

THE SOWER.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

Oh, listen, sinner, while we tell,
The love of God, unsearchable ;
So deep, so high, no mind can trace,
No heart explore the depths of grace.

Yet here in God's most blessed word,
His love is seen, His voice is heard ;
He speaks to you, He speaks to me
With such sublime simplicity.

He loved the world, His Son He gave,
The guilty and the lost to save ;
To save them from the woes of hell,
Oh! this is love unspeakable.

Not by our works, but by the blood,
Of Him who once our surety stood ;
Nothing but this could e'er atone—
The blood of Jesus Christ alone.

Oh! come, unsaved one, come TO-DAY,
Christ is the Light, the Truth, the Way,
Trust not your heart, trust not your mind,
In Him eternal life you'll find.

Receive this message from above—
These words of truth, and grace, and love,
Believe, and you shall surely know
Salvation from eternal woe.

THE ELEVENTH HOUR.

IT was the day for visiting the workhouse infirmary at R—. I felt strangely disinclined to go, and after putting on my things I took them off again, then again put them on. It was a hot summer's day, and Satan kept whispering that there was no one needing a visit that special afternoon. Aye, he is ever the father of lies, and well for us who know the Shepherd's voice and can discern that of the destroyer of lives and the enemy of Him who came as He said "Not to destroy men's lives but to save them." (Luke 9, 56.)

I went. The old man at the entrance as usual looked at my basket and said in his gruff, kind way, "Don't show me what's in it," and as usual I went through the wards I generally visited; but there seemed no special need, no special one for whom the Shepherd would leave the ninety and nine that day, when suddenly, passing the door of a ward I had never entered, seized with an impulse as direct and swift as a flash of lightning, I turned the handle and stood in the doorway. On a small, narrow bed, opposite the door, lay a woman, whose matted hair lay around the dark, parched face, the great black eyes looked into mine. But oh! dear friends, have you ever seen a dying face saturated with despair? Have you ever looked

into eyes which say "No hope! no hope!"? If you have you know what I read as I walked up to her bedside, and said "I am afraid you are very ill." "I am dying," she answered.

Speaking a few words to her I found one great burden lay on her heart. She had a sister living in R—, and the dying woman's children—children of a drunkard parent—deceived her and on that account for years she had not taken any notice of the poor thing before me.

I promised to go and see her and tell her of the sufferer's state, and then I spoke of Christ. "I don't know," she said, "I have been very wicked, but I believe God sent you."

"But how do you know that I will go and see your sister? How do you know that I will keep my word, I am a perfect stranger to you."

"I know you will," she returned, "I know God sent you."

"Then if you can trust a perfect stranger, cannot you trust the Son of God who spent so many years on earth, healing the sick, cleansing even the leper, and raising the dead, and at last offering Himself upon the cruel cross, 'the just for the unjust,' a propitiation for sinners. 'The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.' Is it hard to trust Him, isn't He worthy of it?"

She listened, but no gleam of hope shone in the great black eyes, she only repeated that God had sent me, and that she could trust me.

I went to the sister and finding her out left a

message telling her where and how I had found the dying one.

The next time I went she received me gladly. "She has been," she exclaimed, "and all is right between us—I knew God sent you."

Her heart seemed open now to listen to the love of God, and the "peace made" by the blood of the cross. She seemed to have a sense of His watching, and His care, in having brought about a reconciliation between the two estranged hearts. He could do the rest. After repeating some scriptures to her, I took out my Testament to read them over to her, when the nurse came quickly up to me saying, "We don't allow any reading here. If you want to read to them there are plenty of books about, Dickens and other stories,"

"Ah! nurse," I said, "my twenty minutes are too precious, it is the Saviour of sinners we want to read about, and if that is forbidden so would other reading be. But I will do nothing against the rules."

I knew this was untrue, as I read freely in the other wards, but I contented myself with repeating the verses over again to the dying one and then asked permission to pray with her, which was refused. I saw the time was up.

"Oh," pleaded the sick woman "you will come again. You wont mind her. She is so cruel to me, and is so constantly the worse for drink. My husband comes here every other day and seems disappointed to find me alive each time."

