

# THE SOWER.

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## THE FAITHFUL SERVANT.

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James was an honest servant, trusty, true,  
Having his master's interest aye in view,  
He ne'er was disobedient, but he did,  
And that right willingly, what he was bid.  
In duty's path most steadily he trod  
As one who truly knew the fear of God.  
When Sunday came then James with pious care  
Dressed in his best would to the kirk repair,  
And list the sermon in decorous wise  
As if an angel spake from yonder skies ;  
And when the bread and wine were passed around  
Be sure that there his placid face was found.  
We children loved him and would often pay  
His cot a visit on the "Sabbath" day :  
I think e'en now I see his hoary head,  
The "big ha Bible" ope' before him spread.  
With aspect meek like to a child of grace  
A pleasant smile upon his sober face ;  
I think I list his jokes and hear him tell  
Queer pawky tales which always pleased us well.  
Thus honestly, and free from wrath or strife,  
James led a blameless and religious life.  
Liked and respected both by old and young,  
His blameless life on every neighbor's tongue,  
Surely when death drew nigh, one such as he  
From wild despair should be completely free,  
"A well spent life," and "God is merciful,"

The ground of hope that all must needs be well.  
Ah! oft we are deceived by outward show  
For who the heart's deceitfulness can know?  
But time sped on, the days flew swiftly by  
And the old faithful servant came to die.  
I went to see him ere he passed away,  
Ne'er while I live will I forget that day,  
Though more than half a century has fled  
Since I then sat beside his dying bed,  
A new-born Christian who had never been  
Before, or since, witness to such a scene.  
Oh what a change! the placid look was gone,  
With wild unnatural glare the blue eyes shone:  
The restless limbs betrayed a restless mind,  
The feeble hands refused to be confined  
But fumbled with the bedclothes, while the tongue  
On which of old such pleasing accents hung,  
And which was noted for its quietude  
Babbled incessantly, but not of good,  
'Twas not of Jesus, blessed Son of God  
He spake, nor of the virtue of His blood,  
No happy thought came from his trembling lips  
His faith had suffered a complete eclipse.  
"Being justified by faith we've peace with God,"  
Alas! James only felt sins awful load.  
And now—the cottage echoing with his groans—  
Awakened conscience spake in thunder tones,  
For lo! before him stretched the boundless sea  
Of dread and fathomless eternity  
Into the which he needs must launch away,  
No friendly port in view, no sheltering bay,

But one vast, boundless, terrible expanse  
Dismal and dark to which he must advance.  
And while the bed beneath him seemed to quake  
'Twas thus with stammering lips the old man spake.  
"Eternity! eternity? Oh! Oh!  
What shall I do and whither shall I go,  
Eternity! eternity!. Ah woe is me,  
How awful, dreadful is eternity."  
In vain I spoke to him of Christ the Lord,  
In vain I quoted from the Holy Word,  
With wonted deference he held his peace,  
But then alas! no sooner did I cease,  
Than once again the miserable man  
With stammering lips the same sad strain began;  
"What shall I do and whither shall I flee  
Ah! me, how dreadful is eternity."  
Stam'ring and stuttering 'bout that solemn word  
But not a syllable of Christ the Lord.  
Thanks to my God I ne'er again have been  
Witness to such another painful scene.  
What does our story teach? Duty is well,  
But it will never save the soul from hell.  
Religion too is good; 'tis good to care \*  
For widows and for orphans, and beware  
Of this vile world, but think not that will save  
Thy soul from hell, thy body from the grave.  
'Tis Jesus, the Redeemer who alone  
In heaven or earth can for thy sins atone,  
Ah! when the thunders of God's judgments roll  
How dread the lot of the poor Christless soul.

\* James i. 27.

## "TURNED TO GOD FROM IDOLS."

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(I. THESS. i. 9).

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DOES the reader know what it is to be turned to God? This is a serious question. Think of it soberly. Do not try to put it away from you. The serious consideration of it may bring lasting blessing to your soul. You have some object before you in this world. Perhaps it is to attain happiness. You may have tried different ways to reach it. Let me ask you, have you *attained* to happiness? Are you *satisfied*? Or have you been trying one thing after another only to be disappointed? Alas! so it is with every source of satisfaction that this world can offer. Nothing brings true happiness; nothing leads a soul to where he can say, Now I am satisfied, I have all I need for time and for eternity. To find what you need you must be turned to God. *He* is the source of all good, of all blessedness, and in the knowledge of Him is found peace and joy and blessing without measure and without end. It may be you know something *about* Him without knowing *Himself*; and what you have learned about Him only makes you afraid; and you think it would be a very dreadful thing to be brought into His presence. You expect to stand before Him bye and bye in the day of judgment, or when you die, but the thought only fills you with terror, and you wish to put off the meeting with Him as long as possible. Why is this? It is because you

