

THE SOWER.

THE OPENED EYE.

Blind men maintain that this short life
Is all that we shall ever live,
And in the face of tears and strife,
Cry, "Only this can pleasure give!"

The eye that Christ has open'd sees
This present life already dead,
But sees beyond another is
Set brightly flowing in its stead.

This eye perceives that deadly sin
Runs in the very veins of man,
And more, that he can never win
To holiness, do all he can.

Himself is vile, unfit for bliss,
To which he never will attain,
But when his years are told, from this
He'll pass into a world of pain.

It sees him passing, it perceives
The swiftness of his flight to be
Beyond the swallow's and he leaves
The circling seasons presently.

Oh, that all eyes might be touched soon
By Christ, the ever-gracious Lord!
For with new sight another boon,
SALVATION FREE, he doth afford.

“ AINT IT NICE.”

“ **A** MECHANIC and his wife had taken a poor sick woman into their house, who had been turned out of house and home, because of her inability to pay rent. I entered the sick room and found lying upon the bed a woman past middle life, far gone with a terrible disease that was literally eating her life away. She was wan and thin; her face was marr'd with pain, and ploughed into deep furrows with suffering. At the time, she was moaning with agony; so that for a while I could not speak to her, but taking her thin hand in mine, I sat by the bedside and waited awhile till she turned her face toward me.

I then said, “my dear friend, I am sorry to see you so sick and suffering so much.” “Yes,” said she, “I am sick, and I am suffering more than I can tell you. Oh the pain is so great, but it won't be for long, I think.” “And are you at peace with God?” I asked. With this, a look of darkness and mental distress worked its way into the face of pain, and turning her distressed eyes away from mine she said in a despairing kind of way, “No, no, I have not as yet made my peace with God, and I am too sick to do it now; I am in such pain that I cannot even think of it for long at a time. Oh no, I have not made my peace with God.” Then in a few detached sentences, she betrayed the false teaching she had received upon the whole subject of salvation by grace through faith; all of which was so mingled with despair that my heart was greatly moved.

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I waited till she was done, and then said kindly, and softly to her, "I have some good news to tell you." "Good news for me," she said "there can scarcely be any good news for such as me; but pray what is it?" "Why, that you have no need to try and make your peace with God." Upon this, she turned with a quick eager glance toward me, and said, "What is that you say, sir? And what do you mean by saying that I do not have to make my peace with God?"

I mean this, *that peace with God has been made by another*, and I have come to tell you about it. And first, let me say, you are quite right in saying that you are too sick to try and make your peace with God; and even if you were ever so well, you could not yourself make peace with a justly offended God. But God Himself, has, through the sacrifice of His only begotten Son, opened up a way by which you can obtain peace with Him. Jesus Christ is our peace; and He came into the world to be a propitiation for our sins and iniquities, but is now entered in to the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." And then as simply as I could, I went on to explain to her God's plan of salvation; how that Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, had come into the world to save sinners; and that God made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, and how that God laid upon Him the iniquity of us all; how that He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, and how that the chastisement of our peace was laid upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. And again

how He bore our sins in His own body on the tree ; and how that He died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, and many other like precious truths.

And then opening my bible, I read to her from Col. i, 20, that Christ had made peace for us by the blood of His cross ; and from Eph. ii, 14, that Christ is our peace ; and from vs. 17, that He came and preached peace to us, who were far off, and that we therefore have no need to take it upon ourselves to try and make peace by our works, or our walk, our penitence our prayers, or penances ; but that Christ having made peace for us, *once for all*, by the sacrifice of Himself on the cross—He now declares it to us, and is now offering it to us freely—on the simple condition of our accepting it in the simplicity of faith. And so I said to her. Do you not now see what God in Christ has done for you ? and that He now can, as it were, say to you, “You, poor helpless sinner, you have no need to try and make your peace with me, only believe in what has been done for you, and rest contented there.”

During all this reading and explaining, she had regarded me most intently and eagerly ; and indeed so great was her interest that she had raised herself partly on her elbows, resting her forehead on her hand. And when I had finished, and was waiting a moment to see the effect the “Word” was having upon her, she said, with great eagerness--“Oh, sir, would you read again to me about the peace?” So I read the passages again to her, and again sought to show her how that the Lord Jesus had undertaken

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her cause for her, and how completely He had made peace for her; and how utterly useless and unnecessary any thing would be that we might attempt to do to this end.

