

THE SOWER.

LUKE V. 32.

Lord in the trophies of Thy grace,
Many a gem will shine;
Revealing, in Thy lustrous love,
Depths from earth's darkest mine.

Thy Spirit works in wondrous nooks
Of unbelief and sin,
And Thou hast bowed o'er hell's dread brink
Thy priceless pearl to win.

We praise Thee that Thy works the same,
Whither the light may shine
On hearts grown hard in Satan's ways
Or those men call divine.

Thy blood can cleanse from every sin;
Thy heart present each one
Spotless and faultless in Thy sight,
When Thy blest work is done.

We cannot measure all Thy power,
We limit not Thy grace,
We only ask that hearts may bow
Before Thee, face to face.

DOUBTS.

CALLING on S——. to-day I observed that he did not look so bright as usual, and soon the cause discovered itself. "Do you know," he said, "I sometimes think I am deceiving myself, and that I am not a child of God at all; for when I was converted, ten years ago, in the time of the revival, I *felt* such a load of sins taken off me, and then I was so happy, but I have not at all the same feeling now, so perhaps after all I am self-deceived."

I saw at once that the fault here was self-occupation, looking *in* instead of "looking *off*" unto Jesus," and therefore I said, "Well, dear S——., I am not surprised at what you say, for it is the natural result of basing your acceptance with God, on your *experience*, and not on what *He says* in His word. I passed at one time through the same experience, and therefore I can feel for you. I used, shortly after my conversion, to have at times great sensations of joy, followed by corresponding feelings of depression, and while these latter continued, of course I was miserable, but what gave me perfect peace was the ceasing to take account of my own feelings *altogether*, and beginning to rest calmly and quietly upon what God says in His word about Christ, who was delivered for my offences, and raised again for my justification; (Rom. iv. 25) and I reasoned with myself thus: "If Christ indeed has been delivered for my offences, there is no necessity for me to be delivered for them, for God is too just to demand payment over again

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for a debt already discharged, and if He has been raised again for my justification no one can ever lay anything to my charge, for His resurrection has set me down righteous in the presence of God. By His death and resurrection my sins were put away, and I am constituted righteous before God. I stand before God righteous as He is righteous. I believe this, and therefore, however much my feelings may change, I never doubt that I have peace with God."

"Well, Mr. ———, I see quite what you mean and I'm sure its very happy for *you*, but how am I to know that He died for *me*?"

"Oh, I said, "that is easily discovered. Look at Rom. v. 6, where it says, 'Christ died for the ungodly,' and verse 8, where He died (it says) for 'sinners.'" Satan never yet could persuade me that I was neither a "sinner" nor "ungodly," and therefore, I always have the assurance of God's word that He died for *me*; and putting two and two together, if He died for me I know that God is satisfied, and therefore not a shadow of a doubt, as to my acceptance, ever crosses my mind. I am enabled to "joy in God," by whom I have received this wonderful reconciliation.

"Well, Mr. ———, I see I must not doubt any more; I see I must cease to be occupied with myself, and enter more into what God has *done* for me and what Christ *is* to me."

Grace presents the truth, faith lays hold of it, the heart rejoices in it, the walk manifests it.

RUIN AND SALVATION.

MANY persons find a great difficulty in understanding either the lost and ruined state into which their sins have plunged them or the free salvation by Jesus Christ. That sin has brought ruin and destruction upon the sinner is indisputable, since sin is a state of revolt against God. Now Jesus has come from the Father to save and to deliver the sinner from this ruinous condition, and beyond all other consideration He has perfectly glorified the Father: He says, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Then in giving His life, Jesus has righteously settled the question of sin: He has paid the penalty for man justly condemned by the law of God. He has submitted to punishment in the place of the guilty, and He has paid the debt. His personal worth was so great that He could offer Himself an accepted substitute in our room and place; He was God manifest in flesh; as man He was the embodiment of every perfection. Moreover, by His death, He has triumphantly attacked the very root principle of evil; He has, if one may be permitted the expression, killed the enemy in his fortress; and by His resurrection He has brought in a new life, life in resurrection, heavenly life, without sin, and for heaven. The blood of Christ is called by the apostle Peter "precious blood" and he adds, that He is dead and risen for us. That is perfect salvation, salvation through grace.

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We are completely saved when we have received this salvation. It is by faith that it is obtained, that we lay hold of it; it is by simply believing from the heart what the God of truth has said of it in His Word.

