

THE SOWER.

THE WATER OF LIFE.

“ Broken heart ! the fountain’s open,
Christ hath died upon the tree,
All the powers of hell are shaken,
Grace flows down from God to thee.”

“ God Himself, the Source, the Fountain
Christ the Way the waters flow,
By the Spirit, down from heaven
To the thirsty heart below.”

“ Now’s the time, the time accepted,
Now to thee God’s light hath shone,
Christ God’s love hath manifested,
He the finished work hath done.

“ By one righteousness completed,
Adam’s life receives its doom ;
Jesus Christ, in glory seated,
Everlasting life hath won.”

“ Broken heart ! the river’s flowing,
Haste ! delay not ! yet there’s room ;
Hear the word of God beseeching,
‘ Whosoever thirsts may come.’ ”

THE WORK OF THE CROSS.

In Jesus on the cross, the Son of man has been glorified in a much more admirable way than He will be even by the positive glory that belongs to Him under that title. He will, we know, be clothed with that glory; but, on the cross, the Son of man bore all that was necessary for the perfect display of all the glory of God. The whole weight of that glory was brought to bear upon Him, to put Him to the proof that it might be seen whether he could sustain it, verify and exalt it; and that by setting it forth in the place where, but for this, sin concealed that glory, and, so to speak, gave it impiously the lie. Was the Son of man able to enter into such a place, to undertake such a task, and to accomplish the task, and maintain His place without failure to the end? This Jesus did. The majesty of God was to be vindicated against the insolent rebellion of His creature; His truth, which had threatened him with death, maintained; His justice established against sin (who could withstand it?) and, at the same time, His love fully demonstrated. Satan having here all the sorrowful rights that he had acquired through our sin, Christ—perfect as a man, alone, apart from all men, in obedience, and having as man, but one object, that is, the glory of God, thus divinely perfect, sacrificing *Himself* for this purpose—fully glorified God. God was glorified *in Him*. His justice, His majesty, His truth, His

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love—all was verified on the cross as they are in Himself, and revealed only there; and that with regard to sin.

And God can now act freely, according to that which He is to Himself, without any one attribute hiding, or obscuring, or contradicting another. Truth condemned man to death, justice for ever condemned the sinner, majesty demanded the execution of the sentence. Where, then, was love? If love, as man would conceive it, were to pass over all, where would be His majesty and His justice? and moreover, that could not be; nor would it really then be love, but indifference to evil. By means of the cross, He is just, and He justifies in grace; He is love, and in that love He bestows His righteousness on man. The righteousness of God takes the place of man's sin to the believer. The righteousness, as well as the sin of man vanishes before the bright light of grace, and does not becloud the sovereign glory of a grace like this towards man who was really alienated from God.

“God of all grace! I gladly own,
What in His death Thy Christ has done:
What He is there upon Thy throne,
What Christ is *now*, and Christ alone,
Is all my joyful plea;
He's all *my* trust! He's all *my* boast!
For, since He died to save the *lost*,
I'm sure He died for *me*.”

FEELINGS.

The all-important questions for an anxious soul are not what it feels and what it thinks, but, such as the following:

1. What is God to me a guilty sinner?
2. What has God done to save me a lost sinner?
3. What will God do for me an awakened, seeking sinner?
4. What will God be to me a believing sinner?

To some of our readers, and especially our youthful readers, these questions may be subjects of interesting Scriptural enquiry. And when the first is understood, the doubts and fears will be all gone, and the second, third, and fourth will be quite plain. So we will leave them, and give, in illustration of our subject, the substance of a recent conversation with a young man in deep concern about his soul. He introduced himself by saying,

"I would like to speak to you by yourself. I am very anxious, very unhappy, cannot rest. I cannot see my way clear at all."

"Well, what a mercy! what a mercy it is to have the conscience touched about sin, and the heart in any measure turned to God. Can you believe that He is doing all this in love? Are you satisfied that God loves you notwithstanding all your sins?"

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I feel that I am a great sinner ; you don't know what I have been, but I can't feel as if I would be forgiven."

"Do you really believe that God regards you as a great sinner?"

"O yes, indeed I do ; I am sure of that."

"But now, tell me, how are you so sure of that?"

"Because I know it—I feel it ; I have been a very great sinner."

"But is there no other way that we may know it besides feeling it ? Has not God told us in His word that we are all sinners ?"

"Yes, I know He has, and I would give the world to know that I am pardoned."