Cruelty, sin, and unkindness,—hard pillows for a

dying bed. But the Lord was seeking to lay that poor despairing heart upon His breast; seeking to blot out all her transgressions like a thick cloud; seeking to shelter the soul beneath the precious blood of Christ. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you. (Exodus, xii, 13.) Not when I see your fair deeds, and spotless lives, your works, and your alms, and your prayers. No, the blood of a Lamb "without blemish." Can you find one like Jesus, the spotless One, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth"? (1 Pet. ii, 22.) "The Lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Pet. i, 19.) I left her to ponder over Him. Dear reader, have you ever considered Him? Studied Him well, as the word means? Seen Him in that rude manger cradle and in the little village of Nazareth? Seen Him spending long nights in prayer; long days healing, teaching, comforting, blessing? Seen Him mocked and spit upon, buffeted by coarse hands, and hated by coarser hearts? Seen Him lifted up on that cross, a thief on either side? Heard Him cry to God the cry of the forsaken One? For what, for whom? For you, dear reader, for you and me. And I warrant that if ever you have seen Him thus, you have cried out like Peter of old "I am a sinful man, O Lord," and like the thief, "Remember me."

The nurse escorted me to the door of the ward, telling me that she "prayed for all the churches and chapels every day of her life," and I returned home to find that I must at once go to the seaside with a sick relative for a few days. Almost every hour of

the day that face of despair seemed before me; those great black eyes seemed yearning all their cry of need; but the heart of God was open. "He willeth not the death of a sinner" The Saviour who said, "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life," was gazing down upon that narrow bed, and I strove to leave her with Him, although no one might read His precious word to her, or plead with her for the peace of sins forgiven.

A week passed, and I returned, and went again to the Infirmary. The narrow bed was empty. No long black hair, dark and matted, lay upon the pillow, no great black eyes met mine. She was gone. But when? How? Dear ones, don't leave your peace till a death bed. There is no limit to God's love, and no limit to His grace; but there is joy and rejoicing in a life spent for Him. Crowns, and sheaves, and glad harvest songs, and His rewards, His, "Well done."

The nurse came up to me and apologized for what she had done and said. "She was sorry to have hindered me." "But she was very happy," she said, pointing to the empty bed. "She said she knew the blood of Christ cleansed her from her sins, and kept talking of you." The nurse, I found, was unconverted, and I felt thankful for her softened manner, and above all for what she told me. The Lord had sought, the Lord had found. She had entered in, covered and cleansed by the blood of the atonement, and He was victorious in another trophy of His grace; another proof of the "travail of His soul."

Reader, does He see the "fruit of the travail of His

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soul" in you? Does His eye look down upon you as you read this simple story of a soul "plucked from the burning" at the eleventh hour, and rejoice in you as one of His redeemed ones, dear to God's heart as Himself, for "The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and believed that I came out from God?" (John 16, 27.) Or does he see a soul covered only by sin, which might pass at any moment into the abyss of eternal misery, away from Him and His glories? Will you face death with despair or joy? With the wailing cry of "No hope! no hope!" or with the new song in your mouth "Even praise unto our God"? The praise of being in that blessed hand from which no one—not Satan in all his strength and rage—can pluck you, nor all the host of hell, for, "No man (no one) shall pluck them out of My Father's hand—My Father which gave them Me is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." (John 10, 28, 29.) Locked, as it were, in the hands of God and Christ, your soul will be as safe as Christ Himself, as safe as God's great heart, and Christ's unfathomed love can make it, and has made thousands and thousands of those who trust in Him.

"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Ephes 1, 7.)

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii, 16.)

PEACE IN BELIEVING.

IX.

MY dear friend:—The Lord be praised that He has given you, however feebly and timidly it may be, to cling to Jesus and trust in His precious blood. I understand all that you say of the doubts and perplexities which have assailed you, even since you have come to Jesus; but none who have trusted in Him have been confounded. It is not the feeling which we have of being in safety that contributes the least in the world to our being so. The doubts and fears of the shipwrecked when in the lifeboat do not make them less safe or prevent them from being at the mercy of the waves. The rock upon which you are is not less firm because that some times when your head turns it seems to tremble beneath your feet. The *perfect* appreciation which God has of the *perfect* sacrifice of Christ, is what constitutes the *perfect* security of all who put their trust in it, however feebly it may be. “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” (Ex. xii, 13.) The foundation of our faith is *perfect* although we may only be able to appreciate it very *imperfectly*.

I thank you for all the details you have given me, they have deeply interested me.

After having passed through so much of doubts and perplexities you may be used of the Lord to the service, and to the relief of those who are under the weight of like distresses.

