

THE SOWER.

DIVINE LOVE.

AND is it so ! we now are *sons of God*,
The blest co-heirs of His eternal Son,
Is this the love of God in Christ made
known,
And which to know is heaven on earth begun !

And is it so ! we shall be *like thy Son* !
Shall we His image wear in scenes of light,
Where love supreme is shed on all who dwell
Within those heavenly courts of glory bright !

And is it so ! we e'er shall *dwell with Him* !
Shall we forever gaze on that blest face !
Forever in its radiant glory read
The story of redeeming love and grace !

Oh ! matchless love, oh ! love beyond compare,
Beyond all breadth and length and depth and height !
Father, this love of Thine is now revealed,
And in the Saviour's face shines forth in light.

The objects of this sovereign love are we,
Who once were lost and guilty—far from God,
And doomed to death and shame and endless woe,
But now brought nigh through Jesus' precious blood.

Through sea of woe, and storm of wrath divine,
Thy holy soul has passed, O Jesus, Lord,
That we might know the love no tongue can tell,
God's love made known in Thee the living Word.

O'er all the scene of malice dark and deep,
Of hate malign, inspired by demon power,
Thy gracious love shone out in glorious light,
Amid the darkness of that darkest hour.

Unquenched Thy love, O Lord, by waves of death,
Or streams of human hatred here below ;
Unchecked by power of Satan's mighty hosts,
Or wrath of God—that cup of unmixed woe.

That awful cup, Lord Jesus, Thou did'st drain,
Our mighty load of sins did'st bear alone,
When, as a victim, Thou did'st take our place,
To bear our curse, and for our sins atone.

But now Thy woes and sufferings all are o'er ;
The storm is hushed, the tempest clouds are gone ;
The mighty work is done, and Thou art risen,
And seated high upon Thy Father's throne.

And soon, Lord Jesus, Thou wilt come again ;
Soon, soon, shall we Thy glorious face behold,
And in its glory read the story sweet
Of endless love,—yet love that ne'er grows old.

O sinner, would'st thou know that heart of love,—
The heart that bled, to put away thy sin ?
Behold, He knocks ! He bids thee open the door,
That love may tell its own sweet tale within.

Oh ! haste, oh ! haste, dear soul, and let Him in !
'Tis Christ the Lord who seeks to fill thy heart ;
He knocks, He waits, He knocks again, and calls,
"Whoever thirsts may drink,—whoever will."

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A SHINING LIGHT.

“A happy fellow,” the world would have called him!—young, strong, active, with good continuous work in a watch factory. Always ready for a carousal with his mates; ever with the jest and oath upon his lips. Never a thought to cloud his days, or harass his nights; “Let us eat and drink for to-morrow is not,” his life seemed to say * * * but: * * * *
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A chamber of peace, and a face of joy—stricken down by rheumatic fever, his lungs became affected; and he lay in the last stage of consumption, the constant hemorrhage making him too weak even to leave his bed. But no oaths are on his lips; no jest and song, and thoughts of carousal. He thinks of his mates, but how? “When I was converted,” he said “I asked that I might be allowed to witness, where I had so often blasphemed His precious name among my associates, who knew my former life so well. Instead of that, God has fixed me to this bed of sickness; it is like the watchmaking; each piece is finished in a separate room, and then, when all is ready, they are put together and make a perfect whole. He trains us each separately, in the darkness; but by-and-by, we shall be a perfect whole. *His workmanship.*”

He had been sent to the home for dying at B—some time before I met him; and while there, spoke to another sick one who was indeed settled in the “far

country." The man could not bear it, and struck him. Instead of dying, F——was spared four years; and leaving the home, his wife, and the two little ones, came down from London, and they had lodgings in another part of the town. He desired to testify of Christ among his mates—this was withheld, but instead, the Lord gave him four years of soul-winning, —soul-winning?—for a man lying on his bed!—yes, dear reader—Paul and Silas won the jailer's soul when they were in the stocks; barred by dungeon walls; and locked within prison doors. It is not *where* we are, but *what*. His own can be "a sweet savour of Christ to God" anywhere, and everywhere. One day the man who had struck him was taken by a friend to see him. Again the faithful words of warning against sin, and the message of love to the sinner. The face of the poor drunkard and blasphemer grew white as death, but no word escaped his lips, and some time after F——passed away; he died full of joy and peace in Christ.

