

THE SOWER.

“TURN YE, TURN YE FROM YOUR EVIL WAYS; FOR WHY
WILL YE DIE?”—(Ezek. xxxiii. 11).

Oh! why will ye die? What a wonderful word,
Addressed to vile sinners by heavens great Lord;
'Tis loving remonstrance unmingled with wrath,
Kind warning to flee from a ruinous path.

Why turn a deaf ear? canst thou think it is well,
To follow the path which leads downward to hell;
When God, thy Creator, from yonder bright sky,
Calls urgently, Turn ye for why will ye die?

Let me plead with thee; think of the worth of thy
soul.

Go search the green earth to the uttermost pole,
Go climb the high mountain, pass valley and plain
Sail the bright shining river, the wide bounding main.

Search the depths of the ocean, the bowels of earth,
Lay bare all the treasures that there have their birth,
Then tell, if thou canst, the vast worth of the whole,
'Tis as nothing compared to the worth of thy soul.

The earth, and all things we can see, must decay,
 Like a dream of the night they will all pass away ;
 Will thy soul like a vapor vanish? Ah! no,
 That soul is immortal for weal or for woe.

Yet you peril your soul, a sorrowful tale,
 For trifles as light as the air you inhale,
 When God tells thee plainly the way thou should'st go,
 Why tread the dark path that leads downward to woe?

Should you die in your sins will the fault lie with Him
 Who gave his loved Son thy lost soul to redeem?
 It cannot; God ever desires to forgive—
 His wish is that all should leave evil and live.

Will it lie with the Saviour who died on the tree,
 That thou from dread judgment should ever be free?
 Ah, no! His own word places that beyond doubt,
 Who e'er comes to Me I'll in nowise cast out.

Christ's wondrous affection what darkness can dim,
 He wept o'er the city that crucified Him,
 And such was His love, that when sinking in death,
 He prayed for His foes ere He gave up His breath.

No! poor wretched sinner the fault lies with **THEE**,
 God woos thee in love and from Him thou dost flee,
 Yet all will be well if you heed his bless'd cry,
 Oh! turn you from evil, for why will ye die?

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PEACE IN BELIEVING.

IV.

MY DEAR friend :—Time passes quickly and soon it will have passed forever. The thought is suggested by the remark you made that more than a month has passed since your conscience has been awakened, and that next Monday will be the anniversary of your birthday. I can reckon more than double the number of years that you can, but I cannot express to you how much more rapidly the last half of these years seems to have passed than the former. When one possesses a life in Christ which never ends, and has before him the coming of the Lord, when death will be swallowed up in life, the flight of time will not be a matter of regret. God grant, dear friend, that your coming anniversary may find you in the *conscious enjoyment* of this new life. It will then be, I am sure, the happiest you have ever passed.

In the meantime I cannot conceal from you the anxiety I feel to see you remaining so long in the same spiritual state. As long as a soul does not really know Christ, it does not confide in Him, rejoice in Him, or confess Him openly, and one cannot be sure how this state of anxiety and distress may end. I have known people, who, after passing through the most heart rending anguish, have finished by returning to indifference and sin. How very sad if this were to be your case. Do not then have a

thought of remaining in your present condition. To-day, as in my previous letter, I address you seriously in the words of the angel to Lot, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." You reason, instead of simply accepting what God presents to you.

"Is it not useless," you say, "to try and believe by myself?" It is certain that if you only make an effort to believe you will hardly succeed. But if it were the case of a relative or a friend, in whom you have confidence, would you merely make an effort to believe them? No; it is only necessary that they tell you a thing, for you to have faith in it. But, alas! when it is God, who—so often repeated—gives you the same assurance, addresses the same invitations to you, you speak of trying to believe—Him, the God of truth, who cannot lie. What a sad state to be in!

You add, "Ought I not rather to ask God to open my heart to receive the gospel, and to hope that He who has shown me a little of my culpability will make His word living and efficacious for my soul?" Be the thought far from me to turn you aside from asking God anything you feel the need of. The merciful ways of God are diverse, and I understand how one may be attracted, little by little, until the light, in its full brilliancy, makes Christ appear so attractive and His blood so precious that the heart can no longer doubt. As to myself, I was praying when my soul received the truth and was set free.

