

# The Sower

A GOSPEL MAGAZINE.

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Vol. V.

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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.

Ecc. xi. 6

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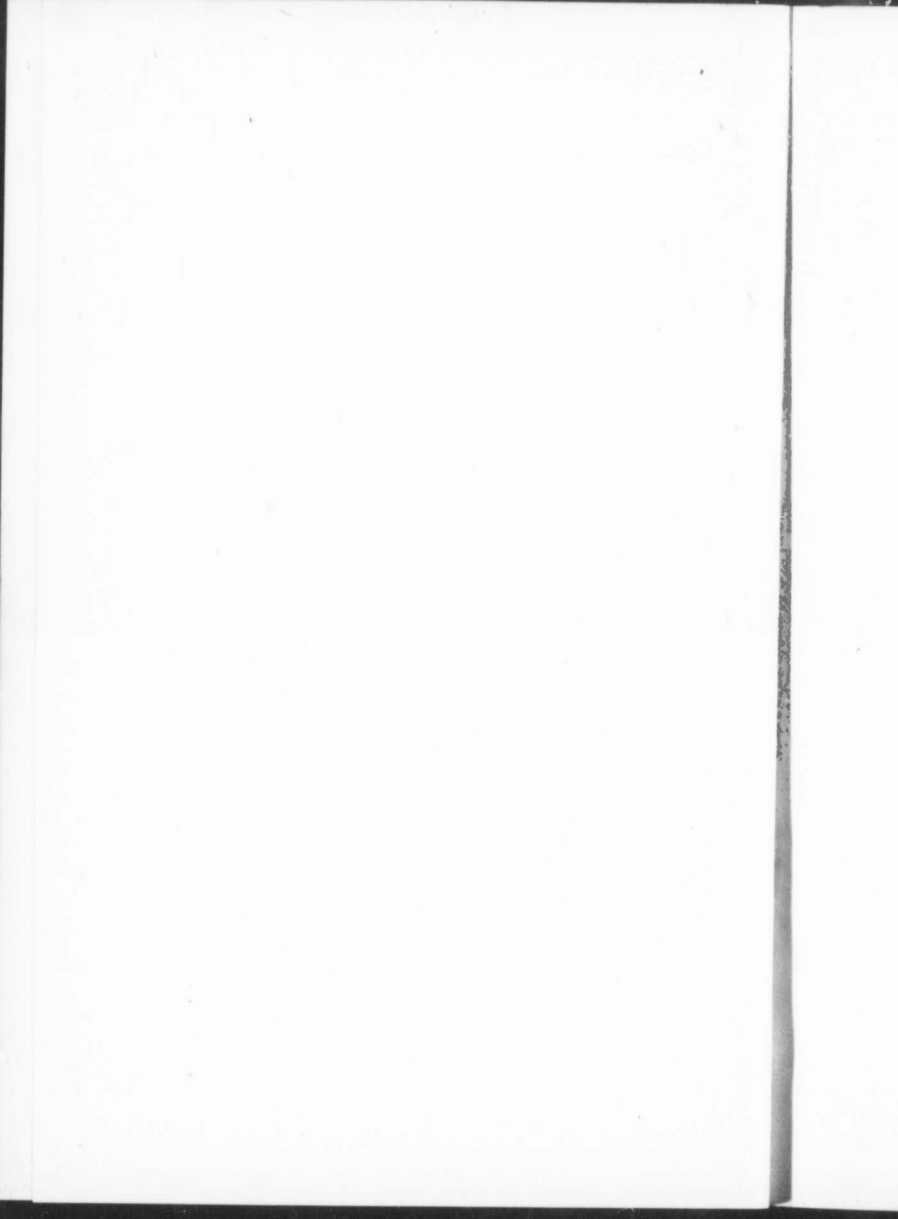
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# THE SOWER.

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LIFE IS SHORT.

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I Peter i. 24. 25.

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**L**IFE is short, and man is frail;  
To the blast he soon must yield,  
Like the flower that decks the field;  
Life is short, and man is frail.

Man, alas to woe is born ;  
He a weight of sorrow bears,  
He a wreath of cypress wears ;  
Man, alas, to woe is born.

Look, O man, to Christ the Son,  
There is pleasure, peace and rest ;  
Thou in Him may'st now be blest ;  
Look, O man, to Christ the Son.