"I lie here and think of the moment that I shall see Him," he said one day. "The joy of it seems almost too much. It will be the happiest moment of my life when I see His face. *His very face*, marred *once for me*."

There is a beautiful picture, painted by Sir Noel Paton, belonging to the Queen, called "Death, the gate of Life." This dear one's face was very like the face of the kneeling warrior—worn with suffering, yet radiant with joy—the marks of death already there, yet to the wondrous beauty of a soul full of

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Christ—full to overflowing with His peace, and pardon, and praise. Quickly he seemed to learn *Him*. One could never find out his needs. He never told anyone but the Lord, of them, and said he never wanted for anything. In the little chamber of peace, one Sunday afternoon, we remembered the death of Christ with him, in the breaking of bread, and the drinking of the “cup of blessing”—remembrance of Him “until He come.” What changed the wild young fellow’s heart? Sickness? That often makes us more selfish, and hardens, if we have nothing in Christ. Being shut in to himself? That would be like being enclosed by hornets, if there were nothing but the old nature, and the remembrance of past misdeeds, for companions. No, he had learnt of Him who was “meek and lowly in heart,” and he had found rest to his soul. Rest, that no kingdoms or palaces could give. Rest, which thousands of years of learning could not bestow. The rest of sins forgiven; of a soul freed *for ever* from condemnation, and dark spots made white in the blood of the Lamb. Do you know it dear one? Is your soul “whiter than snow?” Are your sins blotted out as a thick cloud? Or do they stand like a black mountain between you and God? He will blot out thy transgressions for *His own sake* (Isaiah xlv. 22,) if you will go to Him as a sinner, and plead the finished work of Christ; for God is a just God, and He cannot visit your sins upon you, and upon Christ as well. *He* laid them upon Jesus—will you accept this?—or will you carry them yourself until they weigh you down to

death, and sink you into the everlasting misery "prepared for the Devil and his angels"? Not "prepared" *for you*, mind. God "willeth not the death of a sinner." "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways and live." (Ezekiel xviii. 23.)

"Christ died for the ungodly," and "God *so* loved *the world* that He gave His only begotten Son." Would you give your only son to save a friend's life? Then measure His great love by your feeble heart, if you can, and never dare to say that He does not love you.

In the house where F—lodged there was a young girl whom he had been the means of bringing to Christ. She had a great dread of death, and said her one desire was to be with him when he died. It was evening—just before the lamps were lighted—that he passed away, and this young Christian *was* with him. She declared that the room was full of a bright light as his soul quitted the body, and that when he could no longer speak he lifted his finger and pointed upward. As his hand dropped, he passed away. Just before he was taken, his mother-in-law went to stay with them. "It is like talking to a stone wall," he said, "she is so wrapt up in forms of religion." But the next day, with a glowing face: "I am so ashamed; my mother-in-law is trusting in Christ, and I almost doubted whether she ever would be *changed*." At his funeral his own father bowed at the feet of Jesus, hearing of Him there as

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the resurrection and the life. So he had a full harvest for his sowing. Will you not make another, from this little testimony of his joy and "peace in believing?" "What shall it profit a man?" *What shall it profit you?* "If he gain the whole world and lose his own soul." (Mark viii. 36). "The whole world," mind you. Not a part; not millions of money; not Great Britain or France, or Italy; but the *whole world*," and lose his *own soul*. What would you care by-and-by, dear reader, if cast out from the presence of God for eternity, that you had possessed the wealth of millions, and been admired and flattered by changeable hearts. Who would give then one drop to ease your anguish? What is the price of your soul? We know the price God set upon it. The price of the anguish and cruelty of Calvary. The price of His beloved, crowned with thorns, and scourged and mocked. The great loving heart of Jesus broken at the cross, because He took *your* place, and God forsook Him in His place as sin-bearer.