Her eyes closed with my last words; the tears trickled into, and down the deep furrows of her pain-worn face; a sweet restful smile came about her lips, and laying herself down, she said again, and again, "Aint it nice! Oh, aint it nice, that the Son of God should come into this world, and die, to make peace for the likes of me? Aint it nice? Oh, aint it nice?"

I arose softly, and left her with a new found Saviour and peace.

As I went away from that house, my own eyes were full of tears; but my heart was full of joy and peace; and I was saying to myself as I have hundreds of times since, Aint it nice! Oh, aint it nice? that the Son of God should come into the world and die to make peace for the likes of me, simple and unworthy me! Aint it nice?

A PRECIOUS DEATH.

A LITTLE boy in the neighborhood of London, England, recently died. He was only twelve years old, but had by God's grace, learnt that Jesus Christ was *his* Saviour, and that God had cast all his sins into the depths of the sea. Just previous to the moment of his death he exclaimed, "O, precious Jesus!" and having thus cried he fell asleep in Jesus.

And now dear reader, young or old, have you learnt that Jesus is *precious*? Well! He is precious to him that *believeth*. Do you *believe* that He died on the cross for *you* and that He there blotted out all *your* sins by the sacrifice of Himself? If so you too can *now* exclaim "O precious Jesus."

THE PARABLE OF LUKE XV.

IN its three parts this parable illustrates the threefold work of God in the salvation of sinners; and also the three aspects of their state, strayed, lost, dead—the divine and human sides. The man after his strayed sheep “which is lost,” is the Saviour, “the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke xix, 10).

The woman in the second part, with her “candle,” in quest of the lost piece of silver, sets forth the Holy Spirit with the glad tidings diligently seeking the lost sinner, “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph, ii, 1), “by them which have preached the gospel . . .” “with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” (I. Peter i, 12).

The Father’s joy in the third part is in receiving his wandering son, “For this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry” (Luke xv, 24).

The grace of God appears in this threefold way, and is intensified by the unworthiness of its object (see Titus ii, 11).

“The good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep” (John x, 11), and “when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. i, 3). The Holy Spirit came from heaven “to reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John xvi, 8), but bearing a message of glad tidings from a glorified Saviour

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who had made atonement on the cross, inviting sinners to the Father's feast of good things.

It is instructive to notice that the triple expression of joy is all on the divine side, a fact of much importance for the solid comfort of the believer in Christ. He finds no comfort in his changeable feelings, but looks away from himself and is satisfied with his object, Christ on high. He is silent but the language of his heart is, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, etc.," (Is. lxi. 10).

It is interesting too, to notice the three stages in the history of the "younger son." First, having "gathered all together," he struck out *for himself*, to have his fling in the distant land. The second stage was reached when having "spent all," and was about to "perish with hunger," "he came *to himself*," and said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee." Happy moment, only surpassed when at the third stage in his history, he came to the *end of himself* in his father's arms.

How many really born of God have lingered in the by-paths of the world, having a most uncertain christian experience with mingled doubts and fears, through not having reached the third stage of the prodigals path? These know not "the love of God," which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Rom. v, 5).

There is however a dark back-ground to this divine picture. The Pharisees, scribes and "the elder son," religious but Christless professors represent those who seek rest in their own "dead works." They can pray "with" themselves, and "thank God that" they are "not as other men." (Juke xviii, 11), but they are strangers to this new found joy, and ignorant of the grace of God. They despise when they have no nature nor taste for, and "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." which "is by faith," and found only in the prodigal's path "from the far off country." (Rom. x, 3, 4). "By grace ye are saved through faith." (Eph. ii, 8, 9).

Either Christ's atoning sacrifice is sufficient, or it is not. If it is sufficient, why these doubts and fears? The words of our *lips* profess that the work is finished, but the doubts and fears of the *heart* declare that it is not. Every one who doubts His full and everlasting forgiveness denies, as far as he is concerned, the completeness of the sacrifice of Christ.

The ground of settled peace, in the midst of a world of sin and sorrow, is to assure my soul that God is true when He says, that He "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

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THE INDIAN'S GIFT TO JESUS.

IN a portion of America from which the red man has now been driven, a meeting was held in a wild forest. The theme of the preacher was "Christ and Him crucified." The preacher spoke of the love of the Good Shepherd who came into the world to seek and to save the lost. He told how this Saviour met the rude buffetings of the heartless soldiers, and the mockery and scorn of the ungrateful Jews. He drew a picture of Gethsemane, and the crucified Nazarene bleeding upon the cross. He told his wild congregation how the kind Jesus was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted; wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. He told the Indians, that all men like sheep have gone astray; all have turned, every one his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all; and the Lord Jesus, as a Good Shepherd, lay down his life for the naughty sheep.