Bliss and endless life are thine,  
Soon as Him thou dost receive ;  
Dost thou on the Son believe,  
Life and blessing, then are thine.

“ONE DANCE MORE, AND DEFIANCE TO  
THE FLAME.”

THE following extract is taken from an old book written nearly forty years ago, and serves as an awful comment on the words of scripture. “There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom. iii. 18).

The incident “is said to have occurred while the French army occupied the city of Moscow.”

“A party of officers and soldiers determined to have a military levee, and for this purpose chose the deserted palace of a Russian nobleman, in the vault of which a large quantity of powder had been deposited. That night the city was set on fire. As the sun went down they began to assemble. The females who followed the fortunes of the French forces, were decorated for the occasion. The gayest and noblest of the army were there, and merriment reigned over the crowd. During the dance the fire rapidly approached them; they saw it coming, but felt no fear. At length the building next to the one they occupied was on fire. Coming to the windows, they gazed upon the billows of fire which swept upon their fortress, and then returned to their amusement. Again and again they left their pleasure to watch the progress of the flames. At length the dance ceased, and the necessity of leaving the scene of merriment became apparent to all. They were enveloped in a flood of fire, which they gazed on with deep and awful solemnity. At length the fire communicating to their own building, caused them to prepare

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for light, when a brave young officer, named Carnot, waved his jeweled sword above his head and exclaimed, 'One dance more, and defiance to the flame.' All caught the enthusiasm of the moment, and 'One dance more, and defiance to the flame,' burst from the lips of all. The dance commenced, louder and louder grew the music, and faster and faster fell the pattering footsteps of dancing men and women, when suddenly they heard a cry, 'The fire has reached the magazine, fly, fly! for life!' One moment they stood, transfixed with horror; they did not know the magazine was there, and ere they recovered from their stupor, the powder exploded; the building was shattered to pieces, and the dancers were hurled into a fearful eternity."

Oh! what an exhibition of the madness and folly of the human heart that knows not the fear of God. Led on by the deluding power of Satan, the loss of an eternity of blessedness, and being plunged into an eternity of unutterable woe, are risked for one fleeting moment of empty, unsatisfying pleasure here. Who can estimate or pourtray the insane madness of such a course. "One dance more, and defiance to the flames!" Ah! it is the language of many a heart that has never given utterance to it in words. Thousands upon thousands on all sides are acting out the folly of the French dancers in Moscow. That is, in the uncertainty of human life, which is but a fleeting vapor, and in the presence of the imminence of the Lord's coming, they neglect to flee from the wrath to come. The cry "Escape for thy life" is heard, but unheeded. Some pleasure, some

trifling object connected with this life, some present gain, holds the heart. The cry of danger has been heard again and again, perhaps, and the awful danger even seen and felt, and the heart has been touched again and again by the gracious entreaties of a Savior-God; but the blinding spell over the soul, and the delusive dream of "time enough yet," have proved too much, and the awful risk is taken. "One dance more," and then—ah! yes, and then what? A fleeting moment's pleasure, or what is called pleasure, and then the soul goes out into an eternal night of darkness and woe.

Oh! unsaved soul, flee from the coming wrath! Wait not a moment! Linger not in all the plain! Flee to Christ for refuge. You will find Him "a shelter in the time of storm." His blood has been shed for sinners, and all who believe in Him are sheltered by that blood. Jehovah has said "when I see the blood, I will pass over you." Blessed assurance. Is it yours reader? Have you come to Jesus, and His sheltering blood? "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (Ex. xii. 13; John vi. 37). Once more let me beseech you, repeat not the folly of the Moscow dancers, nor of those all around you, who, heedless of the gospel call, are moment by moment neglecting God's great salvation" (Heb. ii. 3). Wait not for to-morrow; you may never see it. Wait not for the next hour; you may be in eternity. Seize the present moment, God's "now," for "behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).



## THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

“God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men.”

“God be merciful to me a sinner.”—LUKE xviii.