Do you prize it at this high price? If so, see to it to-day, that you place it in safe keeping; out of Satan's hands into His, for you know not what a day may bring forth. Said a pleasure-loving, godless woman once, as she shut up a novel she had just finished reading, "There! that is how *I* should like to die." That night her wish was granted; she had only time to call for a drop of water, and she was gone; gone into the presence of Him she scorned.

is a hard thing to refuse true love. Will you ever find any like His? Then, "see that ye refuse not Him that speaketh." It is *Christ*, not creeds that alone can save you—and *He will save you*—save to the uttermost *all* that come to Him.

THE gospel not only tells men they need forgiveness, it tells them, believing, they have it—not a single spot, all the sins gone. But how can you say that? you ask. Does not God say so? Perhaps you are not caring for it! It is terrible if you are not—terrible that God should spend His Son and you not care about it! That is worse than breaking the law, for the blood was shed to wash away that sin. But when atonement has been made, and is rejected, or treated with indifference, what can be done? For "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." By the gospel, we announce the forgiveness of your sins, and a perfect righteousness wrought out for you. Have you got it? Do you think God has spent His Son to atone for our sins, and work out this righteousness, and we not need it? If you need it, have you got it? Have you ever been in the presence of God? Have your eyes ever been opened to see your nakedness in the presence of God? The blind man does not know his state. When God has clothed a man, he is not naked. God clothed Adam with skins. When a man has put on Christ, surely it may be said, "By grace are ye saved."

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HISTORY OF A SOUL.

THE Lord has laid it on my heart to tell of the way He brought me to Himself; indeed, necessity is laid upon me to do so. (1 Cor. ix. 16.)

One naturally shrinks from speaking or writing of one's self, yet, if it should be for the glory of God in blessing to but one soul, such feelings may well be laid on one side.

Although when quite a child I had serious impressions, getting alone to read my bible, and would frequently commence the week resolving to be "good;" yet it was not until I was nearly sixteen that I was convinced I was a sinner, which caused me great anxiety, sometimes such deep distress, I could scarcely bear it, and then it would wear off, and I was careless and indifferent.

I did not know the simple gospel, but was wanting to know if I were a child of God, if I were one of the elect, and would often find myself saying:—

"Am I elect? I want to know,
The thought has tried me sore;
For Jesus' blessings to them flow,
To them and to no more."

Oh what a dreadful perversion this is of the gospel of God's grace which is free to "whosoever will!" (Rev. xxii. 17.)

As time went on, eternal things became more real, and thus my anxiety increased, and sometimes it was truly the one thing "needful." How often I said: "Lord to whom shall I go, Thou hast the words of

eternal life," and: "Say unto my soul, I am Thy salvation."

But God in His great love watched over me, and drew my heart to Himself. Surely He pitied my ignorance, and if I did not follow Him according to His word, He followed me, giving me often to enjoy His sweet presence, when reading His word or in prayer in my own room, so that I could then believe I was His child, and safe for eternity.

But I was resting on my feelings, for when they changed I was again full of doubt and fear. I was looking within, instead of looking without to Christ, not understanding the ground on which God could save sinners, and before I had peace I passed through a fortnight of such agony of soul I shall never forget; though afterwards I could bless God for it.

One Friday evening (June 18th) a horror of great darkness came over me—I remember saying, it was a darkness that could be felt. (Exodus x. 21.) Every ray of hope fled, and I felt myself to be the greatest sinner that ever lived, and my just desert to be hell. I joined the thief on the cross and said: "We indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds." I could scarcely eat, drink, or sleep, so was brought low in body. Friends tried to comfort me, assuring me I was all right, but I could not believe it. I think God was teaching me that in His sight there is no difference between the moral and immoral, but "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." (Pro. xxvii. 19.)