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But I dare not advise any one to follow the same course or wait for the same effect, and for these reasons:—

Firstly.—I do not find such counsel in any place in the scripture.

Secondly—A person may pray, as you say, and not receive salvation. Now, this single thought makes me tremble—that anyone might be able to say, “I have done what you advised, and I am not saved.”

And lastly—The commandment of scripture is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and *thou shalt be saved.*” Now, no one can say, “I have obeyed this commandment, and am still lost.”

You, my friend, have only *tried to believe*, and that is not at all the exhortation which scripture addresses to you, and which it presents in different forms. We are told to look to Jesus, to go to Him, to seek in Him our refuge, to eat the flesh of Christ, and to drink His blood. But all these expressions come back to this: *Believe in him.* He explains it Himself when He says, “He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”—(John vi. 35).

But mark it well, it is *Christ* who saves, and not the fact of going, looking, or even believing, in so much as these may be considered apart from Himself. Bread appeases hunger and nourishes; it is not merely the act of eating, however indispensable that may be. A man really hungry does not stop to consider whether he can eat or not. He seizes with

avidity the bread which has been placed before him and eats it. Receive Christ then—the bread of life—who only can satisfy the needs of the soul. God assures you, that “If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.”—(John vi. 51). Believe, unhesitatingly, His word.

You ask again, “Is it possible for me to believe by myself?” and you quote this phrase from a tract, ‘It is by means of the Spirit that the truth is received.’ As to the last it is undoubtedly true. Without the Spirit the knowledge of the truth would profit nothing. It is by Him that the word of God, which is the truth, communicates to the soul a new life, and it is thus that it is said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”—(John iii. 5).

But along side of that let me remind you that it is *you and me* who believe; the Spirit does not believe *for us* or in *our place*. He leads us to believe in placing Christ before us in the glory of His person, the tenderness of His love, the value of His blood, the power of His resurrection. Christ, in fact, as we find Him *in the written word*. But if on one hand it is for us the Son of God descended from heaven, for us that He suffered and died, for us that He rose again; on the other hand it is we who ought to receive Him, confide in Him, rest upon Him.

Now we come to your question, “Is it possible for me to believe by myself?” No; you cannot do it. Christ says, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.”—(John vi. 44).

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It is, however, written, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."—(Rom. x. 17). If it is true that by nature we are not only wicked, but "without strength," (Rom. v. 6), it is also true that God has communicated to us a living and effectual word, which has power to save our souls. (Heb. iv. 12; Jas. i. 21). Where then is the difficulty that hinders you from believing? In order to reply let us consider the subject a little further.

Firstly—The bible is full of the most positive assurances, in attestation of the fact that God does not hinder the salvation of any, but that on the contrary He is full of kindness toward all.

"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"—(Ezek. xxxiii. 11).

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else."—Is. xlv. 22.

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."—(Is. lv. 1).

"John came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe."—(John i. 7).

"For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."—(John iii. 17).

“But these things I say, that ye might be saved,”
—(John v. 34).

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”—(John xx. 31).

“The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”—(John vi. 51).

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”—(Mark xvi. 15).

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.”—(2 Cor. v. 19).

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”—(1 Tim. ii. 4).

“The Lord is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”—(2 Peter iii. 9).

“The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”—(Rev. xxii. 17).

Can anyone read these passages, and many more like them, and doubt that God truly desires the salvation of men? The obstacle which hinders you from going to Christ, my friend, *is not God*. He invites you, urges you, supplicates you to come to Christ and be saved. If you respond to His appeal, He will certainly save you.

Secondly—But the difficulty is in yourself. You show it in this passage of your letter, “It seems to me that I cannot sufficiently confide in Him, that He should receive me.”

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If you were to say of your father, I feel that I cannot fully trust him, would not that show that you had a bad opinion of his character? Now that is the language of your heart, and of the natural heart of every man as to God. We are also just as far from loving Him, for we are in such ignorance of His character that we are not able to trust Him, and we do not care to go to Him.

“Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life,” said the Lord. Ah! that is the secret of the evil, at the very bottom of our sinful state; we do not will to go. And are you not yourself the proof of it? For more than a month you have groaned under the weight of your sins, and the misery of condemnation, and you say, “I have tried to cast myself into the arms of Jesus, but I do not seem to be able to trust Him sufficiently to believe that He will receive me.” You have not willed to come to Him; if you had you might have done so, and might have enjoyed peace.

Thirdly—It is true that God only can overcome this lack of confidence, bend this rebellious will, and that as a result of His grace. Scripture no place teaches that in order to be received by God, we have to find in ourselves a previous confidence in Him. It tells us, on the contrary, that the thought of the natural heart is “enmity against God.”—(Rom. viii. 7).

Will God wait to find something good when He has declared that there is no desire to seek Him, no fear of Him, no knowledge of the way of peace? (Read the whole of the passage, Rom. iii. 9-26).

Has not God manifested His righteousness because He has not found among men either righteousness, rectitude, or hope of healing. "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor."—(Is. lix. 14-16).

It is just on that account that Jesus tells you to come to Him. Why, then, do you not respond to His appeal? Why are you so slow in seeking in your heart that which is right? Instead of complaining of what you have not yet realized, look at what God has done in sending His only Son and in giving Him up to death that we might be saved. God freely justifies the sinner "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."—(Rom. iii. 24). God is not at all obliged to save us; He has willed to do it, because He is love.

Fourthly—Do not wait to be led to Christ, as you have perhaps pictured to yourself, by some new revelation, by some distinct and powerful impression. The moment you believe in Christ, it will be the same Christ, of whom you have read and heard so many things; the same Christ who now waits with open arms to receive you. We are sinners, ungodly, and without strength; but "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."—(Rom. v. 6). Dare you not believe that? Can you be worse than *ungodly*, or in a more desperate condition than *without strength*? *It is for such creatures that Christ died.* "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."—(1 Peter iii. 18).

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“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”—(1 Tim. i. 15). Is not this good news for a lost sinner?

You will never have a better title to assurance in Christ than the very excess of misery and helplessness you have, for it is on this very account that He came down from heaven; it is for that He was nailed to the cross. It is not for the just, for those who feel as they ought to feel, for those who are able to believe of themselves that Christ came to the earth. No; but for those who are lost; for sinners; for those, who, left to themselves, would reject Christ and continue to the end in their course of sin. It is for them that He came, for them He suffered, for them He died. Reading that, can you believe it? Believe it, not because it is my word, or the word of any man, but because it is God Himself who says it? But for that turn your eyes away altogether from yourself and look to Jesus. Turn your eyes away from this ungrateful, sinful *me*, and place them upon Jesus, who came from heaven to earth, who wept and groaned, suffered and shed His blood for miserable, unbelieving sinners. Look to Jesus. God commands you to do so. Jesus Himself also invites you, and the Holy Spirit presses you to do it. Oh! could you not obey without a moment's delay?

All that God or man can desire is found abundantly in Jesus. “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood; that He

might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."—(Rom. iii. 25-26). "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."—(Rom. iv. 5).

Time fails me; my paper is nearly filled. May God lead you, my dear friend, to find the full satisfaction of your soul in Christ, in whom God also has declared Himself fully satisfied.

I remain, faithfully yours, in the love of Christ.

Thank God, now there is pardon, yet there is room, now there is a welcome in the Father's house for you, poor lost one; now God's invitation is to you to His great supper of salvation.

It is on earth the invitation comes. Earth is the waiting-room in which the fate of the soul is decided, either on the one hand for glory or on the other for the dark, the bitter gloom of the pit of endless woe! Who shall decide? With you, my reader, lies the responsibility.

Oh, unsaved sinner, can you bear to think of that place to which you are hastening, all your friends gone, your joys gone, and wake up to find yourself a sinner in your sins.

Jesus died to save the never-dying soul; and unbeliever you reject Him. How shall you escape if you neglect so great a salvation? Flee for thy life. Jesus still waits to save. He saves the ungodly, those without strength, nothing to pay.

