

# THE SOWER.

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JOHN I. 10, 11.  
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He came, whose embassy was peace,  
He left His throne above ;  
To prove if enmity would cease  
Beneath the power of love.  
He came, whose errand was to give—  
His hand was opened wide,  
Yea, at our need, that we might live,  
He gave Himself, and died.

What had the world for Him ?—'Twas meet  
To answer love with love,  
With signs of thankful joy, to greet  
The Stranger from above.  
For Him, His days are almost past,  
His sorrows well-nigh o'er,  
When lo ! the world will give at last  
From its abundant store !

The shameful cross—the piercing thorn—  
The vinegar and gall ;  
The world gives these with cruel scorn,  
And He endures them all.  
O world ! that cross doth still proclaim,  
On earth, in heaven above,  
The story of *thy* guilt and shame,  
The wonders of *His* love.

## "I AM JESUS."

(ACTS IX. 5).

THE Jews had rejected, betrayed and murdered Jesus, their Messiah, the Son of God. God had raised Him up from the dead, and exalted Him as Lord and Christ, at His own right hand. And the Holy Ghost had come down, and had anointed and sealed, those who believed in His name, and had united them to Christ in glory, as members of His body. And the Lord Jesus now looked upon His followers as a part of Himself, His body.

Saul of Tarsus had become the great leader in the persecution waged by the Jews against the disciples of Jesus. His state and career are briefly described by the Holy Ghost in these words: "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem." (Acts ix. 1, 2). Afterwards, speaking of the matter himself, he said; "Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." (Acts xxvi. 10, 11).

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*This* man, this enemy of Jesus, devoting his life to the slaughter of the saints, and the crushing out of the name of the Nazarene, was to become an example of God's wondrous grace towards His enemies, as well as a chosen vessel to bear the name of Jesus to the Gentiles.

As this man pursued his way to Damascus, little did he dream what was to befall him on the way; little did he think that all his zeal to uphold the law, and all his own righteousness, of which he could boast above his fellows, were in one short moment to be proved utterly worthless; nay more, to be proved enmity and rebellion against God. But let us look directly at the words of the Holy Ghost. "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus; and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven; and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?'"

And he said, 'Who art thou Lord?'

And the Lord said, 'I AM JESUS, whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.'

What a revelation to this poor, self-righteous persecutor! And how like the revelation of Joseph to his brethren in an earlier day! "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." (Gen. xlv. 4). "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." (Acts ix. 5). Joseph's brethren were troubled in his presence, because their sin had found them out, and his power and authority were unquestionable, and until they knew

the grace in Joseph's heart which could, and did fully and freely forgive all, they were not at ease. So Saul trembled and was astonished in the presence of Jesus amid "the glory of that light." His sin too had found *him* out—his self-righteous rebellion against God, in which he had reddened his hands with the blood of the saints. It was all before him now, and he was helpless, smitten to the ground, and stricken blind by that dazzling glory. What is all his zeal worth now? And what can all his righteousness avail him? Alas! all is worse than filthy rags. He had counted Jesus an imposter; he had thought He was dead, and that the disciples had stolen Him away while the soldiers slept. But here he meets Him alive and encircled in glory above the brightness of the sun. In ignorant unbelief, not knowing Jesus, he had "kicked against the pricks," refusing the authority of the exalted Saviour. And now he found it "hard." That power and authority he cannot question now. He has been made to feel His power, and has seen His glory. Solemn moment! In the presence of the Lord, the Judge, stript of all his righteousness in which he had trusted, all his sin and rebellion uncovered in the all-searching light of God's presence, and the blood of the saints discovered in his garments of self-righteousness! Oh! what will he do now? Whither shall he flee from "the glory of that light?" Nay, he will not flee. He will submit to the authority, and trust to the mercy of that glorious One against whom he had sinned. Is there grace in Him? Perhaps it may avail. If not, it is

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all over. He bows. He is obedient to the heavenly vision, and obtains mercy, because he did it ignorantly in unbelief. (I Tim. i. 13). "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" are his trembling words as he bows to the will and authority of the Nazarene, whom before he had despised. And was there not something in the Lord's manner that spoke assurance to his trembling soul? Was not the glory of grace shining in that face? Was there not tenderness instead of severity in that voice, when He said "I am Jesus?" Did not that poor trembling sinner feel that he was there the object of compassion flowing from a heart which was love itself? Precious, precious Saviour! of whom that same persecutor could afterwards say "who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*." (Gal. ii. 20).