Take an illustration, I am in prison for my evil courses, the ruler of the nation extends clemency to me, I read the message, I recognise the official seal, I believe in it, the doors of my prison are opened and the word to me is, "You are free," I go out with thanksgiving and singing.

READER, *to-day* thy hands are busy at work, thine eyes are beholding, thy mind is thinking, thou art planning for the future, TO-MORROW all is still—the folded arm, the closed eye remain, but thou art gone—gone to Eternity. Others were once busy as thou art, healthy as thou art, thoughtless as thou art, they are gone—gone to Eternity. The merry voice, the painted clown, the talented artist whose presence made the theatre and the pantomime an attraction for thee, are gone, they are removed far from the region of fiction to that of reality—the reality of Eternity. The shrewd merchant whose voice was so familiar to thee on the crowded exchange is silent, he buys and sells no more—he has entered Eternity.

And Reader, *thine own* turn to enter Eternity will shortly come. Ask thyself honestly, "AM I PREPARED FOR ETERNITY?" Give thy conscience time to answer, Listen! It speaks to thee to-day, drown not its voice lest it should speak to thee no more. Let the Heaven and Hell of the future stand before thee in all their realities, one of these must be thine *Eternal dwelling-place*, and TO-DAY is the time to make thy choice. To-morrow may be too late—ONE DAY BEHIND TIME. *Which* art thou living for? *Which* art thou traveling for?

THE YOUNG SERVANT.

MARY was a young servant maid who knew and loved the Lord Jesus. One day she was in her room putting on her hat and jacket to go out on a message, but her looking glass did not reflect a happy figure; she was annoyed at having been taken from her work and could not repress her feelings.

"Mary! Mary!" cried her mistress, "are you not ready yet?" Mary obeyed the call and at once started out.

It was a charming morning; Mary soon quieted her impatience and she had not gone far before she judged herself for her failure and soon regained her usual good humour. "It was very wrong," thought she, "to murmur because I had to leave my work to go and inquire about poor Miss S——." Here a shade of sadness crossed her face. "They say she is dying," she continued; "but if she loves Jesus she has no fear, I am sure of that."

Mary knew a little of the love of Jesus towards herself, but she had not yet learned to give up everything for Him, to be subject in everything and to overcome her impatience in her little trials and disappointments.

Near one of the windows of the house where Mary was going, and which she was now approaching, sat a lady looking out at her, with a heart full of sorrow and bitterness. "Why," sighed she, "should my child have to endure all these sufferings, whilst this young

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maid is so happy?" and rising she came forward to meet Mary as she entered the house, and said to her:

"I suppose you have come from Mrs. E—— for news about my daughter. Perhaps your bright and happy face may cheer her a little—come and see her and deliver your message to herself."

Mary, who had often been at the house to inquire after the invalid, followed the lady, surprised at such consideration for herself, a little waiting maid.

When they came to the bed-room the lady left Mary, saying she would shortly return, Mary then turned to look at the pale and wasted face of the dying girl. Never before had she seen such a sight. "Is she asleep?" said Mary, No, for opening her eyes the sick one said, partly to herself and partly to the young maid, "I am so tired! so tired!" In a moment all Mary's timidity vanished. Her heart was filled with pity for the poor sufferer, and approaching the bed, her eyes fixed on the thin and wearied face, she said softly and tenderly:

"Do you not know that Je-us came to give rest? He offers it to you now. He Himself says: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'" And growing yet bolder, she took a Bible which she found near her, and opening to the eleventh of Matthew, she read again slowly, the precious words of the Saviour.

"Mark the place for me," said the sick one, "and tell me more about Jesus."

In the few moments at her disposal, Mary told the

young girl all that she had realised in her own heart of Jesus and His love, and as she thus simply confessed how precious her Saviour was to her, the sick girl exclaimed, "I understand, I see it now, Oh! how good He is?"

She had not time to say more; the lady returned, and Mary went back to her place, wondering at all that had passed.

Two weeks passed, and Mary was sent again to the same house. She had heard, in the meantime, that the sick girl had died. As she made inquiries about her, one of the servants said that Miss S—— had a very happy death. "She was quite changed after your visit," she added. "I think they will give you her Bible; she left it for you."

Thus in this simple and true story is shown how the grace of God meets souls in their need, and where there is faith in the words and work of the Lord Jesus, the passage from death to life is so gentle, that like the wind blowing where it listeth, we see not the motive power, but we see the blessed results, and give glory to God.

Christ having by Himself made purification of sins, is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. There is no longer room for fear, for him who sees Christ in the glory above, because every ray from that glory says to him: *No Condemnation*. It is because sins have been put away, that Christ, who bore them, is on high.

