

THE SOWER.

THE REBEL'S SURRENDER TO GRACE.

LORD Thou hast won, at length I yield ;
My heart, by mighty grace compell'd,
Surrenders all to Thee ;
Against Thy terrors long I strove,
But who can stand against Thy love ?
Love conquers even me.

All that a wretch could do I tried,
Thy patience scorn'd, thy power defied,
And trampled on Thy laws ;
Scarcely Thy martyrs at the stake
Could stand more steadfast for Thy sake,
Than I in Satan's cause.

But since Thou hast Thy love reveal'd
And shown my soul a pardon seal'd,
I can resist no more.
Couldst Thou for such a sinner bleed ?
Canst Thou for such a rebel plead ?
I wonder and adore !

Now Lord I would be Thine alone,
Come take possession of Thine own,
For Thou hast set me free ;
Released from Satan's hard command,
See all my powers waiting stand,
To be employed by Thee.

"IT WON'T SINK."

ONE beautiful evening in summer I was seated with an old sailor on the sea shore. We admired together the beautiful view which the setting sun presented. My companion had for many years in his earlier history been in command of a smuggling craft, but a complete change in his course of life had taken place as will be seen by the following recital. After a pause of some minutes my companion suddenly broke silence by saying:

"What grace to be brought to a knowledge of God who has created all things, and whose love is more marvelous still than his power! At one time I had no eyes to see the beauties of creation, and still less to see the grandeur of divine grace manifested in Jesus Christ. I thought neither of the magnificence of the works of God nor of Him who has created them. My men and myself were in the habit of searching with the spy-glass every quarter of the horizon to see if there was any man-of-war in sight or any coast guard on our tracks. We were always better satisfied when the darkness increased, and often we would have been, if the night had been several hours longer, so that we might have disposed our cargo in a place of safety.

"I remember well one morning," he continued, "just as the day began to break, we discovered a coast guard in the distance. We had on board a heavy cargo of tobacco upon which we expected to make quite a

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bit of money if we should be able to land it. Although the coast guard was a long distance off we knew quite well if she gave chase we could not possibly escape, as on account of our heavy cargo we were forging ahead very slowly. We hoped at first that we might not be seen but this hope was soon taken away, when we saw the coast guard crowding all sail and directing her course towards us.

"None of us were ignorant what the consequences would be if we were captured. Not only would the vessel and cargo be confiscated but we ourselves would be sentenced to a term of imprisonment. We looked at each other with consternation. For a time there was dead silence, each waiting for my command. The coast guard was gaining rapidly upon us, and we could calculate the limited time when we would be overhauled. I was in great distress, when suddenly a hope of safety occurred to me. 'Mates,' I cried, 'there is no hope for us by running away, they will soon be on us, but let them come, *they will find only an empty vessel.* They may think what they like, but they won't be able to do anything to us.'

"My men raised a shout of joy and we at once set to work. We first rigged a sail at the stern of the ship to screen us from the observation of the custom officers; then sending part of my men below I placed them in line to hand up the packages of tobacco which we pitched overboard as they came up.

"With what energy we worked! It gave us, no doubt, some sorrow of heart as we thought of the loss we would sustain, but we consoled ourselves at the

thought of the disappointment the customs people would feel when they found the vessel empty.

"All was quiet; nothing was heard but the sound of the packages dropping into the sea. The cargo was sensibly diminishing. "Cheer up men," I cried, "we shall soon finish it." Just then I perceived that the ship's boy who was working near me was being overcome with fatigue. I sent him to see if the dreaded coast guard was very far off. Only a few seconds had passed when he came hurriedly towards me, pale as death, but unable to articulate a word, although his eyes betrayed his fear and distress. I gave him a shaking as I asked: "What's the matter? What has happened?" With difficulty he got out these words: "*It won't sink,*" and then dropped down on the deck.

"We understood only too quickly what he had tried to express. I hurried to the stern of the ship, and what a sight presented itself to my eyes! It was a beautiful morning; the rising sun was gilding the sea with his rays, while in the track of the vessel was stretched in a long line, the packages of tobacco which rose and fell with the motion of the waves, reaching right away towards the approaching coast guard. We were speechless as we gazed upon the scene. In the excitement of the moment we had not bethought us, that the tobacco would not at once sink in the water. We cursed heaven and earth, and all the coast guards; but where was the good? The proof of our guilt was displayed in the condemning line. We were lost, and upon our ears resounded again and again the ominous words: "*It won't sink!*"

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The old sailor ceased speaking. I thought he had finished his story, when he began again :

"In those days I little thought that this adventure would result in any good to me. My heart was then far from God. I belonged altogether to the world, and to that which is of the world. From time to time, however, I had serious thoughts, and then would resolve to correct my ways, and change my course. But to resolve is one thing, to put into execution quite another. I knew that my mother prayed for me. For a long time my father and my brothers had ceased to do so, saying there was no hope for me, whilst my mother on the contrary would say: "Prayer without perseverance accomplishes but little, but when persevered in, it is stronger than the devil."

