

THE SOWER.

RISE, HE CALLETH THEE!

An incident in a Gipsy camp.

“**N**OBODY ever told me,”
And your heart was glad and free,
With the glad, sweet breath of heaven,
And its ceaseless minstrelsy.

“Nobody ever told me”
Through the long and dreary days,
That God had looked with yearning
On sinners and their ways.

“Nobody ever told me”
In my dark and starless nights,
How could I dream of radiance
From such stupendous heights?

“Nobody ever told me,”
And my life was black with sin,
Yet no whisper came of Jesus
Stooping my soul to win.

“Nobody ever told me,”
And all along the road,
My weary stumbling footsteps
Went farther from my God.

“Nobody ever told me,”
How was I then to know,
That all my crimson sin stains
Might be as white as snow.

“ Nobody ever told me,”

And the years went rolling by,
Swift and sure and Christless
Into eternity.

Oh ! cry of Him, and spare not ;
Though devils smite your lips,
All the light seems circled
In the hate of hell's eclipse.

Oh ! cry of Him to thousands ;
Some yearning heart like mine,
Shall bring to Him you tell of,
And prove He is divine.

Tell of Jesus seeking
The lost in sin's highway,
Bearing their load on Calvary
And letting justice slay.

Tell of Jesus risen,
The same in glory's height,
Seeking a soul from heaven
And flooding earth with light.

Tell, and the parched hearts drinking
The life-draught as they die,
Shall rise, and spread their praise-wings
In boundless ecstasy.

Shall cry a Saviour's precious blood
Washing as white as snow,
Till not one crimson sin-spot
Is found above, below.

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CHRIST JESUS.

OUR life in Him can never be forfeited.
Our righteousness in Him can never be tarnished.

Our pardon in Him can never be reversed.
Our justification in Him can never be cancelled.
Our acceptance in Him can never be questioned.
Our peace in Him can never be broken.
Our joy in Him can never be diminished.
Our rest in Him can never be disturbed.
Our hope in Him can never be disappointed.
Our glory in Him can never be clouded.
Our love in Him can never be darkened.
Our happiness in Him can never be interrupted.
Our strength in Him can never be enfeebled.
Our purity in Him can never be defiled.
Our comeliness in Him can never be marred.
Our wisdom in Him can never be baffled.
Our inheritance in Him can never be alienated.
Our resources in Him can never be exhausted.

READER, are you saved? Do not shirk the question; do not deceive yourself with a careless "No one can know," for you may know, thousands do know, do positively, certainly know, and why not you? and more, be assured of this, if you are a believer, and really want to know, you most certainly will, for the Lord never sends any needy one empty away. His word gives unwavering assurance to one trusting in Him.

THAT'S ME.

IN the year 1844 a young English officer was sent, with his regiment, to one of the West India islands. The yellow fever was raging there at the time and many soldiers fell victims to the disease. Another officer of the same regiment was attacked and in five days he was dead.

The one who is the subject of this sketch was detailed to command the detachment which was to accord military honors to the deceased at his grave. A presbyterian minister read the service for the dead, after which the firing party returned to barracks. During the march the commanding officer fell back to the rear and entered into conversation with the minister, who in a short time turned suddenly towards him and said:

“Where do you think your soul would have gone, if it had been you that had died?”

The young officer hesitated a moment and then replied:

“I think I would be in hell.”

“That is a very serious answer, God will remember it,” replied the minister, “and I hope you also will remember it.”

Five years passed and the same officer found himself with his regiment in another part of the world. He had passed through, during that period, many vicissitudes; small-pox; fevers; cholera; had raged about him; his mind had become seriously disposed, and he often remember-

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ed his own words. "I think I would be in hell."

About that time he met an old officer who had been a friend of his father's, and who, seeing him looking sad asked him to come and see him in the evening. In the evening he went to the old officer's quarters who said to him :

"They are going to have a bible reading in the next room for young officers, if you will go you will be welcome, if not here are some wax candles and books, you can amuse yourself until we are through."