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THE following true narrative is given in brief, from memory, as illustrative of the order of divine work in the soul according to scripture. Overhearing a conversation with a patient in the same ward in a hospital, upon whom the gospel of God's grace was being pressed for faith, this one declared with emphasis that she "did not believe a word of it;" but with the request to the speaker to come nearer, as it was an effort for her to talk. She said she had been a Jewess, and was now a Christian; but that she did not believe what she had just heard. Her grounds for claiming to be a Christian were that she had been baptized and confirmed as a member of the Episcopal Church, having given up Judaism, and thought there was nothing more required; but admitted that she was not justified before God; nor had she peace with Him. She believed the New Testament was a revelation from God, and believed that "Jesus is the Christ," and was therefore "born of God," and had eternal life.—(1 John v. 1. 9-13). But she was a stranger to the blessings of the gospel, and the troubled expression of her face proved it, notwithstanding the effort to hide her anxiety as to her soul, for she had no hopes of recovery from her illness.

Judaism had been formally renounced for Christianity, outwardly, but she was still making Israel's old mistake of seeking to establish a righteousness

of her own for God, in order to please and satisfy Him, by adding church ordinances to law-keeping ; but had not submitted herself unto the righteousness of God by faith. (See Rom. iii. 19-23 ; ix. 30-33 ; x. 1-13).

As proof that justification and peace with God were obtained upon the principle of FAITH only, faith without the works of the law, the testimony in Rom. iv. as to Abraham and David was read, laying stress upon the fact that it is *now* a question of faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, who is seated on high, and that nothing else could meet her need, as shown in the end of chapter iv. and first verse of chapter v.

Peters testimony also in Acts ii. was pointed out, that the Jews had crucified Christ their Messiah, but that God had raised Him from the dead and made Him both Lord and Christ on high.

Her eyes closed in silence, but the face told a tale. She had been baptised,* and now repentance was being wrought through faith in the truth. Presently, with tears of joy, she said, "I never saw these things before," and with measured words she spoke of her new-found joy in a risen and glorified Christ. The troubled expression was gone ; she was pardoned, and in possession of the Spirit, and was

*Human religion insists upon baptism, but neglects the divine requirement of repentance in the soul ; hence the scriptural order of repentance and baptism FOR THE JEW was reversed in this case.

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filled by the God of hope with all joy and peace in believing, that she might abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.—(Acts. ii. 38 ; Rom. xv. 13). Shortly after this she departed to be with Christ, which is far better.—(Phil. i. 23).

There was the new birth and life through faith in the person of Christ ; repentance and faith in a risen and glorified Christ for pardon, and she received the “promise of the Father,” the “gift of the Holy Ghost.”—(Acts i. 4 ; ii. 33).

If you come to God as a sinner, owning and confessing your guilt, and that you are lost and ruined, and plead only the name of Jesus, and accept Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as your only and all sufficient Saviour, that very moment God will blot out all your sins for His Son's sake. He will wash your soul of every stain, however black, and make it whiter than snow ; He will give you eternal life which you can never lose ; He will give you an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for all who put their trust in Christ. Is it not inexpressibly glorious to have such a Saviour and such a salvation.

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

I HAVE FOUND A RANSOM.

IT is utterly impossible that true, solid, eternal peace can be enjoyed, or true spiritual worship presented, until the conscience is purged by the blood of the cross. I must know not only that all the claims of my conscience, but that all the claims of God's throne have been perfectly answered by One who died in my stead, ere I can breathe freely, walk at ease, or worship within the veil. There is no IF, no BUT, no condition. The door is thrown open, as wide as the sinner's heart could desire. His nature, his condition, and all his heavy liabilities have been divinely met in the cross. God can say, "Deliver him from going down into the pit," not because he has kept all my commandments, nor even because he has earnestly tried but reluctantly failed to keep them, nor yet because he has sincerely repented and purposes to lead a new life; no; but because "I HAVE FOUND A RANSOM." Here is true peace. God knew the exact amount of ransom required, and He has Himself found it—found it all—found it for ME.

Reader, rest here? See the full amount of ransom told out beneath the eye of infinite holiness in the life-blood of Jesus! See it! hear it! believe it! rest in it.

May God the Holy Ghost open your eyes to see and your heart to understand and believe the things that make for your eternal peace.