THE Pharisee here took the ground of what *he was*. He does not take to himself, openly, the credit of what he was and did. He does not say, I thank myself that I am this and that and the other. He was quite as orthodox in that respect as numbers in the present day, who are looking within for their grounds of peace, and who say, “We give God the glory of all that we hope He has wrought in us, and own Him as the One who has produced it all.” But if He has produced anything in our souls, it is not for us to rest upon, or to glory in, or find peace in. We are upon the Pharisee’s ground if we found our peace upon anything that we may suppose grace to have wrought in us. He thanked God; but it was for what he was, what he did, and what he did not. These formed the ground on which his soul sought to stand before God. And he thought he did stand. He was self-deceived; he was on perfectly good terms with himself. “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are,” etc. And there are numbers in the present day, bearing the name of Christ, professing, in words, to have no confidence but Christ; numbers who would be shocked at the idea of attributing salvation to any but Christ, who are yet practically and really taking the Pharisee’s ground before God.

When such persons have any real work of God in their souls, they are destitute of peace. Where there is thorough self-deception, men may thank God that they are not as other men. But supposing there is any idea of what man is before God, and yet the attempt to take this ground, misery must be the result. It may be the ground on which some readers are seeking to stand, who, if asked, Do you take the ground of the Pharisee? would say, Oh, no! Then what ground do you take? What are you wishing to stand upon before God? Is not this the reason you allege for not having peace, that you do not find in yourselves such fruits as would be certain marks of your being God's children? Or if sometimes you hope that you see some such marks, you cannot always find them, and therefore you are so cast down and desponding. Is not this the way in which you explain your own state? Or, perhaps, with some examples of rare devotedness before your eyes, you say, If I were but such an one! And what if you were? Would it do *then* to say, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are?" What are you wishing and seeking? You are seeking and wishing to be something better than you are, in order to stand before God. And if you could have your wish and be that, would you stand upon it? Then you would be the Pharisee outright.

But what was the publican's ground? There was the deepest sense of what he was—a sinner; and he was not even asking to be something better. No doubt he did desire deliverance. He would not have

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been so troubled about his state if he had been content to be a sinner. He had the deepest sense of what he was; but what was his hope?—his resource? The only open door before him. It was *what God is*, and what God is to what he knew himself to be. It was “God be merciful to me a sinner.” When the soul is once brought there, there is no doubt as to the issue. The word of God contains an answer now to such a state of soul as was not found even while our Lord was living upon the earth. God’s perfect, blessed answer is in the fulfilment of the Saviour’s own prediction of His sufferings and blood-shedding on the cross. There was the answer on Christ’s part to God for all the sin—let it be what it may—upon your conscience. There is also God’s answer on His own part in the love that gave Christ to take the sinner’s place, and stand in the sinner’s stead, and die for the sinner; the answer on God’s part to the cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” Oh! that some reader, may through God’s own teaching, be led to see how mercy has interposed—how mercy has triumphed. May you see something of the height and length and depth and breadth of mercy—God’s mercy, the sinner’s only refuge, his only resource. It is not mercy without atonement, without sacrifice, without the full vindication of God’s holiness and righteousness. It is not mercy at the expense of these. But as sin has reigned unto death, even so grace now reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## ASSURANCE.

THE door was shut and the shutters were up! Could I be too late? Had I missed, through tarrying, ministering to one whom He was seeking—the dying girl I had been asked to see? I went to a neighbor and enquired of her if E—— J—— was still living.

“Oh, yes. Just step through the shop [a baker’s shop] and tap at the inner door.”

I did so, and the lame mother opened the door and drew me in. E—— was lying on the little couch, looking very near death, with an eager, anxious expression in her brilliant eyes. I spoke more to the mother than to her, just a few words on the love of Christ, and then I touched on assurance.

“Ah!” said the mother, as the dying girl burst into tears, “that’s what is fretting her. She keeps saying if she only *knew* she was saved. And only this morning the minister’s left for a month’s holiday, and she said just before you came in, ma’am, “Now, mother, I shall have no one to help me.”

So I told her how I had been sitting, anxious to finish some work in hand; but could not rest, feeling constrained to go to her. This seemed to strike her as a proof of God’s love and care.

Then I pointed her to the word of God: “In whom we *have* redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” (Ephes. i., 7).

“But ye *are* washed, but ye *are* sanctified, but ye *are* justified.” (I. Cor. vi., 11).

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"*All that believe are justified from all things.*"  
(Acts xiii., 39).