I understand have painful side, with confess the grace of God that saves us keeps us white (ix. 117.)

But the glorious light (iv. 6). The day as if it (2nd, 18— led me to the garden of Gethsemane to what was

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I understand this better now, because since then I have painfully felt what it is to place myself side by side, with one and another I have heard of, and confess their sin as my own, knowing but for the grace of God I had lived as they. It is grace alone that saves us (Eph. ii. 5); and God's power alone that keeps us when saved. (1 Peter i. 5, Jude 24, Psalm cix. 117.)

But the darkness was only sent to usher in the glorious light, and oh what a light it was! (2 Cor. iv. 6). Though many years since, I remember the day as if it were but yesterday—it was Friday, July 2nd, 18——about one o'clock, when the Holy Spirit led me to think of Jesus in His agony of soul in the garden of Gethsemane, when He was looking forward to what was before Him on the cross.

One often thinks now, if He was "sore amazed and very heavy," and "His soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death," when only contemplating what was before Him, what must have been His sufferings when He actually drank the dreadful cup on the cross, which was filled with the righteous wrath of a holy God against sin.

We know :

"That wrath would have kindled a hell

Of never abating despair,

In millions of creatures, which fell

On Jesus—and spent itself there."

From Gethsemane, the Holy Spirit led me to Calvary, and I went over in thought all that transpired there, until at last I said to myself "It was for me—

Jesus died for me—suffered for me—shed His precious blood for me,” and then He spoke those words with sweetness to my soul: “It is finished,” and I knew and believed the work was finished there, and then, that saved my soul. “For by one offering” etc., (Heb. x 14.)

If one single thing had yet to be done it would be a flat contradiction of these precious words of Jesus on the cross. But, “It is finished,” and I knew I was saved, my sins forgiven, and I, who only deserved hell, was now as sure of heaven as if already there; indeed for many weeks I seemed half there, for He had won my heart, even as David won the heart of Mephibosheth by his unexpected kindness. (2 Sam. ix. xix. 30.) Oh how I did long to depart and be with Christ! I experienced the truth of 1 Peter i. 8, for what joy and rest of heart it gives when we can say “We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” (Eph. i. 7, and also Rom. v. 1.) It completely swallowed up all that had gone before.

But oh! the tears I shed, and the sorrow I felt, because my sins had been the cause of His sufferings—to know that He “Who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” had died for one so vile as I—that He had taken my wretched place as a sinner, in order to bear my sins in His own body on the tree”—and had suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring me to God;” (oh how intensely personal this is to each one when it is first enjoyed) and yet one knows that in no other way could God have been glorified, and sinners saved. It is such a comfort, our blessings flow through so righteous a

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channel that "grace reigns through righteousness." (Rom. v. 21.)

How one loves that verse, Rom. v. 8, God could not possibly have given us a greater expression of His love, than He has in the gift of His beloved Son, "God is love." No wonder that sometimes one is "in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better;" and yet this is a selfish wish, only thinking of one's own happiness, whereas the Lord has set before us the "blessed hope" of His own return to take *all* "His own" to be with Himself for ever. (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.)

