied.

"And now, tell me, are you like the woman when she entered Simon's house, not knowing her salvation, or the forgiveness of sins ; or as she was when she went out—pardoned, saved by faith, and in peace ?"

She gathered up her little remaining strength, and although her breathing was difficult, she replied decidedly and distinctly ; "I am like her when she left the house."

How great is the grace of God which gives a sinner liberty to approach Him ; how perfect the love which can banish all fear from the heart. The poor dying one was in peace. She possessed a peace which was not the result of works of righteousness which she had done, but peace acquired through the blood of Christ which was shed at the cross.

It was a precious confession of the mercy of God and I took advantage of the favourable occasion to press upon those present the acceptance of the gift of

God, so liberally and so freely offered to all those who come to Him.

Once more I stood at her bedside ; the pale face of the sufferer plainly indicated her near departure, but peace, like a river, filled her soul, for she had come to Jesus and had left at His feet the heavy burden of her sins.

“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.”

Unconverted reader, take care that you do not despise this “great salvation.” Now it is near you, in your mouth and in your 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. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. * * Whosoever believeth in Him shall not be ashamed.”

IF you do not yet know Jesus as your substitute, if you have not yet believed that He came under judgment for you, then the wrath of God abideth on you. Listen to the voice which supplicates you. “Be ye reconciled to God,” that you may escape the wrath, and find in God not only the One who pardons your sins, but a Father who wishes to give you a place near His own heart in His house.

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CONDEMNED ALREADY.

SOME years ago, a young man, whom we will call Robert, lived in a part of America, which was newly settled and where the gospel had been seldom preached. One evening however a young evangelist spoke from the third chapter of John's gospel, insisting particularly on the eighteenth verse. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not *is condemned already*, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

The words "*condemned already*" made a strong impression upon Robert. He sought to persuade himself that there were no such words in the bible, and that the preacher had doubtless made a mistake. Robert was quite willing to allow that if he continued in his evil ways he would be *judged* later, but to be condemned now, was too much. The word of God is a sword (Eph. vi. 17), and this sword had penetrated the soul of the young man.

Returning home he strove, again and again, to convince himself that it was not true, and could not be found in the bible. In order to assure himself, as soon as he came into the house he took his bible so long neglected and looked for the passage. Truly the solemn words were there. "But he that believeth not is condemned already, because, he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

He did not however wish yet to accept what was so clearly said. He cast the bible upon the table and said to himself: "Although it is so written in the bible, I care not, it is not true.

Spite of all this, the sword of the Spirit had reached his soul, so that later he could say of himself; "For five years God has whipped me with these words, CONDEMNED ALREADY, CONDEMNED ALREADY!

I heard them continually, and often went to the tavern to silence by drink the inward voice which never failed to make itself heard—But all was in vain.'

At last, after a very long time, conquered by the grace of God, Robert saw that God was right, and that he was not only a wicked sinner but *condemned already*—Soon after however he found the Saviour of sinners who, during all these years, had followed him until at length "he came to himself," like the prodigal son in Luke xv. and fully accepted the only means of salvation by which we can escape judgment. With a heart thirsting for pardon, he believed as a *lost sinner* and *condemned already*, on the Son of God, who in the same verse (Jno. iii. 18), says, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned."

My dear friend, you who read these lines, do you still belong to the great number of those who do not wish to believe that their judgment is already pronounced?

Will you be as senseless as the malefactor, who, condemned to death, thought, up to the last moment, that he would escape the sentence, because he did not believe it to be true?

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RICHES.

I will fill their treasures.—Prov. 8: 21.

My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and My revenue than choice silver.—Prov. 8: 19.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.—2 Cor. 8, 9.

I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. . . . I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.—Prov. 8: 23-30.

I will *give thee* hidden riches.—Isa. 45: 3.

MERCY.

God, who is rich in mercy, for His *great* love wherewith He loved us. Ephes. 2: 4.

God *so loved* the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.—St. John 3: 16.

REDEMPTION.

In whom we *have* redemption, through His blood the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.—Ephs. 1: 7.

That He might shew the *exceeding* riches of His grace. (Free favor.) - Ephs. 2: 7.

ASSURANCE.

Unto all riches of the
full assurance of under-
standing.—Col. 2 : 2.

They shall *never* perish,
neither shall any pluck
them out of My hand.
—St. John 10 : 28.

FOR WHOM.

The Lord is rich unto
all that call upon Him.
Rom. 10 : 12.

And with Him they
crucify two thieves.—St.
Mark 15 : 27.

Jesus said unto him, . . .
To-day shalt thou be with
me in Paradise. — St.
Luke 23 : 44.

Buy of me gold tried
in the fire that thou
mayest be rich.—Rev. iii
18.

Forasmuch as ye know
that ye were not redeemed
with corruptible things,
as silver or gold. . . But
with the precious blood of
Christ.—1 Peter, 1 : 18-19

GLORY.

To whom God would
make known what is the
riches of the mystery . .
which is *Christ in you*
the hope of glory.—Col.
1 : 27.

My God shall supply all
your need according to
His riches in glory.—
Phil., 4 : 19.

Despisest *thou* the riches of His goodness ?—Rom. 2 : 4.