"O, you need not speak about giving ; God is not asking anything ; neither is He seeking to condemn you because of your sins, but to turn your heart to Jesus. But now, take the ground of faith as a sinner. You can only have to do with God now by faith. Know and believe that you are a sinner, not because you feel it, but because God says it. And then comes the important question, What is God to me a sinner ? Now, don't look within—look to Himself—hear His word. What does it say ? 'But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' (Rom. v, 8). Can you receive the truth here so plainly stated, namely, that God is love to you a sinner ?"

"The word says it, and we should believe it ; I know that."

“But should not *you* believe it now? Will it be truer to-morrow? Does not God say He loves the sinner! and you say that’s what you are. Therefore He says plainly that He loves you.”

“That’s what I want to believe, but I can’t feel that He loves me; my sins seem so great.”

“Well, that’s true, but in place of looking at your sins, as you know them in yourself, look at them in the light of this verse, and you will see that it is by means of these that you know how much God loves you. It was your sins that drew forth this wondrous love, in the gift of Jesus. God loved us, Christ died for us, ‘while we were yet sinners’—while we were as black and vile as sin could make us. Righteousness judged the sins, and love saves the sinner, through the sufferings and death of the blessed Lord Jesus. O, wondrous, wondrous love! But mark, this is not all. Not only has God manifested His love in giving Jesus to die for you a sinner, but the same love has followed you in all your wanderings, and now He has laid His hand of love upon you, and is drawing you to His beloved Son. O, yield your heart to the drawings of His love. Look up! only look to Jesus! Hear Him saying to you, ‘Look unto me, . . . and be ye saved,’ and ‘Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest.’ Be done, then, with your feelings and reasonings about yourself. Dwell on the love of God as it has been manifested in the death of Christ for you, and let your whole soul rest on the truth of that word, ‘The blood of Jesus

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Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' The moment you take your place among the 'us' who believe, your sins are all cleansed away. The answer of Jesus to your every anxious look and earnest desire, is, 'Thy sins which were many are all forgiven. Go in peace.' I John i, 7; Luke vii, 36, 50."

"Well, I think I believe all that; I see it quite differently now. But I thought that I ought to feel it all in myself, before I could believe it was true to me. I now see I must not look to myself, but only to Jesus."

"Yes my dear young man, the only sure way of keeping our eyes off ourselves, is to keep them fixed on Jesus."

Before closing this paper, we desire to say a plain word on the perplexing subject of "feeling." We meet with it everywhere. The mistake into which so many fall, is that of confounding the enjoyment of truth, when believed, with the mere feelings or impressions of their own minds. When persons say, "I can't feel that God loves me—that Christ died for me—that my sins are forgiven," we believe they simply mean, "I do not enjoy or feel the power of these blessed truths." But how can these or any other truths be enjoyed, or their power felt, until they are believed? Faith never refers to self, but always to the word of God. We meet with many who want to *feel* that they are believers, before they have believed the truth, and to feel that they are safe before they trust in Jesus.

Now, this is all confusion. The *truth* to be believed, mark, is *outside* of self—the *enjoyment* of it is *within*. “The Lord direct your hearts,” says the apostle, “into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.” (II Thess. iii, 5). These blessed central truths are ever the same—unchangeable, outside, and independent of the believer; nevertheless, they are to be enjoyed in the heart. But if we at times fail to realize their power, and to enjoy them in our hearts, they remain unchangeably the same. The object of faith is ever outside of self—the enjoyment of it *within*. Our failing to enjoy the object, can never lessen its value, or change its character.

The truth as to pardon, peace, and acceptance must be received in faith before it can be enjoyed, or its power felt. The same moment that the sinner is brought to Jesus in faith, the whole need of the soul is met—fully, perfectly, and forever met. When this is believed, the soul has rest; not, observe, in its own feelings, but in the word of Christ believed. He never says to one who comes to Him, “I will forgive.” No, blessed be His name; but, in plainest terms, He says, “Son, daughter, thy sins *are* forgiven, thy faith *hath* saved thee; *go in peace.*” Mark ii, 5.