He preferred to go to the meeting, where he seated himself among the others. This was altogether a new experience for him, and he understood but little of what was being said, but he was compelled to say to himself ! "These people have something I know nothing of ; a happiness which I do not possess," and this made a deep impression upon him.

One evening as he thought upon his past life he asked himself : "What is my life? It is to eat, to drink, to die, and then * * * to be lost * * !"

Dear reader, of what does your life consist? What will be its end? It is surely worth while to give it thought. Your voyage here below will soon be ended, and then where will you go?

Thank God, the officer judged that it was a subject for serious reflection, and on asking himself : "What is my life?" that he arrived at the conclusion that it was to eat, to drink, to die, and to be lost.

On leaving the meeting he became really serious, but he was without a counsellor. He was voyaging upon the sea of life without chart or compass; he did not even possess a copy of the word of God which alone is able to bring light to a soul.

The morning which followed this memorable evening he bought a parallel bible, and began to read the gospel of St. Matthew with the parallel passages, praying at the same time that God would open his eyes. He read with profound interest, having a real anxiety about his soul, and seeking constantly to amend his ways in a manner that would be pleasing to God and thus reach heaven at last. His heart was greatly exercised, but often he became much discouraged by his failures. As soon as he formed new resolutions sin came to destroy them.

He took three weeks to read the gospel of Matthew. When he had finished it he began the epistle to the Galatians; coming to the third chapter, the tenth verse arrested his attention: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

"That's me," he cried, after reading the verse. "That's me! I have put myself under the curse in trusting to my own works."

He then began praying, saying: "Lord, what must I do, I have tried to do my best. He re-

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mained some time on his knees, then rising up he took his bible and read to the thirteenth verse of the same chapter, where he found these words: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written: cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

For the second time he cried out: "That's me again!" I am redeemed from the curse of the law; He has taken my place.

The scales fell from his eyes. God had answered his prayer, had opened his eyes. And upon whom had he opened them? Upon Christ, upon Christ on the cross! His eyes were turned away from himself and turned towards the Saviour. He ceased looking at his own works, to contemplate the all availing work accomplished upon the cross by the Lord Jesus Christ, and accomplished for him. His faith laid hold of the Saviour, and he cried out joyfully: "HE HAS TAKEN MY PLACE."

Can the reader of these lines say, He has taken my place? If not why has He not done so? Your sins are your only title to a Saviour, for "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim' i: 15). And the precious blood of Jesus Christ is the only and absolute power sufficient to maintain you in the presence of God, or enable you to enter heaven.

"Ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. ii: 13).

AT SYCHAR'S WELL.

REJECTED and driven out from Judæa, He sat weary on the well of Sychar. A woman, lonely (it was not the hour when women go forth to draw water) and weary with sin, evidently a strong and ardent nature that had sought happiness with eager pursuit, and sank through it into sin, and not found rest to her spirit (how many such are there in the world?), dragged on a life of toil and, in the midst of it, thought sometimes on Gerizim and Jerusalem, and knew there was a Messiah to come. There might be happiness and rest somewhere. She had none. Toil and weariness she had, and the last evidently in spirit as well as body. Jesus had toil and weariness too, but through love, not through sin, save the sin of others, and this could not weary love, and He knew where rest was—He was it. The Son of God, the Judge of all, had, humanly speaking, put himself in a position where He was debtor to this woman for a drink of cold water. But soon He draws her out. He speaks of the gift of God, of a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. All was dark in the Samaritan woman's mind. She moved in the circle of her own weariness; this she felt, the fruit of her sin and toil after happiness, and (with all the movings within that predominated and filled her

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mind, for, in fact, what had she else ?), what does the Lord do? "Go, call thy husband and come hither." "I have no husband." "Thou hast well said," replied the Lord, "'I have no husband;' thou hast had five husbands and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband; in that speakest thou truly." Now a ray of light breaks in. "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." The word of God, by the Lord, has divine authority in her heart, because it has reached her conscience. She has found a man who has told her all that ever she did. Who knew that? The prophet's word has divine authority. Yet she does not yet get to wells of water. The divine communications made to her were quite unintelligible; but much was done. He, who knew all her life, all her sin, had been sitting there in grace, willing to be helped by her. Grace was there as well as truth. She had found the Christ, and leaves her water pot and her care with it, and becomes a messenger of that which is good news for all. Gerizim and Jerusalem are all alike, and alike nothing. The Father is seeking worshippers in spirit and in truth.

