

THE SOWER.

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FOUND.

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MATT. XVIII. 12.

O GOD, through Christ the living way,
My Father and my God,
So near and I so far astray,
Brought nigh Thee by His blood.

Myself, and this, and that, I sought
Behind, around, before—
And yet the nearest found I not,
Until I sought no more.

It was Thyself, O God, who sought,
With tender yearnings deep,
The loveless soul who sought Thee not
The worthless wandering sheep.

I come, yet leave myself behind,
And thus unfearing come,
For nought besides Thyself I find
In mine eternal home.

I come—Thine open arms enfold
And welcome me within—
Let others work to bring their gold,
I only bring my sin.

HISTORY OF A MAN

WHO BELIEVED HIMSELF FIT FOR HEAVEN.

ONE Sunday evening, seated alone, I reviewed in my mind the whole history of my past life. I said to myself: "If ever anyone deserved to go to heaven I am that man. What could anyone do to be saved more than I have done? Every Sunday sees me in my place at church; if there is a sick person to be visited I am ready to go; I am a good husband; a kind father to my children; conscientious in my relations with others; upright and honest. Such I am; is anything lacking?"

It was not the first time that I had thus complacently thought of myself, and consequently I was quite satisfied that all was well.

However, in spite of all, I seemed to hear outside of myself, a voice which said: "Would it not be well to ask God to show you if you have need of anything else, and if you are really fit to be in His presence?"

"Yes," thought I, "I will ask God to let me see anything that there may be of evil in me, in order that I may remedy it."

I then went up to my room and said: "O God, shew me if I am doing wrong; and in what it may be; and if there is any wicked way in me!" I was sincere and desired to act rightly.

From that moment I began to discern in myself all sorts of evil things; learning, not only that I had many faults, but that I was a vile, odious, lost and

totally ruined creature. I saw also how wrong I had been in imagining that my good works had made me fit for the presence of God. The more I cried to God, the more miserable I felt. I began to see myself under my true aspect, and it seemed to me that the eye of God penetrated every part of me, and made me realize that I was lost. Oh! I shall never forget those five long and painful months: I was so completely miserable that I could hardly work, eat, or sleep.

I resolved to find the pastor whose religious services I had attended, in order to recount to him what my feelings were, and ask if he could not assist me. I did so, but he understood nothing of what I said to him. When I told him that I was a miserable, lost sinner, earnestly desiring to know how I might be saved, and extricated from such a wretched condition, he evidently did not understand what it all meant.

I then spoke to some of my religious friends, but they could only speak thus to me: "You have doubtless committed some serious offence, which nobody knows, and this troubles your conscience and causes you anxiety."

My poor wife was very much upset to see me in such a state. She knew well that I had done nothing of the kind, but she could not understand how a "proper man like me" could be in such a state of anxiety before God. Poor wife! she thought my head was turned.

However I had come into the light; for the first time in nearly forty years my eyes were opened to

my true state in the sight of God. I had learned that I was a sinner, and that I was lost. The real state of my soul was laid bare before me, and I had learned this, that to the eye of God my nature was as bad as that of the worst criminal who had ever existed.

My fellow-workmen ridiculed me; they believed me out of my senses. Ah! those five long months! I was nearly in despair. I had not a friend in the world who was able to give me relief.

How ardently I longed for salvation; for that which could deliver me from the wrath to come! At last, one morning, I opened my bible, and casting myself on my knees, from the depths of my soul I cried to God in the words of Psalm lxxix., which had fallen under my eyes, "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. . . . O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee. . . I am in trouble; hear me speedily. Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it."

I cast myself upon God, for there was nothing but His mercy that could aid me; then I went to my work, looking to, and crying to Him to respond to my prayers.

Whilst I was at my work, and looking to God, suddenly a sweet and holy assurance of the love of a pardoning God, filled my soul. It was like the dew of heaven, and my heart overflowed with joy. It was as if heaven itself had descended upon me. I was so happy that I dropped my tools, and rushing into the workshop, I cried: "The Lord has saved my soul!"

It was as though a thunderbolt had fallen into the

midst of my comrades. For some months they had tormented me, and railed at me; and I was altogether ashamed and timid before them, knowing myself to be a poor lost sinner; but now I was as bold as a lion.

"Yes," I said to them, smiling, "He has saved my soul, He wishes also to save yours." It was too much for them; they hurriedly left the shop.