"About three years had passed after the circumstances I have recounted. We had been condemned to a punishment less severe than we had expected. As soon as we were set at liberty, I again, alas, took up my dangerous and wicked occupation. One night in winter I had gone in a row boat on the river which empties below there, for the purpose of shooting birds. The night was dark and while waiting the rising of the moon, I lay down in the bottom of the boat. All around me was profoundly silent. It was New Year's eve and after a time I heard the stroke of midnight. It is the last night of the year, I said to myself, and my thoughts went back involuntarily in a review of my past life. My childhood came before me, and I again saw myself kneeling at my mother's knee to say my evening prayer. Again I heard her tell me of

One who came down from heaven to bring life to the world. At this remembrance I sighed deeply, and said, half aloud: 'If I should die this night not a single soul in the world would thank God that I had lived.'

"The more I reflected upon my past, the more horrified was I of my life of sin. God had created me, and I had lived and was still living as though there was neither God nor eternity. True, I had not previously thought of myself as a great sinner. I had not been given to drink, and according to my way of looking at things I had not done anything wrong, for I did not at all look upon smuggling as wickedness. But that night the light broke into my soul, I was deeply touched, and going down on my knees in the boat I besought God to come to my help. Henceforth I would be another man. I resolved not to touch a drop of liquor, and to avoid all bad company. No doubt my old friends would hunt me up, and try to get me to the saloons and to places of wicked amusement, but I was determined I would turn my back upon it all, and go to church with my mother. Many things which I thought I would do, and others which I thought I would avoid, presented themselves to my mind, and I at once began to have a very good opinion of myself, and was happy in the thought that I had quickly become a new man; for being faithful to my resolutions, I judged I would be almost a saint. But on reflection I saw yet several things which I ought to clean up, or as we say, lighten the ship. Half measures did not satisfy me. I must throw overboard *everything* which ought not to be found in my boat, and

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I saw in my mind quite a list which I would need to change. My resolution became more serious and positive from moment to moment, and my heart grew lighter. My life appeared to be completely changed, and as a finishing stroke, I decided to sell my vessel, and go home to my mother.

"How blind and senseless I was! I shall never forget that night. After having decided to sell my vessel it seemed that then everything was in perfect order, but God who is faithful had spoken to me. I had taken up the oars to return to land when suddenly the moon broke through a cloud, and cast its clear and peaceful beams right across the rippled water straight to where my boat was lying. It was like a long band of silver which seemed to rise again to the luminary from which its rays had emanated. Then a painful thought crossed my mind. The remembrance of a certain morning, when pursued by the coast guard, I had cast the cargo into the sea, came suddenly over me with overwhelming power. I saw again the ship's boy with his pale and frightened face, and I heard his cry of distress: '*It won't sink!*' Ah what had I been trying to do, I had essayed to lighten the ship by casting the cargo overboard, and there, behold it was all floating behind me like an accusing line, which stretched away right up to the throne of God. All that I had done, said, thought, or desired was there, naked and entirely uncovered before the face of God, in the light of His presence, and '*it would not sink!*' Fool that I was I thought I could drown, in the sea of eternal forgetfulness, all my wicked

words, all my evil deeds, and I had not a thought of the holiness and omniscience of God!

"I was completely thrown down. All my trouble would be worthless; all my good resolutions vain; even if faithfully performed! If I had been able from that moment to do only that which was good, it would not efface the evil wrought in the past. Yes, all the evil was there, all before me, nothing forgotten, nothing swallowed up. What avail was it to be forming good resolutions for the future, and to pitch the old cargo overboard, when it would not sink? Tears filled my eyes and ran down my cheeks; I was well nigh in despair. I cast my eyes on the thousands of reflections of the light of the moon on the surface of the agitated waters, and they seemed like so many torches lighting up my past life. What could I do? which way should I turn? My complete change of conduct could not efface the past. I was lost, hopelessly lost! For me there was no resource, no salvation!