know God is holy and you are unholy, He is righteous and you are unrighteous, you love sin, and He hates it. Now it is true, God is righteous and holy and hates sin, but you do not know Him, else, true as this is, you would gladly meet Him, for in meeting Him *now*, in this day of grace, you would meet One who has fully measured all your need, and just as fully provided for it. But this, Satan does not want you to know. He desires to keep you in darkness, and to blind your mind (he blinds the minds of those that believe not. II Cor. iv. 4), for he is a deceiver, a liar and a murderer. But notwithstanding Satan's lies, and the foolish and wicked pleadings of your own heart, it is true that *all* good is found in God Himself, and in Him alone. Nowhere else can true good be found. It is worth while, then, to know Him, and to taste His goodness, and to learn how He has met all our guilty need in His own infinite goodness and love.

When Paul went to Thessalonica he found the people there, as they were everywhere among the Gentiles, worshippers of idols. Now it is important to see what this really involved. I Cor. x. 20, 21 will tell us: "But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils." So then idol-worshippers were simply *devil-worshippers*. They might not know this, for they were deceived, blinded by the power of Satan, who led them by their lusts and passions, connecting these things with idolatry. But whether they knew it or not, it was true. There were many different kinds of idolatry, but the stamp

of Satan's character was on everyone of them, just as the stamp of God's character is on Christianity. Fornication in its grossest form was connected with Baal-worship, and this with unblushing shame. See Numbers xxv, and Rev. ii. 14. And human sacrifice was connected with Moloch-worship. Even the children of Israel caused their children to pass through the fire to Moloch. According to Jewish accounts the image of Moloch was of brass, and hollow within. His face was like that of a calf, and his hands stretched forth to receive his victims. They built a fire within this fire-god of the Amorites, and the priests laid the poor infant victims in the hands of this heated monster. (See Smith's Bible Dictionary). Is it difficult to see the old "murderer" behind all this? The marks are too plain to be mistaken. The forms of idolatry might vary, but all were connected with Satan, and the demons which are under his direction, foul, wicked, and destroying soul and body. This awful enemy of God and man, might lead men by their lusts and passions, or by their fear, but he never gave them that which brought peace and rest and satisfaction of heart, and he never does, but only deceives men, to lure them on to their destruction.

The Thessalonians were idolaters, but the very fact that they *turned to God from idols*, shows that they were not satisfied; and the fact that they endured persecution and every kind of hardship for the sake of the truth, showed that they valued what they found when they were turned to God. They had found what was *true*, and what brought them present peace,

and eternal blessing, and they would not give it up even if they had to suffer unto death. Paul had set before them "the *living* and *true* God," in contrast with their *lifeless* and *false* gods, works of their own hands, which could neither see, nor hear, nor talk. But it was the living and true God as revealed in Jesus Christ, for it is in Christ only that God is fully known. Creation declares His eternal power and Deity; the heavens declare His glory; the firmament displays His handiwork. But it is in Christ that His *heart* is seen; nay more, all that He is in love, righteousness, holiness, truth; His hatred of sin, yet love to the sinner; the maintenance of His holy majesty in the judgment of sin, yet opening the door of salvation wide to the sinner, have been revealed in Christ. Men had been proved sinners, whether without the law, or under the law, and were in a lost and helpless state. They had no righteousness they could bring to God, and no sacrifice that could atone for their sins. And it was just when man was proved to be in this helpless condition, that God revealed Himself in Christ on the cross. In the death of Christ God furnished the needed sacrifice and ransom. And He was asking from the Thessalonians neither righteousness nor sacrifice, but showing them in the gospel that He had freely furnished everything in Christ, and that through faith in Him all would be theirs. The poor Hindoo mother need not throw her babe into the Ganges to be devoured by the crocodile, nor do men need to lay their children in the arms of the fire-god, to appease the deity. No, God is satisfied

with His own provision, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, His Son, and men need but to be turned to Him from all their lying vanities, to find what resources of grace and blessing are found there.

Now, unsaved reader, you may not be a worshipper of the fire-god, or of any idol made by men's hands, but if you have not been turned to God, you are yet in your sins, and "the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience" is just as surely leading you on to the hell where Baal-worshippers and Moloch-worshippers, with all the ungodly, will have their portion. Oh! turn to God and live. He is a Saviour-God; "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all. (I Tim. ii. 4 6). Come to Him then and be saved. Come guilty, come vile, come empty-handed, come just as you are, and He will receive you, for He turns none away who come to Him in truth. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?