MAN'S UPRIGHTNESS.

JOB xxxiii.

READER, note this, I pray you. Man's uprightness is to confess that he has sinned. How simple! And yet, simple as it is, how hard it is to get the heart to take this ground! How hard Job found it! What arguments! What strife of words! What self-vindication! What recording of his good deeds! What reference to public opinion! What a process! What immense difficulty in getting him to the end of self, and evoking from his heart those accents of true uprightness—the three monosyllables, "*I am vile!*" Thus it is with the poor human heart. It is so hard to see the entire superstructure of one's personal reputation lying in ruins around one! And yet, it is only amid the ruins of self that one can get a view of the glories of Christ. Establish your own character—build up your own reputation—work out your own righteousness, and what are you doing? Just raising an insuperable barrier between your soul and God's salvation. That barrier must be demolished, it must crumble into dust at your feet, before ever your soul can bask in the sunlight of that free grace which reigns through righteousness, unto everlasting life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is of the very last importance to get a clear understanding of this question of man's uprightness. It is to be feared that very few really apprehend it.

The only upright ground for a sinner to occupy is the confession of utter ruin. "I have sinned." This is what I have done. "I am vile." This is what I am. These few words make up the sum total of man's conduct and condition, and furnish the only formula for an upright soul. "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." (Hab. ii. 4.) "God be propitiated to me a sinner," is the only breathing of an upright heart. If I have not, from my inmost soul, owned myself lost, I am not upright. If I imagine that there is a single redeeming feature in my nature and character, as before God, I have not yet heard aright the voice of the interpreter—the one among a thousand.

And, now, let me ask, what does a soul receive when it has learnt its uprightness? It receives, according to the language of Elihu, three things; namely, ransom, righteousness, and resurrection. The divine testimony to every convicted, self-condemned soul is this, "*I have found a ransom.*" It is not, "Go thou and find it where thou canst." No; God assures me He Himself has found it—found all that was needed—found it for all who know and own themselves lost—found it for me. God declares Himself satisfied with the ransom. He could not be otherwise seeing He Himself has found it. He has proved Himself satisfied by raising from the dead the One who "paid in blood the dreadful score, the ransom due for me." He can now pronounce, in the sinner's hearing, those emancipating words, "deliver him from going down to the pit"—words, which,

while they tell me of the grace that delivers, tell me also that there is a pit to be delivered from. God can now address the poor trembling penitent, and say, "My hand shall not be heavy upon *thee*;" and as He speaks, He points to the cross where the ransom was paid, in the life-blood of his co-equal and co-eternal Son. May my reader know now, if he has not known it before, the value of the ransom, and the completeness of the deliverance founded thereon.

How our desires shape our judgments; what we want to see needs not spectacles—none so blind as those that won't see. This is true regarding spiritual things, and moulds our views more than we will acknowledge.

Men WISH there were no God; they SAY there is no God.

Men wish there were no Conscience; they ignore it, and it is seared to them.

Men wish there were no Law; and they fight against it.

Men wish there were no Hell; and they whiten its blackness, and terminate its duration.

Men wish there were no Devil; they clothe him as an angel of light, or picture him as a phantom of the imagination.

Men wish there were no Bible, because it reveals all these to them very plainly; therefore they deny its inspiration, ignore its authority, garland it with purple and gold, distort, mis-translate, mis-construe, laugh at its commands, and deride its object.

BUT FOR ALL THAT, GOD IS TRUE: YEA, EVEN IF EVERY MAN BE PROVED A LIAR.

"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Rom. vi. 23.

HAVE YOU RAISED ANCHOR?

TWO drunken sailors wished to cross an arm of the sea in Scotland one dark night. The inlet was not wide, and usually it was crossed in twenty minutes. The two sailors were anxious to get over as quickly as possible, and getting in their boat, they set themselves with all their strength to row over in less time than usually taken, but the crossing never seemed so long before. They redoubled their efforts, but although they were looking momentarily that the prow would strike the other shore, they still continued in open water. There was no current in the narrow bay, but the sailors in their drunken stupidity imagined the tide was against them, and again pulled with all their might, but they did not reach the other shore. "Well," said they, "either the boat is bewitched, or we are." They continued rowing, the hours passed, day began to break, and the increasing light revealed to the two exhausted but now sobered sailors the cause of their trouble.

"Hello mate," cried one of them, looking over the side of the boat, "we have not raised anchor."

It was the fact, and now they saw why their night's work had been so utterly useless.