When I had returned to my own house, I began to tell my wife the good news; but she, believing it was another phase of my disease, wrung her hands, crying out: "Now he is altogether insane!"

Full of joy, of love, and of praise, I would have been glad to have found someone to praise the Lord with me; so I went to a friend to whom I had spoken of my sufferings, thinking that he would now understand me; but my joy seemed as strange to him, as my grief had formerly.

After that, I spoke to each of those who, it seemed to me, ought to have been interested in the matter; but not one cared for it, nor entered at all into what I had found, until one day I ventured to speak to the gentleman for whom I worked:

"I hope, sir, that this new building will be of good service to you."

He replied: "For my part, I think very little about it; these things have not much importance for me; I possess something so much better than all the world can give."

Believing then that perhaps he would understand me, I recounted to him how I had been a proud Pharisee, satisfied with myself; how God had opened

my eyes and given me to see that I was lost, and how He had saved me. As I said that, the gentleman cried out, "Bless the Lord."

Then my heart was filled with joy. I had felt that I ought to praise the Lord, but I had never been able to find anyone to join me in it. This gentleman gave me a book in which I read the history of someone who had passed through the same experience which I had. I then learned that I was not the only one who had had such exercises of soul.

After that, a friend took me with him to a prayer-meeting. I there recounted the goodness of the Lord to me, and as soon as I had finished, there was a concert of voices saying, "Bless the Lord!" and I felt that it was exactly what I had needed, the company of Christians who could praise the Lord.

And now I give thanks to God in that He has saved me, and not only so but that He has accorded me the grace, when I am out of work, of speaking of the Saviour to other poor sinners.

Such is the history, my dear reader, of one who, like many others, glide tranquilly along to a lake of fire, satisfied with themselves, and deceiving themselves. It is the case of thousands of people; perhaps it is yours? Do you know what it is to see yourself lost? Are you conscious of the happiness of being saved? Are you one, or the other? In hell all are lost; the doleful mourning of those who have neglected mercy, ascends from the abyss as they cry, "Has mercy forever ended?" And the echo, sad and solemn, responds, "Forever!" In heaven all are

saved, and if you ask, "How, and by whom?" the unanimous response would be: "We are here, saved only, fully, and forever by the blood of the Lamb, slain on Calvary."

Reader, to-day you are neither in heaven or hell, but you are lost or saved, ready for heaven or hell! which is it? Have you thought up to this that all is right between your soul and God? You enjoy a good reputation perhaps among your acquaintances, but would you like to find yourself suddenly in the presence of God? Would you like to *dwell* with Him? Let me beg of you to do as the one whose history I have just repeated. Go straight to God, go to Him now and say to Him: "If I am doing evil, O God, show me how and in what."

Know this, that if you have never gone to God as a lost sinner, you have never gone to Him at all. You may have been a preacher of the gospel, and yet be lost. Preaching does not save; good works do not save; salvation is only in Christ. In the scriptural sense, according to the word of God, good works only flow from salvation, they never procure it. In the first place, the grace of God bringeth salvation; then it teaches us to renounce ungodliness and fleshly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and piously, and to be zealous of good works. If you reverse the order, you will never possess the one, or accomplish the others. In order that a work be really good, it must not proceed from self. Prove your good works, and see if they have not their origin and motive in self, instead of coming from pure and disinterested love for God.

“We love Him, because He first loved us,” is the true motto of the Christian. We serve Christ because He died for us; such is the power which impels a saved man to act for Him. All other motives are valueless. The love of Christ is the great power from which all true service flows. Do you know it? Have you it? If not go at once to God; cry to Him, in order that He may open your eyes, in His mercy. He will save your precious soul before it is too late, lest you find yourself among those who recall their good works (Matt. vii., 23), but who will not hear the voice of Him whom no hypocrite can deceive, say to you: “Depart from me; I have never known you.”

In the life of the man which we have retraced in our history, there are three distinct epochs. During several years, he was lost and ignorant, although he was tranquil and without fear. It was the deadly peace of a false security. Then during five months he was troubled and unhappy, because he knew that he was lost. Now for several years he has been saved by the perfect work of Christ in whom he has believed; and he knows and rejoices in a permanent peace and joy, happy in being able to speak to others of their great salvation.

In which of these states are you at this moment my dear reader?