"I do not know how long I continued rowing, nor which way I went. I neither thought of the late hour of night, nor of the cutting wind which had sprung up from the sea. I was insensible to everything except the terrible accusations of my conscience, which rose higher and higher before me. Then I looked up towards heaven where the myriads of twinkling stars with their soft light seemed to be looking down upon me. Was there then no hope for me? I asked myself as I buried my face in my hands. I felt that I could no longer bear this state of distress and misery. I was like a malefactor who had just heard his

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"But the eye of God was upon me, poor miserable sinner that I was, although I knew it not. His heart, full of compassion, had thoughts of love and peace towards me.

"Whilst I was in this state, seeing neither relief nor safety, my heart seemingly enveloped with thick clouds, suddenly my thoughts went back to my childhood. I remembered the teachings of my pious and faithful mother. Had she not often spoken to me of Jesus, the Saviour of lost sinners? Had He not died on the cross for sinners? Had not one of the thieves who had been crucified with Him found grace and pardon at the last hour? And if I should now turn to this divine Saviour would not His precious blood wash away my many sins, taking them away from before the face of a thrice holy God? was there not then also grace and mercy for me?

"Again I fell down on my knees. What I asked, or even what words I said, I do not remember, but I knew that all at once everything became perfectly clear before me. Yes, the Lord Jesus had died also for me. He had borne the punishment of my many sins. They were now cast into the depths of the sea. Jesus had borne them all, had made expiation for them, and thus had been able to bury them in the unfathomable ocean of divine mercy, and nothing, and no one, could bring them to the surface again. 'Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more,' was the passage which presented itself powerfully to my mind, as

though written by the Lord Himself in letters of fire. An inexpressible joy filled my soul; a joy so great and marvelous that my poor heart was for the moment overwhelmed, and unable to take it in. Tears of joy streamed from my eyes; light hearted, and entirely relieved of my burden, I turned my boat towards the shore, and, a new man, I stepped upon the land. I had gone out a lost sinner, and now I took my way homewards redeemed by the Lord.

"That is the end of my adventure with the coast guard," said the old sailor, and he added :

"It all turned to my eternal salvation, for it taught me that it was *altogether useless to lighten the vessel by one's own efforts, seeing that the cargo will not sink.* True deliverance only comes by faith, in receiving the testimony of God concerning His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and by virtue of the precious blood which purifies from all sin. Righteousness is necessary. Now, God is righteous in forgiving our sins, but it is only on account of the redemption wrought by our Lord Jesus Christ."

Not all the gold of all the world,
 And all its wealth combined,
 Could give relief, or comfort yield,
 To one distracted mind :

'Tis only to the precious blood
 Of Christ the soul can fly,
 There only can a sinner find
 A flowing full supply.

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MORAL REFORMATION.

REFLECTIONS SUGGESTED BY THE RECITAL, "IT
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MY dear reader, you have now read the preceding account of the ways of the God of all grace towards a poor sinner. Will you grant me your further attention for a little, that from it a useful lesson for your soul may be presented to you. It is said that "God speaks once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not." (Job xxxiii. 14.) He can do so by various means. Sometimes by preaching, or directly by the word, or again by a tract. At other times God may speak by some striking event, or by affliction, for God is great in power and rich in resources.

Usually when God speaks to any one both the heart is touched and the conscience awakened, and the person sees clearly what is evil in his ways. Then good resolutions are made, he intends to change, to correct his bad habits, to restrain his passions, his fleshly and worldly tendencies; in a word he will reform and become religious if he is not so. In the world, and I may even say in the religious and evangelical world these dispositions are systematically approved and encouraged. For the drunkard there is total abstinence; for those who have fallen into immorality, or who are in danger of so doing, there is moral reformation. We know also the activity displayed everywhere to develop a religious

sentiment in families and in the public. People take much trouble, and make great sacrifices to attract souls to the churches. Among those who labour thus there are doubtless many who are truly Christians and devoted to the Lord; who announce the glad tidings as far as they know it, and preach Christ as Saviour. We can but rejoice in the confidence that God will act for the glory of the name of His Son, the only name given among men whereby we may be saved. (Acts. iv. 12.) Furthermore God will judge every man's work.

The thought which I have however specially before me is to warn souls of the danger which exists in the desire to regulate the future without having regulated the past, a danger to which the unregenerated soul is exposed. It is a natural tendency of the heart, for it is easy to be satisfied thus, instead of as a repentant sinner seeking the presence of God. At the bottom it is nothing else than the desire to establish one's own righteousness in order to quiet the conscience and often perhaps to minister to pride, and answer to the desires of others to whom we wish to be agreeable.