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"For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?"  
 Luke ix. 25.

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"You tell me I am dying, and urge me to say whether or not I think that I am going to heaven. What is the heaven you mean?"

"To be with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and to be with Him for ever and ever, is what I mean by heaven."

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## HOW A HEATHEN WAS CONVERTED TO GOD AND SAVED.

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HE lived in and was a native of Southern India, and had been taught from his infancy to worship and pray to fire and water.

In that part of India the British Government had a college for teaching English to native young men, so that they might qualify themselves for holding government situations as clerks etc, in the government offices. And the head master of this college was evidently one who respected, and I trust went further and believed God's blessed and precious written Word. So in teaching these native young men to read, a portion of the Holy Scriptures was read regularly each day by those who were able to do so. At first, full of prejudice and dark unbelief, the young man who is the subject of this narrative, disliked having to do this very much, and often would show his contempt and dislike for the Bible, by kicking it about when he got opportunity, and even spitting upon it to show his fellow students perhaps, how little he cared for, or believed it. But one day the reading lesson was in the 6th chapter of John's Gospel, and some how or other the 37th verse fixed and fastened itself on his mind in a way that he could not shake off or forget, especially those words in it, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." He even tried to forget them, I think he told me, but they were constantly returning upon

him and coming up again in his mind. Not very long after these things, a fire broke out in the cantonment close by, and in the endeavours to put down the flames, he found himself with others running with water to put out the fire. When all at once the thought struck him, that as a worshipper of fire and water, here was he, running with a bucket of water to put out the fire, or in other words trying to put one god out with the other god. The absurdity and folly of what he had been brought up to believe, so took hold of him that he gave his old ideas entirely up and became an infidel, until one day as was often the custom of these students, he went down with another young man to bathe in the sea not very far from the college. It was usual for them to watch the time of the tide, and when it was at a certain height to swim quite a long piece out to sea, and when at a well known distance, to stop and touch bottom on a sand bar, on which they would rest and take breath, and then turn and swim ashore again. On this occasion however, he had forgotten to notice the time of the tide, and stripping off his clothes on the shore he plunged into the sea, and swam as usual to about the distance from shore where he expected to touch the sand bar and rest before returning, as it was too far to turn and come right back again without resting. To his surprise and consternation when he attempted to touch bottom with his feet, he found no bottom at all, and then it all dawned upon him that he had mistaken the time and that the tide was up far above

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the sand bank, and now too exhausted to swim back to shore, he was helpless and hopeless, and nothing but death by drowning was before him. His companion had not followed him either, and even if he had desired, it was too far off to help him. He tried of course to keep himself up, but began to sink, and with death staring him in the face, began too to look eternity in the face also. All his past life came up before him and here he was, his false gods gone, and nothing to lean upon or trust in, left, and the dreadful thought of going into eternity, and his own unfitness to do so, pressing deeply and powerfully on his terror stricken soul. His agony was no doubt terrible. When, however, in this state, he began to remember those precious words again which he had read, and which had so impressed him some time back in the reading in John vi, and which he had tried to spurn away and reject at the time. "*Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.*" And half doubting and half believing, the poor perishing man cried out, "Lord Jesus, if there is such a person, *I* come to Thee." The gracious, loving, blessed Saviour met him just as he was, and just where he was; and revealed Himself as a real living, loving Person and Saviour to his soul, faithful to His own words as He always was and is, "*Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.*" Meanwhile a boat had put off, some persons whom he had not noticed having seen his danger, and though he had, if I recollect right, gone down once or twice, they reached the spot just in time to save his life, and they took him into the

boat and bore him safe to the shore. *Saved*, not only from drowning, but from eternal misery too. Saved by the boatmen in God's providence, from a watery grave, and saved from an eternity without God and without Christ, in the awful misery of the lake of fire, by the Lord Jesus Christ. He at once confessed Christ to the one who had come down to bathe with him, but who only treated it as nonsense. He soon confessed Christ openly and boldly to his own relations, who went further, and utterly disowned him, and even persecuted him for becoming a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. He came over to England and obtained a situation there as a teacher of oriental languages in one of the colleges in London, and became also an earnest preacher of the gospel. And it was while preaching to a number of British soldiers in Aldershot Soldier's Institute, near a large camp there in England, that he told us of how the Lord Jesus met and saved his soul. Reader, you must have to do sooner or later with that same Lord Jesus, either now as a Saviour, or later on as a Judge. Have you met Him yet? Have you ever come as this man did, as a poor perishing sinner to Himself to be saved? If not drowning, you are getting nearer and nearer to that moment when death will plunge you into eternity, or when the Lord *will come* and shut the now wide open door, on all who are not ready. Oh! that you may, if unsaved, wake up to the realities of eternity, and the reality of there being a living, loving, mighty Saviour, who having accomplished the work that only He could do; that work that had to