THE GRACE OF GOD TO A JAPANESE.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

IT is not the desire to talk of myself, but by your request I shall write a few lines about the way that the Lord led me. May the Lord keep me in His grace, and do it to His own glory.

First of all, I must praise Him and say. "Blessed be the Lord who called us out from darkness and made us meet to be partakers of inheritance in light."

I was converted and baptized on March 30th, 1890, through the Lord's mercy. I was a zealous gospel hater before, and the people whom I hated bitterly, was so-called christendom and its professors. Now, coming to the Lord, being ashamed to be counted among them, my determination was to live a strict christian life, and fulfil all the law. After a while I found, rather to my astonishment, that I was not so good a man as I expected to be. On the contrary, very vile and treacherous sinner. Now, having discovered what I am, felt uneasy about my salvation, and tried to push holy life, with all cost. Then the more I tried to be holy, the more vile I found to be. Thus thrown down into the pit of sorrow and despair, I laid down myself on my bed very often, groaning and crying of my misery. Moreover, after a week or more in such a state of soul, the fear came to my heart that it may cause terrible sickness, and set it aside for a moment, alas! In a month or so the root began to bud again and met same trouble again and again. I cannot

forget even now what I said to myself, that "How happier I was if I were not a Christian." At last when I met the same trouble as in the beginning of July, 1890, my heart was so fixed to go forth till I found that I am saved and blot out the constant fear of God before me; for I thought that the peace can never be found unless the trouble will be taken away. Now all the periodicals, magazines, and books which I loved to read was put aside except the bible and "Imitation of Christ" by Kempis, and continued in prayer and reading, forsaking all the worldly things. Again just like before, the more I tried to be nearer to God, the further was my God.

- Then during first two or three days, I got up at midnight, and dressed up myself and kneeled down before God, before whom I trembled; then next I went up to a hill for prayer in a stormy night, and so on. All these exercises gained nothing but anxiety and despair. At this time I had never a good sleep, nor any meat, except some liquid like soup, and my complexion became pale, and my body very lean, and when I told my trial to my friend they called me a fanatic, instead of sympathy, and even the best members of the church said, "It is presumptuous to try to know that we are saved now." Many times I thought to give it up, but had no place to go after, besides the Lord; though He was then the source of my fear and sorrow, yet I believed the words, "all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive," and it was strange to man's reasoning, my comfort and encouragement through the trial

“Blessed be the Lord, because He has heard the voice of my supplication, my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped, therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth and with my song will praise Him.”

On the afternoon of July 30th while I was reading the fifth chapter of John, a light—the light which I cannot express with my tongue nor pen—with a shock rushed into my heart, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, my heart flashed with unspeakable joy, cried out saying, “Now I am saved, Jesus died for me. He is my Saviour and my God. O how happy man I am?” And was taught some truths in the following days which I spoke to every one whom I met.

In a few days it was so noised about among the local Japanese that a man named———received the Holy Spirit with great power, and will preach on the Sunday August 4th, that the chapel was filled up with crowd before the time. About this time all the people I met seemed to me as if they were rushing to hell-fire, and adding to this fasting, and little sleep, having made me very sensitive, and their fearful destiny, and the love of God, coming together with my mind; tears and sorrows choked me, many times in the preaching. Then most of the audience went away saying, “We shall not hear any more from such a crazy.” Still, about a dozen remained after the meeting was closed, desiring to hear more of God, and anxious of my health. Thus we had the revival during two months, through His

grace, in which many received the living knowledge of Christ.

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This is a brief sketch of my christian life. When I look back what I have passed through, I have nothing to boast with, but failures, and foolishness, while the Lord's grace and mercy—the grace which sought us, and saved us, and sustains us, are printed all over it.

To Him who sought and saved us, and made us more than conqueror in our path and trial,—nay even in our failures—be glory, honor and praise, forever and ever. Amen.

READER, dare you take the place of a careless rejector of God's infinite love in Christ? You may not be an avowed infidel. You may have no doubt of the general statements of Christianity; but do you not perceive from the character of those statements that something of terrible solemnity attaches to your present condition?

If it be true that you are a sinner; and answerable to God; and that the end of these things is death; everlasting banishment from God; and His wrath abiding on you; is there anything more unreasonable on your part than carelessness. And if in matchless kindness God proposes and gives salvation and cleansing, clearing forever the guilty through the death of His Son, what shall be thought of the hardihood, the hardness that can be indifferent?