The Lord be praised for the uninterrupted peace

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and joy which your sister has. She has good cause, as well as all of us, to rejoice in Jesus who has taken away our sins and in whom we are accepted by God as being one with His beloved Son. But do not allow the tempter to trouble you by placing before your eyes your sister's constant joy. Far from being cast down by the difference which you see between your state and hers, let it even encourage you to trust firmly in Christ. This difference may be the result of different causes, but in Christ there is always for His people abundant reasons for rejoicing. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." (Phil. iv, 4.)

I remain,

Affectionately yours in the Lord,



EPITAPH

ON A TOMB IN ST. IVES' CHURCHYARD.



Bold Infidelity! turn pale and die!

Beneath this stone three infants' ashes lie.

Say! Are they lost or saved?

If death's by sin; they sinned, because they're here;

If heaven's by works; in heaven they can't appear.

Reason—Ah! how depraved!

Review the Bible's sacred page—the knot's untied,

They died, for Adam sinned; they live, for Jesus died.

PURGED WITH BLOOD.

(HEBREWS IX.)

“AND almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.” (Hebrews ix, 22.)

In the latter part of this text we find an exclusive and distinct proposition—that without shedding of blood there is no remission.

In the flaming sword placed in the garden of Eden, after man's disobedience, we find his positive exclusion from the presence of God; in our being out of paradise, we see the existing fact, that we are in a state of exclusion from God. And the question now is, have we any access to God—to that which is far above paradise?

It is not only that we are out of paradise, but that we stand in all the accumulation of our transgressions. In the first act of sin we find that the will of man is disobedience to God; and every act of his since has been the treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

When our conscience is awakened, we learn how productive of fruit our evil nature is, and whenever we see that all is gone (for innocency once lost is lost for ever), then we find there is no competency in us to enter into association with God. That which was man's privilege in paradise has been lost, and we find ourselves not only evil, but daily accumulating transgressions. And can we then enter into the place of

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God's holiness? This is the only true question. Let me ask you—is there nothing your consciences own as needing remission? Murder and theft &c., which are the consequences of the condition man is in, through transgression, are owned by all as evil. The natural man may see the blessing of moral conduct as giving happiness on earth, but can discern nothing beyond. But when we look within the veil, it is altogether another thing. Our not wronging our neighbors may produce temporal happiness; but the revelation of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ awakens the mind to a new enquiry—its fitness for the presence of such holiness; and this question is soon settled; we find it impossible. It is not fitting us for happiness in the world as it is (that is not the question); but making us competent to be associated with Christ in the glory He is in when he appears. Does the world know anything about it? Is this what they look for? Do they not rather say it is presumption to think they can have association and fellowship with God? The world is a witness to itself that it presumes no such thing.

God's testimony is, There are none righteous, none understand, and none seek after God. (Rom. iii 11-12.) But suppose we have received an understanding to know Him that is true, then still the question is, how are we to stand in the presence of the glory? Can one in a sinful condition abide in His presence? Can we say that we are fit to be partakers of the glory? There is nothing in the world fit for this. It is in vain to plead the highest morality, or the

most refined amiability; they are not the things to qualify us for heaven. We may find the character of evil all around; all are guilty, for all come short of the glory of God. The evil of the root from which it springs may be easily discerned in the fruits.

Now there must not only be a renewing, but a complete purging of the conscience. And I plead this, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission; all other ways are the efforts of man to depreciate the righteousness of God—the substitution of something instead of God's way of salvation, which is most presumptuous and subversive of the great testimony of God, that without shedding of blood there is no remission. The accumulated sins of our evil nature must be put away. The Spirit of God can have no part but bringing us to the knowledge of the hatefulness of sin, and the necessity of the blood shed; and whenever the soul is awakened to what sin is in God's sight, there cannot be peace until the Spirit which shows the necessity of holiness, and reveals that of God, thus teaches us that nothing but God's own efficient act can put away, by the shedding of the blood of Jesus, that which God testifies against.

The shedding of the blood brings it to the actual power of death—the taking away of the life of Him whose life is given. And why? Because there is the forfeiture of life, and therefore the necessity of the life being given, the blood shed, to blot out the sin, and here we find Christ stepping in, and all the believer has, entirely shut up in Christ, in whom we

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to have a new nature whereby we can delight in God, and not forgiveness only; and this is the consequence of the work of Christ alone, shedding His blood before God, offering His life as a ransom to God, presenting that which was adequate for the purpose, but without which there is no escaping the consequences of sin. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him." (Isa. liii, 10.) The blood was shed, but it is manifested as His own voluntary act. At the same time His side is pierced that we might know the act complete. This is presented to our faith as a thing requisite, and which could be done in no other way. Christ had no associate, no companion; but once alone and for ever the thing was done, and the revelation of it by God to the soul is salvation. This is a transaction between God and the Son; the thing done is the ground of remission of sins to every one that believes.