Do not misunderstand us. A well ordered life which such persons propose to lead, however pure and holy it may be cannot expiate the faults of a past life. No doubt it is well to cease from evil; without that, there would be no real repentance; besides it is necessary to learn to do well. (Is. i. 16; 17). It is our duty; every awakened conscience will acknowledge that; but that does not blot out

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When our first parents in the garden of Eden had transgressed the commandment which had been given them, God did not say to them: "Reform," nor: "Become religious." He placed their sins before them saying: "Where art thou?" and: "What hast thou done?" (Gen. iii. 9, 13; iv. 9). It was useless to make to themselves aprons of fig leaves, and conceal themselves behind the trees of the garden, nothing could take them out of the sight of the God whom they had offended, or cover their sins from Him.

Saul of Tarsus was neither a drunkard nor immoral, nor irreligious; all the contrary. Before the law he was irreproachable; as to religion he was a Pharisee, the strictest sect among the Jews. Still as to the past he had need of cleansing from his sins, and he called on the name of Him against whom he had thought to do many things, (Phil. iii, 6; Gal. i. 14; Acts xxii, 16; xxvi, 9). He needed that God should have mercy upon him the chief of sinners. (1 Tim. i. 13-16).

Furthermore, when they have amended and corrected their ways as much as possible they will again in this new phase of existence commit faults, not, it may be, as apparent to the eyes of men as those committed before, but none the less sins in the sight of God. Not only cannot present good conduct efface the past and the condemnation therefor, but new sins will be added to the old, and the culpability

increased. Only the blood of Jesus purifies from sin; He only is the propitiation for sins; for all sins. It must be borne in mind that conversion is much more than an exterior reformation of life; it is a work of God in the soul. A drunkard for instance may cease to be such and abstain wholly from intoxicating liquors, without, for all that, being converted. A licentious person may abandon shameful passions and not be converted. One may do all sorts of good works and be unconverted. The Lord said, "*Ye must be born again,*" and that is the work of the Spirit of God in the soul; without which, reformation is but as rotten wood, covered with a fine coat of paint.

One meets also awakened souls, troubled as to their sins, who seek to appease their conscience and to turn aside the judgment they feel they have merited, by doing penance; by giving themselves to prayer, to fasting, and to good works; but in all that, they are but repeating the history of the old smuggler, they throw overboard the cargo of their sins which will not, and cannot sink. Their trouble, their labour, their sacrifices, all are useless and without merit in the eyes of God. We repeat, it is the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanses from all sin." (1 Jno. i. 7). And as the apostle Peter says: "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins (Acts x. 43). Yes, it is in Him that "we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of His

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grace." (Eph. i. 7). It is on account of the infinite value of the sacrifice of Christ that God can say to us: "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins (Is. xliv. 22.) Furthermore, we read: "He will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah vii. 19). For that, the intervention of God is clearly necessary, and His divine power, but that power cannot be in exercise at the expense of His righteousness; but because of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. God manifests His righteousness in favor of believers when He declares: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 17).

Dear reader, the epoch in which we live is in every respect a serious one. Time is rapidly slipping away, and God says to us: "The end of all things is at hand." Are you at peace with God as to your sins? Has He spoken to you and have you responded? He speaks to you at this moment, listen to Him. Have you received Christ as your Saviour? Have you been placed by faith under the benefits of His expiatory work? If not, see to it at once, for to-morrow is not yours. And when you have believed in Jesus the Saviour of sinners, you will be able to sing, with all the redeemed:

Now, I can call the Saviour mine,
Though all unworthy still:
I'm sheltered by His precious blood
Beyond the reach of ill.

YOUR SOUL.

O H the value of an immortal soul! Who can rightly estimate its worth? God esteems it of such value that He gave His own beloved Son for its salvation. Jesus, the Son of God, values it so highly that He shed His own life-blood to save it. God the Holy Ghost sets such value upon one soul that He follows it again and again with convictions of sin, if haply the sinner will give heed to His warning. Satan esteems an immortal soul of such value that he wearies not, in every way possible, to keep it in darkness and unbelief, lest he should lose it. (2 Cor. iv. 4.) What value does the reader set upon *his* soul? Hear the words of Jesus, "What shall it profit a man if he gain *the whole world and lose his own soul?*" How many and varied are the things for which men barter away their souls. Riches, honor, reputation, etc. And lawful things, "a piece of ground," "five yoke of oxen," "a wife," if chosen *instead of Christ* become the ruin of the soul. (Luke xiv., 16-24.) And sometimes a mere trifle, a passing pleasure, a moment's enjoyment is valued more than the soul. Let us remember Esau who for *one morsel of meat* sold his birthright. (Heb. 12. 16.) And if the soul is so lightly esteemed, no wonder the Saviour is too.

Wretched man valued Jesus at *thirty pieces of silver!*

How great the contrast between God's estimate of the sinner, and the sinner's estimate of the Saviour.