Soon there was a slight movement in the assembly, and a tall son of the forest, with tears on his red cheeks, approached the pulpit, and said, "Did Jesus die for me—die for poor Indian?"

"Yes," said the preacher. "Jesus died for sinners."

"Me give Jesus," replied the Indian, "my dog, my rifle."

"Jesus," said the preacher, "does not want those gifts."

“Me give Jesus my blanket, too. Poor Indian he got no lands to give Jesus—the white man take them away. Poor Indian got no more to give,”

The preacher replied, “Jesus is now risen, and is in heaven at the right hand of God, and He can and will make rich those who believe in Him.”

The poor, ignorant, but generous child of the forest bent his head in sorrow and meditated. He raised his noble brow once more and fixed his eye on the preacher, while he sobbed out, “*Here is a poor Indian, will Jesus have him?*”

A thrill of unutterable joy ran through the soul of the preacher and of the people, as this fierce son of the wilderness now sat, in his renewed mind, at the feet of Jesus. Reader hast thou given thyself to Christ?

Oh, what rest, what happiness for the poor soul, when he sees he has to do with One who has conquered all enemies for him, and in whom he has treasured up all glory for him! Before he came to the consciousness of this, the book of his daily transgressions appeared to ascend up before God black with the catalogue of his offences, on every leaf of which was written, “Sin, sin, sin.” But now these blackened characters are effaced, and on each page is transcribed, in letters of blood, in the blood of God’s dear Lamb, “Love, love, love.”

"I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH,
AND THE LIFE."

I AM the way—the beginning, the middle, and the end: I am the Alpha and Omega of thy salvation. He that is in Me is on the way, and before he cast his look on Me he was not on the way. There is no such thing as a way to Me, yet there is a way forth from Me to heaven.

There is no distance between the sinner and Christ. The sinner may choose a way for himself, but he does it at his own risk. Just there, where the sinner is standing in the very mire of sin, the way begins: it is just there Jesus lights on him, and there He helps him. He is also without power to take one step heavenwards before he has given himself up to Christ, and He alone then guides him.

He is the way—walk in the way. He is the truth—out of Him all is a lie. Those who cast Him away, and utterly neglect Him, whatever way they may think to commend themselves by, they are in the lie. The ground whereon they stand is separated by a great gulf from Christ.

But He is also life—all that is out of Him is dead. A man may be rooted in all that seems secure and powerful, yet is he dead! Take up with Him, then, who is the way, the truth, and the life.

Wonderful is it that He is come to thee! Thou who errest in thine own way art in the lie and in death. But, ah! it is right as it is. Thou shouldst give to Him what is thine, and in its place take what is His. That is a fair exchange. With the upright is the blessing. Give thyself to Him with thy whole and with an upright heart, with all thy misery. Ah! He makes a present of Himself to thee with His salvation. Thus manifests He Himself to be the true "I AM," who is the unchangeable, the eternal—all that is good, all that is perfect.

THE GERMAN SQUIRE.

THERE is great value, and not unfrequently, great power in the record of God's dealings with a soul. We have not often heard of any thing that has interested us more deeply than the case of a German squire as an instance of such dealing. We can merely undertake to give the substance of the narrative, without vouching for the perfect accuracy of details.

This squire seems to have belonged to a class of persons who affect to despise the word of God, and, as a consequence, to hate the name of Jesus. Being visited, on one occasion, by a Christian pastor, he charged him, on no account, to name the name of *Jesus* while under his roof. The pastor assented, and spoke only of *God*, as displayed in creation. He dwelt upon the exhibition of power and wisdom in the works of God, and having done so he took his leave.

Being invited by the squire to repeat his visit, the pastor did so, and spoke of God in His righteousness; in His holiness; in His majesty; in His hatred of sin, and again took his leave. Here the squire's conscience was reached. The arrow of the Almighty penetrated the joints of the harness in which his infidel system had encased him. He was a convicted sinner. The flimsy cobwebs of rationalism gave way before the stern realities of his personal guilt and the holiness of God. The proud, self-sufficient sceptic became an humble, broken hearted penitent.