I have not peace in anything in which I take a part, but peace in that in which Christ acted alone. Man's part in it was only stretching out the sinful hands which crucified Him, and this is all he had to do with it. Is it, I ask, by any act to be done now that peace is obtained? No; it is simply by the blood which has been shed, the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of His death, which can give peace through faith.

If we once see ourselves morally dead in trespasses and sins, and that without the full forfeit of life there is no remission, we shall see, as regards the cleansing of the conscience, there is nothing but the blood for us. But who did this? It is the act of

God to provide Himself a Lamb, by the shedding of whose blood the conscience of those admitted into the holy presence of God is effectually purged.

Can you say paradise is lost, and disobedience and sin are here, and yet I shall force my way back to God? What hope can those have who are not washed in the blood, taking a worse ground than that which excluded them from paradise (with this accumulated sin upon them), treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and despising that blood which cleanses from all sin, counting it an unholy thing? He who seeks God's holiness and passes by Jesus, going to God in his sins, passes by the blood, rejects the testimony of God, and despises Jesus.

How often you have resisted God's holy Spirit, how many motives to goodness you have disregarded, how many particular blessings you have sinned against, how many good resolutions you have broken, how many checks and admonitions of conscience you have stifled, you very well know; but how often this has been the case of other sinners you know not. And therefore the greatest sinner that you know must be yourself.

JESUS.

“Just as I am without one plea,
 Eager from sin and death to flee,
 Seeking no man, no God save Thee,
 Unto Thy blood to shelter me,
 Saviour I come; and I am free.”

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"TO-MORROW."

"GO thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." So said Felix to Paul the prisoner, and Felix trembled, for his conscience told him he could not face the judgment to come. Dear reader are you like Felix? Have you trembled as he did, and, like him, banished your fears for a more convenient season? Let me tell you of a man I knew who was very much like Felix. His fond wife was like Paul; she often besought him to turn now to Jesus the Saviour, but there was always something in the way—business to-day, pleasure to-morrow; it was always, "I pray thee have me excused." Years passed by, and at length the wife was called away by death. Before his wife departed she laid upon her sister a most solemn charge that she would take up the cause of her husband and plead with him to enter in at the narrow gate. Faithful to her charge, the sister of the departed wife oftentimes besought him to come to Jesus. She reminded him of her who was gone, and her words of exhortation. "Oh," said he, "I will come to Jesus, but not to-day—to-day I am very busy; there are certain things which really must be attended to, after those are done I will come." "Boast not thyself of to-morrow." To-morrow he was laid on his sick-bed—the bed of death. The doctor was speedily called, and when he reached the bed-side his grave countenance told the solemn fact.

"Sir," he said, "I will not trifle with you, you have but a few hours at most to live." "What!" cried the dying man, "I dare not die—I cannot die!" "Sir," replied the Christian doctor, "I pray you do not spend the short period of your life that remains in useless remorse; turn now to Jesus; believe in Him now; come now just as you are with all your delays, and you shall be saved now." "No, no," said the wretched man in agony, "No, I cannot die—I am not ready to die to-day." "I beseech you," said the doctor, "to look away from yourself, forget the past, turn to God now—you have but a moment left, Oh, do not waste the last opportunity which God in His mercy gives you. All was vain; every effort, every entreaty to lead this man to look to Jesus and live was fruitless. His voice grew fainter, and feebler; the burning fever that had so suddenly laid him low overcame him; the trifler with God's love and with his own precious soul was dead. He died saying, "Too late—not ready." Unsaved reader take warning from this sad story. Come just as you are to Jesus. Do not trifle with your precious soul.

Oh, most wretched and foolish sinner, thou who tremblest before the face of an angry man that is ignorant in all things! What wilt thou be able to answer unto God, who knoweth all thy sins, and searcheth the lowest depths of the evil that is in thee? Why lookest thou not forward, and prepare thyself for the day of His righteous judgment, in which one man cannot possibly be excused or defended by another, but every one will have to answer for himself.