Yes the "persecutor," the "blasphemer," found mercy. He was forgiven, justified, saved, and made a chosen vessel in which to spread abroad the sweet savor of the name of Jesus. He was a living proof of the measureless grace of God toward sinners. The words: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief," had their exemplification in himself. Wherever he went he was a living proof of their truth. But he could also add, "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a *pattern* to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." (I Tim. i. 15, 16). The chief of sinners has been saved, and

this is the proof that in the grace and long suffering of Jesus, the door stands open for *all*.

Fellow traveler to eternity, have you entered that open door? No! Why not? The same compassionate Jesus who saved Paul is ready to save you. Has He not spoken to you? and have you ever said, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" Perhaps you think *well* of yourself! But what would you think of yourself, if you lay *prostrated* and *manifested* in "the glory of that light" which shone upon Saul of Tarsus? Ah! your self satisfaction would be turned into loathing then. You need a Saviour. Do not deceive yourself. Do not trifle, and sin away the day of grace. Jesus calls *now*. Do not disobey His call, lest you perish in your rebellion and unbelief. His compassions still flow. Turn not away from that river of mercy, but come, and drink, and live.

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"Let there be light!" Jehovah said,  
The beam awoke, the light obey'd;  
Bursting on chaos dark and wild,  
Till the glad earth and ocean smiled.

Light broke upon my rayless tomb,  
The day-star rose upon my gloom;  
And with its gentle new-born ray,  
Brightened my darkness into day.

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## REpentance AND SALVATION.

“**R**EPENTANCE toward God,” (Acts xx. 21) is necessary because He is holy, and must judge the sinner, unless the sinner judges himself. It is not agony of feelings worked up by human effort; nor a change of mind merely toward God; but a divine work in the conscience and heart through the word of God believed, led to it, by the goodness of God, (Rom. ii. 4), and evidenced by self-judgment. See Luke xxiii. 40, 41; and compare Jonah iii. and Matt. xii. 41. When thus exercised he is led on to salvation by faith in the gospel, and sealed with the spirit. (Eph. i. 13).

Zaccheus sought to show up a good character before the Lord in Luke xix, without evidence of repentance. But what is the use of good works if salvation is by faith without works. (Eph. ii. 8, 9)? or a good character if salvation is for the *lost*; and “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” (Is. lxiv. 6). So the messenger was left with him to work repentance; “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” In the Philippian jailor, (Acts xvi), there is evidence of repentance; so that he is simply told to “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house.”

Some opponents of the gospel slanderously say, “If that’s all you’ve to do, simply believe; then you can go and do as you like.” Such of course are not saved,

their language betrays them. They expect to satisfy God, and *merit* salvation; rather than receive it by faith in virtue of the atonement of Christ for sinners. It is true that for repentant souls it is *only* necessary to believe in the Lord Jesus for salvation. But believers are not "free agents;" nor were they before, but servants or slaves of sin; but being saved, they must obey Him who is their Lord and Master. He satisfied God in respect of sin; yea, glorified Him at the cross, and they must satisfy Him that saved them. Good works follow faith, but never precede salvation, see Titus iii. 4-8.

Until the Lord returns for His saints, it will continue to be true that salvation is by faith only, see Rom. iv. 1-5.

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"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (Jno. vi. 35). Dear reader, do you understand these words? Has *your* soul-hunger been appeased by this "bread from heaven, this "bread of life?" Has *your* soul-thirst been quenched by receiving *in* Him and *of* Him the water of life? Or is it possible that one who reads these lines should fall under the condemnation of the words next uttered by Christ? "But I said unto you, that ye also have seen Me and believe not." No language so cutting as that of rejected mercy—repulsed and slighted love.

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## IN THREE HOURS.

IN one of the most picturesque parts of England there stood a handsome villa residence embellished with the resources of art and nature. In all its surroundings there was the peacefulness of country life, but what particularly impressed those who entered it was the silent, invisible, but indescribable influence which one could not but be conscious of. Peace and order reigned, and each member of the household had their own sphere of activity which was not in any case oppressive. The mistress of the mansion being in delicate health seemed to have only strength for loving, and the expression of profound peace and contentment which her face always wore was like a balm to calm every agitated heart that approached her. Her husband was all that she could wish, and three loving children completed this happy family circle.