When the pastor called again, he found the squire in a state of intense mental anguish. He felt the weight of God's claims bearing down upon his conscience, and his own utter incompetency to meet them. God, as seen in creation and providence, was at a vast distance from him. There was a great gulf between, which he could not bridge. He was wretched, and in the depth of his wretchedness he asked the pastor if he could not give him any relief. "No," said he, "I can do nothing for you; you have strictly forbidden me to name the only one who can do you any good, or afford you any comfort."

This was a moment of profound interest in the spiritual history of the squire. The entire superstructure of rationalism, scepticism, and infidelity had given way. He beheld it all as a mass of ruins, and himself a ruin in the midst of ruins. Neither creation nor providence could furnish a resting place for his poor burdened heart and guilty conscience. He had, under the blinding power of a senseless infidelity, sedulously excluded from his thoughts "the only name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," even the precious, peerless, powerful name of Jesus, the only medium through which the beams of divine glory can pour themselves, in beauteous harmony and consistency, upon the soul of the sinner—the only ground whereon "God can be just and the justifier" of the most ungodly sinner that believeth. He had built up a system for himself in which the name of Christ had no place. The materials of this system had been furnished, not by revelation, but by ration-

alism, the most dreary of all *isms*. He had, under the ensnaring influence of a proud intellectualism, entrenched himself behind what he vainly imagined to be the impregnable bulwarks of infidelity. He had tried to erect a platform of his own whereon to meet God; but now he found out his grand mistake. Christ is the *only* platform on which a holy God and a guilty sinner can meet; but he had shut out Christ. He would not have Him. His motto in reference to Christ was, "O, breathe not His name."

What a moment! The poor squire was really miserable. He knew not what to do. There was a link missing, and he knew not where to find it. An object was needed which his infidel system could not supply. A holy God! How could he meet Him? A righteous God! How could he stand before Him? A sin-hating God! How could he ever approach Him? What was to be done? It was indeed a moment of intense interest—a solemn crisis—a season never to be forgotten. He earnestly begged the pastor to *go on, to tell him all, to keep nothing back*. The door of his heart which had, for so long a time, been secured by the strong bolts of infidelity, was now flung open. His conscience was fully reached. The plough had done its work, and the pastor had but to enter with the seed-basket and sow the seeds of a full and free gospel in the deep furrows of a convicted soul. In a word, he preached Christ—that long rejected, much hated name. He shewed the squire that the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God was the only thing that could put away sin, and justify God

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in receiving the sinner. He shewed him that in the cross of Christ, "mercy and truth had met together, righteousness and peace had kissed each other;" that all the divine attributes were gloriously harmonized, that sin was put away and God glorified, that in the death of Christ all the claims of God, and all the claims of conscience had been perfectly answered.

This was enough. The squire found rest for his troubled soul. He believed the record and was made happy in believing. The bridge had been presented to him, and he instantly availed himself of it, to pass across that otherwise impassable gulf that separated him from God. He saw in Christ the One who fills up every point between the throne of God and the deepest depths of a sinner's moral ruin. He found his *all* in that very name which he had so strictly forbidden to be named beneath his roof.

May the Lord use this narrative of the German squire in bringing many souls to Christ!

For myself—I speak as a man—I never found peace before God or conscious rest with Him until I was taught the force and meaning of that cry of Jesus of Nazareth—"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani." Never, until I understood that He who knew no sin had (then and there on the cross) been made sin for us; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him, could I rest as a sinner in the presence of a holy God? And, as I suppose, it is owing to the distinctive peculiarity of that.—His sorrow under the wrath of God—*not being understood* that so many christians have no settled peace at all.

BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM. (MATT. XXV, 6).

YES, the Bridegroom is coming, and the door will soon be shut. Are you ready to meet Him?

The form of godliness without the power. The giving heed to seducing spirits. The falling away from the faith now going on, and so plainly to be seen in Christendom; all say to any that have ears to hear, that the time is short; that these are the last days, and the coming of the Lord draweth very nigh. Awake! awake! before it is too late.

“The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. xxii, 17).

Unsaved one, Jesus at God's right hand now, is the fountain of the water of life. He gives the living waters for the soul. He paid the price of His own precious blood, that you might have those waters free. “Come and take” before the door is shut.

Mind, it is not “Go and work,” or even “Come and pay” for it; but “Come and take” “freely.” For “Christ hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.” (I Peter iii, 18). “God commendeth His love towards us.” (Rom. v, 8). And risen again from the dead, His work accepted, He has gone into the holiest by His own blood, “having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Heb. ix, 12). Will you have it?

Anxious, repentant one, God says in Rom. x, 9 “that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, *thou shalt be saved: for whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*