FAITH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

“With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”
(Rom. x, 10.)

TO say that God is righteous is to express one of the most elementary truths. “All His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He” (Deut. xxxii. 4). Now by our sins we have made God a judge. We cannot appear before Him unless the question of our sins has been settled, for He will by no means clear the guilty (Ex. xxxiv. 7).

It is evident that every sinner has need of righteousness; any one will admit that. In order to be at rest in view of an inevitable judgment, one must be assured that they shall never appear before the divine tribunal; or, if they do, that a righteousness will be provided for them, in such manner, that they will not be classed with the wicked.

Men seek to settle this matter without reference to God; persuading themselves that there is no judgment, or that if there is, their own righteousness will suffice, and that they will be acquitted.

The folly of the first of these thoughts is apparent. Every one knows that it is not the part of the criminal to decide whether or not he will appear before the authorities who have apprehended him. How much more then when it is having to do with God. This evident conclusion presses unbelievers into the still greater folly of denying the

existence of God. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God" (Ps. xiv. 1).

The second pretext, more plausible than the first does not come from an avowed infidel, but from a religious man who flatters himself, that he can render to God a worship acceptable to Him. The orthodox Pharisee who admits man's responsibility before God satisfies himsc'f with the thought that he is not a debtor and that God must necessarily justify him before His tribunal. It is this which the Lord exposes in Luke xviii, where the man thanks God that he is not unjust, "as other men are." From the bottom of his heart he despised the publican who was an avowed sinner. But Jesus says that the publican went down to his house justified, rather than the other, "for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Let us then leave our own thoughts and ascertain what God says. His thoughts are not as our thoughts. It is in vain for us to lean upon our own righteousness. On the other side, God desires not the death of the sinner. He wishes to be a Saviour and not a Judge; all however in righteousness for he cannot deny himself. Consequently His righteousness has been revealed, not ours, in the fact that by the redemption which Christ has effected, God manifests Himself as righteous in justifying the sinner who believes in Jesus (Rom. iii. 21, 26). The wretched condition of the one who becomes justified is thus declared, and at the same time that

he learns that righteousness is accounted to him through faith (Phil. iii). God does not attribute to him any act, any conduct which could be rightly called righteous, but only the fact that he has like Abraham received the declaration of God, and that his heart is not right in His sight. It is faith that God counts for righteousness (Rom. iv. 5, 9, 22). Now it is evident that the Pharisee who prayed in the temple did not know this righteousness or feel the need of it. If he had heard of it he would not have desired it, for that would have placed him in the rank of a sinner, and that is exactly what his pride would not suffer.

It is only the sacrifice of Christ that meets the need of the sinner.

“THEY say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.”

—Job, xxi. 14.

With pride I love to think of who and what I am,
 Pride rules my will; pride fills my heart;
 My conscience I defy; to God I will not bow,
 The world and fame I choose; let God and grace
 depart.

“Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud; for the Lord hath spoken.

Give glory to the Lord your God, before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.”

Jeremiah xiii. 15, 16.

DIES IRAE.

THERE is a day coming for this world when God will judge it in righteousness; He is saving sinners in grace out of it now. But I tell you sinner, the day of judgment is *appointed*, and the judge is *ordained*. "He has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." That day is coming, and that day will be the witness, the marvelous witness, of the power of God to destruction, when the besom of judgment shall sweep this earth of those who have rejected Christ and refused God's great salvation; and there will not be a solitary ray of mercy, in that blackness; not a solitary ray of light in that darkness. That day is coming. And oh, if that day should overtake you, sinner, in your sins; if that day should find you an unwashed and unforgiven criminal in your sins; if it shall find you out of Christ in your sins; and out of Christ, as the result of having refused, despised, rejected, neglected God's great salvation! What then? How solemn to think of these things! God has appointed the day; he has ordained the judge. And who is the judge? That Jesus whom you, sinner, are rejecting; that Jesus whom you refuse, it may be, in your heart of hearts this moment; that Saviour in whose face you see no beauty to desire Him; a root out of a dry ground; without form or comeliness, despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; you hide your face from Him; He was despised and you esteem Him not, though He was the bearer of our griefs and our sorrows. And it will be Him, it will be that same Jesus. Oh think of that!