All written to those who were trusting in Christ, doubtless, many feeble, doubting hearts, full of weakness and inconsistencies—children of God, whether they realized it or not—not because of themselves, their radiant walk, their wondrous deeds, their burning words, but because of what *He had done*.

It was good to see the light dawning upon that anxious heart; good to see her looking off from her thoughts, and doubts, and fears, and fancies—the "ifs" and "buts" of unbelief—the feelings that are so treacherous and so varied, to *Him*, who cannot lie; "with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning;" who is "the truth and the life." Turning away from peering into a dark corner to the full blaze of light—the light of, "God saith"; the light of knowing *He had* done the work, not half finished it, but completed it, as *He* would do. Is not every blade of grass perfect—every tiny shell on the sea-shore, every nerve and muscle of the minutest insect life? Would *He* leave the greatest of all—the redemption of our souls—to us, to finish, who cannot even make one hair white or black? Who, after *He* had offered one sacrifice for sins, has seated Himself forever at the right hand of God. Would *He*, who never spared Himself when on earth, with, sometimes, not even time so much as to eat, for the sake of the needy, famishing souls around, giving often the quiet hours of the night to communion with the Father, have done this, if the work was incomplete?

Looking up and seeing a living person, the risen Son of God, with those wounds still in his hands and side, still saying to each, "*Whosoever believeth hath everlasting life.*"

God takes great pains to make us sure, not because there is any doubt of the certainty, but because He knows our poor, foolish, fearful hearts. He knows that Satan is still saying, "Hath God said?" and that although He has told us he is the "father of lies," we do not always really believe it. Do you know, dear reader, that you "*have passed from death unto life?*" Is it only a tormenting hope or a glad certainty, because you have believed God, who is not a man that He should lie, and have rested on what *Christ has done*, not what *you have thought* about it? Had the children of Israel any doubt about their safety when they saw the great waters cover Pharaoh and his host? Had they any uncertainty of their victory when they saw the walls of Jericho fall down? Had the prodigal any fear of his acceptance when he felt his father's arms around his neck and his kisses on his cheek? Have you any doubt about assurance when you take your bible and search out all that God has said—all that Christ spoke before and after His resurrection, and heard him cry on the cross, "It is finished?" Had Thomas any doubt when he saw Him before him, and heard Him say, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed?" No. But I think he must have felt ashamed. Won't you feel ashamed when you see Him in glory if you have doubted Him, and not entered into all the gladness and power of the certainty of salvation?

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E——— J——— lingered on some time; but her peace and joy daily increased. She knew Him as the "faithful and true," and her spirit being free about herself and the certainty of her future, she had time to enjoy *Him*; not only to learn fully what He had done, but what He was. Time and leisure of heart to rejoice in His friendship—His love. Aye, dear friends, assurance is like a golden gate of which Satan tries to hide the key, for, once opened, you see all the "unsearchable riches" that are all yours. "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." But until you know you are His forever, you cannot enter into all that He is and has for you. No doubting, hungry wayfarer, lingering, trembling, outside the door, will ever know the glory, and the joy, and the feasting within—the music and the dancing of the Father's house. And what makes us hold? Our need? No. Need might be refused, we think. *His love*. The love which led Him to the cross, and led Him through the suffering and the shame, is the love that has opened the door and beseeches us to enter into it. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Take the key of faith and listen to what God says. If Satan can keep a soul from knowing assurance, he knows he has done a great work; he knows that the soul that trusts in the precious blood of Christ can never be his again; but he has kept back the song and the strength for life-work and service.

"Is there anything you would like me to ask Him for you?" I said to E——— J——— the day before she died.

"Only that I might be with Him soon," she answered.

Not for suffering lessened, or life prolonged ; only to be with Him soon. "Perfect love casteth out fear." "Fear hath torment;" but, knowing that none can pluck us out of His hand, we can stay or go with equal joy, for once His, His forever.

"He is able also to save to the uttermost them who come unto God by Him."

When the time cometh that your eye-strings shall break, and your face wax pale, and legs and arms tremble, and your breath grow cold, and your poor soul looks out of your prison house of clay, to be set at liberty, then a good conscience, and your Lord's favour shall be worth all the world's glory. Seek it, grace be with you.