The only question now is, Can the troubled one receive it as the truth of God? If so, the voice of Jesus has spoken peace to that soul. And if the ear be kept open only for Him, its peace will be as complete and settled as the word of Christ can make it. Did Jesus ever send away a seeking soul from His

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presence in a state of uncertainty? No! never! and He never will. His word is pledged. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." When He says, "Thy sins *are* forgiven," should the soul have another doubt as to the blessed fact? When he says, "Thy faith *hath* saved thee," should the slightest feeling of uncertainty remain? When He says, "Go in *peace*," should the soul go in trouble? Assuredly not! And assuredly it will not, if only it looks to Him, and not within—if only it hears His word, and listens not to the voice of its own feelings. Oh! that anxious, troubled souls, would only cease from looking within, and from judging of their state before God from their own feelings. The blessed consequences of faith in Christ are fully and plainly revealed in God's word. Let the eye of faith rest on it, and let the heart of faith count it most surely, and forever, true, and then peace, like a river, will flow into your soul. The character of your own mind, the nature of your religious education, or your present opportunities, can in no wise affect the heart of God, or the word and work of Christ. Faith's blessed, and never-ending consequences, the Spirit of truth declares to be, 1. *Being justified.* 2. *Having peace.* 3. *Standing in favour.* 4. *Waiting for glory.* "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. v, 1, 2).

DOES THE BIBLE SAY SO?

A FEW years since, a dear servant of the Lord—a colored man—on his way from London to a town on the sea coast, entered a railway carriage in which were several passengers. Having had to hurry to the station, he sat down, and leaning back in his seat to recover breath, looked out of the window.

Presently the train moved on; and as they passed the busy crowds still left on the platform, he thought of the multitudes rushing through this world without any concern about eternity or their immortal souls. His color attracted the notice of an elderly lady who was seated opposite him, for he soon became conscious that she was regarding him with marked attention.

She said to her companion, "What an interesting looking person that is! he looks ill. What a fine race of people he must belong to! I wonder who he is. Do you think he is a Turk or a Hindoo?" "I think he is an Indian," said the young lady. "I wish we could speak to him," continued the elderly lady; "I quite long to tell him the way to Heaven." "Perhaps he may be able to read English a little, if he cannot speak it," suggested the young lady. "You might offer him a tract," said one of the gentlemen. The elderly lady opened her bag, and from a number selected one, which she presented to him with a smile

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and motion to read it. He received the tract, bowed his thanks, and read it through in silence.

While he was reading it, they talked together.

Availing himself of a pause in the conversation, our friend, in good English, thanked the lady for the care of his soul, telling her that it was an all-important object to him, adding, "I heard you say, madam, you longed to tell me the way to Heaven; have the kindness to tell me how I am sure of going there. This tract does not tell me how I am *sure* now, that I shall be saved. It tells me to repent of my sins and to pray, but how can I *know* when I have prayed and repented enough? Can you not tell me plainly how I may be sure of getting to Heaven? Have you no other book that tells a poor sinner how he may get to Heaven?"

"Oh, yes," said the lady, "the Bible, which is the Word of God, was given on purpose to show the way to Heaven. Read the Bible and pray, and you will be sure to go to Heaven."

"Can you show me in God's Word where that is said? Where does it say that if I pray, I shall go to Heaven? I want you to be sure of that. Have you a Bible, madam? And can you point out the text which plainly tells how I may be sure of that?"

She had no Bible in her bag. The other three passengers were asked for a Bible, but no one carried a Bible about with them.

At last our friend drew the precious volume from his pocket, and holding it up, said, "Is that the book

you mean, madam? If it be the word of God, given to show the way to Heaven, it will surely give plain directions. Will you kindly show me where?"

The lady took the Bible, and turning over the leaves, said, "I do not know exactly where to find what I want to show you, but it says if you repent of your sins and pray earnestly, you will be saved."

"That does not satisfy me. How am I to know that I have prayed enough to satisfy God? Can you not point out one portion that is enough to rest upon?"

The lady, turning to her companion, said, "Can you find it?" She answered, "No." The lady asked the others in turn; and the Bible was offered to each with the entreaty that they would point out some passage that told plainly how the sinner was to get to Heaven. But all confessed their inability to recollect where such passages could be found.

The lady returned the Bible, and said, "Well, I cannot find the place, but if you will call upon the Rev. Mr. ——, when you reach F——, he will tell you. He is a very good man, an Evangelical clergyman; and he will be happy to direct you."

"But, madam, we may never reach F——. The train may run off the line, and we may all be killed. We may have a collision. Many things may happen; I do not know that I may live to see F——. Can none of you Christians tell a poor foreigner how he may be saved?"

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"You must pray," said the lady. "The Bible says so."

Our friend, the colored gentleman, took the Bible, and opening it at John iii, 14-16 read out the verses: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 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." Then John v, 24:—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath everlasting life*, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life;" and Acts xiii, 38, 39: "Be it known to you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him *all that believe are* justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses."