AND now, dear reader, a word with you about the state of *your* soul. Are you *saved*—or *lost*? Which? Don't shirk the question. It must be answered soon. The longest life has its end. Who has given you a lease of long life? A long eternity you shall have. Where will you spend it? Another day may find you in it. Gone forever from earth, where Christ died, "suffered for sins once, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Gone where? With Christ? Or without Him? Would it be without him? You tremble to say "Yes." Stop—listen. Your future is awful. *Forgotten* by man—*forsaken* by God—*forever* in hell. Oh pause a moment in your downward course! List the voice of love speaking to *you*—speaking from heaven—"Come unto Me."—"Look unto Me."—"I am Jesus."—"By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

YOUR SINS

HAVE you met God about your sins? Have you answered this solemn question? Where is thy brother? Why is He not here? He had eternal life. No one—not only no man, but *no one* had power to take it away, He laid it down of Himself. His death might seem like the death of any other: but it did differ most essentially from any beside. It was the death of a man who was a divine person. Not all the legions of Rome could have taken it from Him, had He not given it up Himself. He was the willing prisoner, and the willing sacrifice. When the band of armed men came to take Him, after proving with what perfect ease He could baffle His persecutors—for when He said, “I am He,” they went backward and fell to the ground—He gave Himself into their hands, and yet men take advantage of His love to deny His power,—take advantage of His humiliation to gainsay His glory? Alas! men refuse to commit their souls, without an anxious thought, to that precious blood whose virtue is proclaimed in God’s own word. Strange, that in these days of such an extensive circulation of the word of God, there should be so little real belief in its power. The Turk, with his Koran, believes what it tells him; goes through his prayers, ablutions, and forms, and is satisfied that he is one of the faithful. But those who have God’s word are afraid to trust Him; afraid lest after all their sins should rise up against them; but what does God proclaim that blood for? Either the death of Christ is of no value; or no sin of scarlet dye

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can rise up to make me doubt it is all put away, if I believe God's word about it. No doubt sin ought to humble me. But he who knows most of himself, while resting on the blood of Christ, will be the most humble. Suppose a man in debt so deeply that he is afraid even to look into his books to discern the amount, but a friend appears, who has unbounded resources and says: I will pay your debt. No matter what your lack of credit is; the question is, what is *the friend's* name? will it stand good? He will not only pay your debts, but set you up as you never were before. It is precisely so that God works through His beloved Son, and when a man believes, he should not be afraid to look at himself; he can afford to let the light of God shine into his heart, and search out, and shew him, all his motives; and all the discoveries of his own evil, ought to be only for the discovery of the worth of that which has blotted out all his sins forever. This binds him to Christ with a new hatred of sin that he never knew before. God is exalted as a Saviour-God who has come down to me in His Son. Not as One who could have no sympathy with me, but in that blessed Man who thought it not robbery to be equal with God—in Him of whom the prophets spoke, testifying of His glory; and if you believe the inestimable privilege is yours of being saved by Him, without even a speck of sin left upon you. What a joy! and well may you rejoice, if this portion is yours.

And what a thought it is that something so wonderful is always going on—God thinking of souls;

pressing their salvation upon *you* ; telling you of His Son as the Saviour. Will you not accept Him for the worth at which God accounts Him ? Remember the word of God, " When *I* see the blood, I will pass over you." How many say, " If only, *I* could see the blood ! " Does God call you to do this ? *He* sees it, and faith means the soul resting upon the value that God attaches to the blood of His dear Son ! So that I can say, my sins, which were scarlet, are washed away ; though they were many, they are all forgiven. There may be many important questions ; but every question sinks into insignificance in presence of this — the value of Christ, and His blood, in the presence of God. I am brought to meet God at His judgment-seat now, as it were, in my own conscience ; and there I hear His voice saying, the blood of Jesus Christ my Son, cleanses from all sin. Reader, have you thus come ? May this be the language of your heart. "*I believe.*" What is it that hinders the giving up of self ? of the little world, or the great world ? If I give up myself and bow before the only worthy One, this exalts God. It is the acknowledgment that He is good to me in my sins. In Israel, God was at a distance, hidden, and they had to approach Him ; but now, God is going out to sinners ; Jesus came " to seek and to save that which was lost." God was so bent on blessing sinners, that He must become manifest in flesh to die for them. Thus the sum is this ; if I prefer myself, I am a lost man ; but if I cast myself upon the worthiness of Christ, I can join those who say, " Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."