### THE HUMAN HEART.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"—Jeremiah xvii. 9.

THE heart of man is like a barren field,  
 And fruit to God was never known to yield,  
 Its choicest flowers are but cultured weeds,  
 While thorns and thistles are its native seeds :  
 Nay, more than this, there lies beneath the  
 soil,  
 Far worse than what appears, however vile ;  
 For there lies buried, to the heart innate,  
 To God, and all His grace, a thorough hate.

Pilate

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## TRUTH AND UNTRUTH.

Pilate saith, "What is truth?"—St. John xviii. 38.

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"Jesus saith, unto him I am the way, the truth, and the life."—St. John xiv. 6.

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"The law of truth was in His mouth."—Mal.ii. 6.

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"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.—St. John viii. 32.

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"The Spirit of truth \* \* \* will guide you into all truth."—St. John xvi. 13.

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"And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said."—Gen. iii. 1.

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Jesus said, "Ye are of your father the devil. \* \* \* He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it."—St. John viii. 44.

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"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True.—Rev. xix. 11.

## GOD ACTING IN SOVEREIGN GRACE.

HOW beautifully God's character shines out in that authoritative, "I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." Israel shall know this mercy (and in the end Israel shall know it). All its springs are in Him. Has He a character of His own? And are you, because of that, like one at rest in heaven where the Lord Jesus Christ is, blest according to His merit, with all blessings in heavenly places? If I come to what is in self, I find nothing but what is of the first creation; but if I come to the new creation, I meet what God has created in Christ Jesus. I see Him set up there as the slain Lamb, my accepted sacrifice; all blessings due to Him, and the curse due to me, but it was borne by Him. What right have I to go where the glory of God is? Moses had to be hidden in the rock, because He could not see it; but I can go, just as I am, into the full blaze of it. Ah! but only in Him, who is seated at that right hand—not in my own name, but in His. If in my own, I could not come, but I dare not show any hesitancy; I have perfect acceptance there, not on the ground of what I am, but on that of being one with Him who is the perfect expression of God's love. I can go in there with His acceptancy. Is there one affection of your heart that does not find a perfect response? Not one! Is that the ground you are on; that, the rock out of which the water of life has flowed to you; the ground, out of which you are daily drawing strength?

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## AS A LITTLE CHILD.

Luke xviii. 17.

THE wisest man on earth—the man of keenest intellectual perceptions—the man of highest attainments—must become a little child to have to do with Jesus. We must become fools in order to be wise. It may be that some one, looking at such a passage as this, may be perplexed, and say, How is this? Are we not often told that salvation is by faith? That whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ has salvation and eternal life? How then, is it that these blessings are here made to depend upon my becoming a little child? These are but two different ways, my friends, of presenting the same thing. Faith is this child-like spirit that each must have if he is to enter the kingdom of God. It is not that little children are good, and that we have to become good like them in order to get blessings from God. It is not that at all; children are sinners and need a Saviour, and He came to save children as well as grown-up people. What then, is the meaning of the passage? Let me ask in reply, is there one characteristic of childhood so prominent as this, the unhesitating simplicity with which the child trusts those with whom he has to do? Try a child; offer him something that he can value and desire, something suited to him—an apple—a toy. What does he say? Does he begin to make excuses, and say he does not deserve it, that he is not good enough, that he must behave better, feel differently, or the like, before he can expect such a boon? Is this the way

he treats your offer? No. His hand is out at once—he gives you credit for being as good as you seem to be, and profess to be, in holding out to him, the gift.

And what is the whole matter of receiving Christ—eternal life, salvation? It is the simple faith that accredits God to be as good as he says He is, as good as He has shown Himself to be. Has He not said that He “so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”? And yet, with such statements throughout God’s word, the soul, instead of believing God when He declares how good He is, instead of receiving Christ, stands reasoning, and seeking to evade the love which still pursues us with the needed indispensable good. Ah! the heart must be bowed to this, to receive God’s word in true, child-like simplicity, just as a little child accepts unhesitatingly what it is very glad to get. “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.”

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Have you submitted to Jesus? God demands it. He asks for no offering or sacrifice; He presents Jesus and shows you what you are. The worst sinners in the world may be received in grace by Jesus. “Behold now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation.”

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Faith is the way of life;

Believe in Christ and live;

Fly to the shelter of His blood,

And peace with God receive.