"Are these the portions you mean, madam?" he asked.

"Yes, that is what I could not remember."

"But you told me I must pray and repent. This precious book tells me to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and I shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Praise to His name! The poor foreigner can trust that blessed word, and know he is safe for Heaven, safe through the work of that Lord Jesus Christ which was finished on the cross more than 1800

years ago ; and is happy in knowing He is justified from all things, in virtue of that blood shed for sinners, and not by his own prayers and repentance."

He then proceeded, at some length ; to set forth to his astonished fellow-travellers the love that led God to send His Son into this world to die for sinners, and the love that brought the Son to do the will of His Father.

Now, how many of our readers could give a plain and scriptural answer to the question of the colored preacher, "Can you not tell me plainly how I may be sure of getting to Heaven?" Some of you may be interested in the heathen, and perhaps give your pence and prayers to send them the Gospel of God's love to sinners, while yourselves are as yet *unsaved*. O, my dear friends! let me ask you, are your sins forgiven? Do you know the way of salvation for yourselves? Is forgiveness of sins to be obtained through our repentance, prayers or goodness, or how is it to be had? Now God has given us an answer to this question, and on *His* answer my soul can rest: "Be it known to you . . . that through this man (Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii, 38, 39). These verses are so very simple that even a child can understand them. *Through this Man*—not, you will see, through prayers or repentance—is preached forgiveness of sins. O, dear friends! it is so simple. Jesus finished the work, and now there is FORGIVENESS OF SINS to everyone that will only trust Him.

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THE GOD OF PEACE.

Is my reader anxious about salvation? Is he desirous of knowing the pardon of his sins? Does he sigh after the peace of the gospel? If so, let him only pause and think of this;—"The God of judgment" met Christ on the cross, and there entered into and definitely settled the great question of sin. How is this to be known? Is it by some feeling in my own mind? Is it by my passing through some mental process? Is it by aught that I can do, or say, or think, or feel? Nay. How then? "The God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus." This is the way I am to know that the question of sin has been eternally settled. If it had not been settled, we should never have heard aught of "The God of peace," or seen aught of "The great Shepherd's" opening grave, or known aught of the changeless efficacy of the blood of "The everlasting covenant." The God of peace could never have appeared on the scene, if all the claims of the God of judgment had not been divinely answered. How were they answered? By the blood of Jesus—nothing less—nothing more—nothing different. Naught else could avail. If I had all the good works that were ever performed beneath the canopy of heaven; if I had all the morality, all the fleshly pietism, all the legal righteousness that ever man could boast of; if I had all the alms that ever were distributed by the hand of benevolence; if I had all these and ten thousand times ten thousand more besides placed to my credit, it would not answer the claims of the God of judgment with respect to my sins. But the death of Christ *has* answered for me. That sacrifice stands before the eye of infinite holiness, in all its solitary grandeur, in all its divine sufficiency. It needs no addition. It has met all. What more do I want, as the ground of my peace? Nothing more.

Reader, are you satisfied? Is Christ sufficient for you? Has He done enough to meet the claims of your conscience? Do you want to add something of your own doings or feelings to His all-sufficient atonement? If not, what are you waiting for? You say, "I do not *feel*." I reply, we are not saved by feeling, but by faith. "The just shall live," not by *feeling*, but "by faith." Do you not see that while you talk of not feeling, you are still on legal ground—on the ground of works. You have, it may be, abandoned the idea of *manual* labour, but you are still looking to your *mental* labour. The one is as worthless as the other. Give up both, as a ground of salvation, and take Christ. This is what you want in order to be happy. If you were to hear a person say, "I am happy, now, I have peace with God, because I have given a hundred pounds in charity," would you not pronounce him self-deceived? Doubtless; and yet you say, "If I could *feel*, I should be happy." Where lies the difference between "do" and "feel?" Is not the one as stable a foundation for a sinner's peace as the other? Would it not be better to let Christ supplant both? Is there not enough in Him without your feelings, as well as without your works? If your feelings or your works had been necessary, then why did "The God of peace bring again from the dead our Lord Jesus?" Is it not evident that you are seeking something more, as a ground of peace, than that which is presented to you in the gospel?

Dear friend, do think of this. My heart's desire is that you may rest, now and evermore, in a full Christ; that He may be sufficient for you, as He is sufficient for God. Then feelings and works of the right kind will be forthcoming, not as a ground of peace, but as the fragrant fruits of an enjoyed salvation—not as a title to life, but as the outflow of a life possessed through faith in Christ.