The drunken stupidity of the two sailors may raise a smile, but how many souls are in the same condition; many a poor sinner struggles to believe—strange as that may appear—but all their efforts have been in vain, peace of heart is as far away as ever. All

the means of grace have not brought any relief; prayer has not brought a joyful response. The unhappy soul pressed to despair, places the fault upon the devil; upon a fatal chance; upon anything at all but the true cause which is never suspected.

The heart clings to hopes founded on its own righteousness, which it does not wish to relinquish; it secretly nourishes things which retain it under the power of death, it does not wish to cast itself with child-like confidence into the arms of Jesus.

And you dear reader, where are you? *Have you raised anchor yet?* Have you cut loose from yourself? If not, all your efforts are useless; raise then *your* anchor; cast aside your false confidence in everything that keeps you here; cast yourself just as you are, without oars or rudder, into the arms of Jesus, and you will prove for yourself, the reality of the word which says, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise, cast out."

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.—I Jno. i. 7.

Be it known unto 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 ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.—Acts xiii. 38-39.

I HOLD IT.

J. H., son of a farmer, had been brought up in gross ignorance, or rather had through neglect been allowed to grow up in that state. At the age of twenty-five his health began to fail in such manner as to leave no doubt that he had been attacked by a fatal malady. When he spoke of death it was always with astonishing indifference, in his ignorance he imagined that he had never sinned enough to deserve punishment or to have risked the salvation of his soul. Alas! he did not know that he was a sinful man, and of a fallen race. He did not know that all his life had been a continuous state of rebellion against God. The wickedness of the human heart was many times explained to him, as well as the claims of God's law upon him and the judgment which it threatened, as well as the scriptural way of salvation, but up to that time not a ray of light had reached his conscience, the only indication that he began to be sensible of the eternal danger he was incurring was that "he would endeavour to do his best to merit the favour of God, and that he would pray to Jesus to pardon his sins." He could not see more than that.

But time passed. His strength failed from day to day, and it was apparent that he was nearing his end. Apparently his future was full of sorrow and despair, "but God is rich in mercy," and He soon revealed to this soul so darkened, His marvelous love

in Christ, and made it pass "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts xxvi. 18) revealing the light "of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (II Cor. iv. 6.) See him then, lying on his death bed "without peace with God." (Rom. v. 1.) Reader, think of it, and ask yourself what would be your feelings under such circumstances.

"Is not a debt forgiven when it is paid?" I asked him.

"Nothing more certain," he replied, "but how can a man pay his debt to God?"

"Surely," I said, "it is indispensable that a sinless sacrifice be presented. You admit that in yourself you are unable to pay your debt to God, but since the Son of God has taken it upon Himself what have you to do? God offers you a free pardon when He says, "Through this Man, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins," (Acts xiii. 38,) and He can righteously make this announcement on the sole ground, that Jesus Christ having taken the sinners place, He becomes, by faith in Him, the sinners substitute. Jesus has paid the demand due for sin, and what is God demanding from you?"

"That, I cannot answer," said he slowly and sorrowfully.

"Consider," I said, "if you had been in debt and I had paid the debt and sent word to you that I had done so, what would I be looking for from you?"

This time the answer came without hesitation, "That I should believe that you had done so."

"Exactly, and since you, sinner that you are, owe

God such an enormous sum, and He announces to you a free pardon, in the words I have repeated, what is He looking for from you?"

The look of intelligence which shone in his eyes at these words, proclaimed that the light had penetrated the obscurity of this soul, and he replied with earnestness—"He wishes that I should believe that Jesus Christ has paid my debt, Oh! how good this news is, I have never seen it so clearly."

"Ah!" I said, "this is the gospel which has been so often spoken to you, but which in truth, you have now heard for the first time. This is good news from God for sinners, who were waiting the execution of the sentence of death. "By Him (Jesus Christ) all that believe are justified from all things," (Acts xiii. 39,) and as I read to him from my Bible passage after passage, showing the immediate and complete justification of the sinner who accepts the offered mercy, his face, hitherto so inanimate, was now lighted up with a radiant smile as he repeated in a feeble and shaking voice, "Oh! how good this news is, never in my life have I laid hold of it before."

When he was asked some days after this conversation, what his mind was occupied with, he said, "I pray God to show me more."

"What! are you asking to see more as to your forgiveness?"

"Oh! No sir," said he quickly, "I hold it."

Thus resting on the work accomplished by the Lord Jesus, he expired peaceably; and his spirit departed to be with Jesus, for God has said, "whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."