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be done, or none could be saved, the work of atonement on the cross, now risen from the dead, and seated high in heavenly glory, still waits to save sinners, still fulfils His own precious words, that were so blessed to this poor heathen. "*Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.*"

## ROMANS VII.

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"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

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The moment he comes to the last point to which the Spirit has pressed him—the end of himself (v. 24)—the truth flashes upon him that he is delivered through the death of Christ, having died with Him who is risen, and become as such the object of faith. He thanks God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The work was done at the cross, but the Spirit's work in the soul was necessary before he could lay hold of the truth of the first five verses of the chapter, rather the first six verses. He is delivered, and in a new state in Christ risen. What a discovery, a free man in a moment! but he had to be brought to the sense of his own weakness, and learn that there is no hope in himself nor the first man; but in the new and risen One.

## A FREE GOSPEL.

“ JESUS Christ the righteous ” is the propitiation for the believer’s sins ; but also, for the whole world—not for “ *the sins of* ” the world. The italics in I John ii 2, should not be there—they destroy the sense. Death of the sinner before pardon involves the eternal wrath of God. In the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, all the claims of God’s nature were fully met ; and a righteous basis laid, upon which the gospel could be freely preached to “ every creature.” “ He died for all.” (II Cor. v. 15), and it is available for all, that God’s righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ might be towards all and upon all them that believe : for there is no difference ; for all have sinned, and come short of His glory. (Rom. iii. 22-26). Grace meets the sinner whoever he may be upon this ground ; and God is just in justifying the believer in Jesus whom He hath set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood. When the sinner becomes a believer he learns the further glad tidings, that “ He is the propitiation for our sins.” See also Heb. ii. 17 ; I John iv. 10.

The one is world-wide as the righteous basis of the gospel : the other is limited to the believer in Him whom God raised from the dead, “ and gave Him glory ” at His own right hand—He having satisfied God ; yea, glorified Him, on the cross. (See I Peter i. 21). In the one case, whosoever will may come,

in the other whosoever believes has. See also the two goats in Lev. xvi.

The dispute between the Calvinist and the Armenian arises from error as to this truth. The former limits propitiation to the elect only, and therefore has no ground for preaching the gospel to all: the latter denies any distinction, and therefore loses its special force for the believer, and never enjoys "eternal salvation." Heb. v. 9; x. 17.

But with propitiation for the world, the evangelist may be bold, and aggressive; and with propitiation for the sins of believers, they are encouraged to confess them, and "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John i 9).

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"I have been weaker ever since that illness. You remember the long long deep slumber into which I sank, out of which none could rouse me; out of which none thought I ever could rouse—until you came: that was a wonderful sleep! As I lay there, I saw the vast bundle of my sins; too large for me to lay hold of, or to carry, I was troubled and uneasy; but One said to me 'Never fear! the scapegoat with his strong, broad back, has carried them all away into a land not inhabited.' This calmed me. The Lord Jesus Christ is the scapegoat, is He not?"

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"The time is short!" If thou art not prepared  
To hear thy summons from this earth away,  
Awake, arouse thee from thy deadly sleep.

TO show him honour, it was resolved upon, that he should have the power of pardoning and liberating one man out of the convicts who were suffering for their crimes. He asked the history of each from his own lips. One said that he was unjustly sentenced; that the witnesses were foresworn. Another, that he would never have been there but for the fault of his associates, whom he blamed for his lot. Another told him that his parents were to blame. Again, another and another; each laying the blame on friends, circumstances, associates, early training, senseless juries, or a prejudiced judge. All these the great man passed by. At length, a broken-hearted prisoner entered. His history was enquired about, and his reply was simple and upright in the extreme. He said he was there for his crimes, for which no excuse could be made. He had gone on in spite of every entreaty, every warning, every effort for his reclamation, and at his own door lay all the blame. He was justly accused and justly condemned. He was punished less than he deserved. He was unworthy of the smallest mitigation of what he endured.

"This," said the Prince, "is the man to be set free. This man has fulfilled the conditions I desired to find; he will go forth a true man!" The others had hoped to gain their reprieve by every condition than that which he sought for. They had thus failed to obtain what they desired, but this self-judged soul, deeply feeling the sense of its self-ruin, obtained what they had lost.