Now, here we find a picture of the opening of a soul to understanding and the reception of divine things. The presenting of divine things of the highest character in grace does not do it. The natural heart remains closed. Even when there are moral wants and cravings, divine

things are not understood at all. God makes His way through the conscience. Then the word is received. At the moment the heart does not get farther than its present capacity. Still, what has been spoken of has been spoken of for it; and grace makes all its own. Jesus, in grace, has been with it. Oh, what a difference—man's speculations, and God seeing the field white for harvest! The Lord refreshing His spirit when rejected by the pride of man, not with the water of the well, but with love, finding its bliss in hearts filled with wretchedness, drinking of the one refreshing well-spring that has visited this world! He had meat to eat His disciples knew not of. What a place for this poor Samaritan, what a place for us; to refresh, stupid creatures that we are—the heart of Jesus, because He is love? Nothing brighter, nothing more genuine than the effect of her new found joy, which makes this poor woman the messenger of God's visiting this world to the self-satisfied inhabitants of Sychar. She was just the one that suited the Lord.

“THE preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.” Go and tell a man he is to be saved by the blood-shedding and agony of the Son of God, he does not like that, does not understand it. Yet this is the power of God though men think it foolishness.

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THE BOW AT A VENTURE.

A FEW weeks ago, speaking to an aged Christian woman, she told me an incident which reminded me of the peculiar circumstance under which a king of Israel died. Ahab, determined to go to battle, refuses to listen to the testimony of the servant of God and accepts instead the lying flattery of the false prophet. He goes up, but thinks to avoid his doom by disguising himself, while the king of Judah wears the royal robes. But God's word is infallible, and so "a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness," and he died.

Mrs. G—— told me that some years previously an old relative came to spend a few evenings with her each week, as all her children were away and she was alone. One evening, as Mrs. G—— watched her coming, she was struck with her feeble walk, and, knowing that she had no hope beyond this life, she said in greeting her, "I have just been thinking that you are very old and still unsaved." Nothing more was said on the subject and Mrs. G—— quite forgot the incident. She was therefore much surprised when, some time after, her friend came in looking very unhappy, and told her she could not sleep nor forget her words, "for," she said, "I feel my sins are not forgiven, and so I cannot die." Mrs. G——, thankful to God for arousing her from her careless state, told her of the One who came to die

for the ungodly. For some weeks she remained very anxious about her soul, but at last she found peace by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as her Saviour. Thus was it like the bow drawn at a venture, that those few simple words spoken in faithfulness were used to arouse one who was, it may be, deceived by the lying flattery of those who arrogate to themselves the place of expounding the mind of God, and therefore not aware of God's command that men should repent, "for He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts vii., verse iii.). Like the gaoler at Phillippi, when brought to feel he was a sinner in the sight of God, he cries out, "What must I do to be saved." So she also became deeply aware of her soul's needs.

The answer for you dear, unsaved reader is, as it was for him and for her, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The inevitable alternative is, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the *judgment*." You may be old or young, rich or poor, in the full buoyancy of health or, like the one in Job, "chastened with pain upon your bed," if you are still unsaved there is but the one sequence of events,—death and judgment—for there is no man that hath power in the day of death. *Now* you may walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes, but *then* there will be nothing left for you but an eternity of woe, if you reject God's offered salvation.

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THE TRUE PATH.

GOD has given us His word and on its inspired pages we read: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. xv: 3). Notice here the phrase "First of all, I delivered unto you." Now this scripture is very precious because it shows us just what Paul preached first; it gives us his starting point, his first lesson. From Athens he had gone down to Corinth where the Lord told him He had "much people" (Acts xviii: 10), and there he preached and taught for a year and a half. Some years after this he writes to these Corinthian people reminding them of what he had FIRST taught them. What was it? "Christ died for our sins." You see it was a message that met their *need*, for were they not sinners before God? Have you, dear reader, taken your place before God a sinner?

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii: 13). If you turn to Luke xviii you will read there of one who took his true place before God. His very brief prayer is given in v. 13. "God be merciful to me a sinner." He owns himself a sinner deserving nothing but judgment, and immediately the Lord has something very encouraging to say of him:

'This man went down to his house *justified* rather than the other." Permit me to ask again. Have you seen your guilty lost condition and cried to God as did this publican? If you have, then listen: "The wages of sin is death," but our text says: "Christ died," and He was God's Holy One. "He who knew no sin he made sin for us" (2 Cor. v: 21).

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii: 24). Troubled soul, what a message gladdened the hearts of those Corinthian people in that early day; and the same word is for you. The question of sin and of guilt is forever settled for the believer at the cross. Man in his unbelief may have a hundred doubts and fears, God in His great love meets man's need *at once*. *First of all* He proclaims peace by the blood shed at Calvary. He is in haste with his own remedy for man's ruin. The Father *runs* to meet the returning prodigal and receives him with a kiss. (Luke xv: 20.) (Acts xiii: 38.) (John iii: 16.) (Rom. v: 6.) (1 Peter iii: 16.)

Reader, will you accept God's salvation? Will you believe that the death of Christ is the basis, and the only basis of approach to God? Will you believe that, "first of all," Christ died for our sins, and but for His death, yea and His resurrection, we would still be in our sins? Then you will know that the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL.

THE gospel of God, unto which, as the Apostle Paul tells us he was separated, is GOD'S GOOD NEWS; and as God is the Author and Announcer of His gospel, it is, and must be, worthy of Himself. This good, this glorious news is worthy of all acceptation; and may you own, with rejoicing, the grace and glory of God in it.

The gospel coming from the throne of divine righteousness and the divine heart of love, declares present and perfect forgiveness for the guilty; righteousness for the unrighteous; liberty for the law-enthralled and self-bound; while its present gift is the spirit of love for that of fear, and its promised future, likeness to Christ in the glory above.

The good news is not confined to a few; it is "unto all," and the word is: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel unto every creature." The breadth of God's love embraces the world, and all who believe it have its blessings. And as this glorious gospel is proclaimed to all, so is the title to receive "unto all." Not a single sinner is excepted. For grace confers the title thus: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" all are alike upon the level of utter badness and weakness; all differences amongst men are gone, all are alike bankrupts—God says it. Hence God is free in the riches of His grace to bring salvation by His gospel to every human being upon the earth.

WHOSOEVER.

“Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”—Rev. 22: 17

MARK the word, WHOSOEVER! God means what He says. He does not deceive the hopes of men. He is infinitely true and real in all His dealings. And here, in words which include all sorts and conditions of men, He expresses His desire for your salvation. Whosoever! That must be the whole human race. Do you say, “I fear that I am not one of the elect?” God’s words are, “WHOSOEVER will.” Do you say, “I have been a terrible backslider?” God’s words are, “WHOSOEVER will.” Do you say, “I have sinned away many a day of grace, resisted the Holy Spirit?” God’s words are, “WHOSOEVER will.” Be your state what it may, be your character what may, be your heart what it may, one thing only is required of you—a willing mind. Oh that God may Himself make you willing in this the day of His power!

WHAT drove man out of the garden of Eden was that he had a bad opinion of God. And that is what will be the peculiar misery of the lost, when they awake too late to find they had a wrong opinion of God. You say, who will verify that opinion? Why, His own Son, He came into this world to remove the terrible aspersion that has been thrown upon Him in our hearts by Satan.