The reader has no doubt said to himself: "How could it be other than happy! and who would not be so in such a position?"

Yes, dear reader, you would indeed be so, but only on one condition, and that is that you possessed *all* that this lady did. Now I have not yet revealed the secret of her happiness.

For some time she had been a sufferer, her husband did not perceive at first the change which was being wrought in her, and then she refused to see a doctor—"spring" she said "was trying to her;" later it was "the great heat of summer," but the disease continued to make progress and at length it became necessary to have recourse to a doctor.

He came and was struck with astonishment and grief at seeing the state of the invalid. After leaving the sick room he said to the husband with much feeling and not without a tone of reproach :

"Of what avail is it to call me now? It should have been done six months ago."

"It was my wish," replied the husband, "but she was unwilling, affirming that she was not really sick. But is there any danger?"

"Danger!" cried the doctor, "she has not three hours to live, but do not tell her, it would kill her at once."

After a brief silence, with a voice choked by emotion, the husband replied :

"You do not know her, doctor, or you would not speak in this way. It is a very heavy blow for *me*, but you could not take better news to *her*; come again with me into her room."

The astonished doctor followed in silence. He had known the lady since her infancy and had admired her in every relation of life. She had been a loving and obedient daughter, a faithful and sure friend, a wife and mother the most devoted he had known. Moreover, everything that wealth could give, surrounded her—and she would be happy to leave it all? He had been conscious of a different surrounding in this house from anything he had previously known; but was it possible that in this model family there could be a gnawing worm concealed beneath the happy exterior.

These thoughts were revolving in his mind as he

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returned to the sick room, and the husband repeated what he had said.

“What!” she cried, “in three hours I shall see my precious Saviour!”

It was indeed an agreeable surprise for her, and the tone of tenderness and the expression of ineffable peace and joy that overspread her countenance confirmed her words.

She added tranquilly, addressing her husband :

“I wish to pass the first hour in arranging my temporal affairs; the second with you and my dear children; and during the third I shall be awaiting the call of my Lord to be with Himself.”

The doctor was an avowed skeptic, for whom more than one prayer had ascended to God from this very chamber. Many times, efforts had been made to present Christ to his heart and conscience but in vain. But now he went away greatly disturbed by a thing so strange and incomprehensible to him, that this lady, loved, and surrounded by all that could make life happy here, was able to leave with joy, her wealth, her husband, and her beloved children, to go to a Person whom she knew, living in heaven, and who occupied the first place in her heart.

The secret of the joy which she manifested in her departure was to be with Jesus Christ whom she knew as her Saviour, dead and risen; as One who loved her and had given Himself for her; who had taken the terror from death—had indeed annulled it—and had prepared a place for her in the Father's house where she would be forever with Himself.

## GOOD NEWS.

THE gospel of God's Son is good news: good news of His person and work: blessed expression! All until the gospel was a *claim upon man*. A claim can never be *good news*. The gospel never alters the claim of God upon man, but maintains it; and shews that all is over with man, because he can never meet that claim. But the gospel brings in the *power of God*: power on behalf of man; not power to *help* man to meet the claim of God upon him. But it reveals the righteousness of God, consequent upon man being altogether without strength. Thus peace flows into the soul, when it ceases from everything else and submits to the revealed righteousness of God, which is upon everyone that believeth. While a person is looking for *help*, he is under law, and has *never been in God's presence*. The thought of *help may be held* while a person is looking forward to some future meeting with God; but if I am in the presence of God now, *help* will not do. I am lost. I want now, righteousness and pardon: and I want it *now*. And the soul will not have solid peace until it is in the presence of God, righteous and pardoned. The apostle says, the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, because therein is the righteousness of God revealed. A righteousness which is declared unto all, to Jew and Gentile, yea to every creature, and which *is upon all them that believe*.

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## THE SENTENCE OF DEATH.

“ CONDEMNED already ”—these are solemn words! Of whom do they speak? “ *He that believeth not is condemned already.* ” (John iii. 18).

Have you ever been present in a court of justice at the close of a criminal trial, and heard the Judge pronounce the sentence of death? The donning of the black cap, the solemn tone of voice, the expectant faces, the awed silence—all add to the solemnity of the scene. A young man who had been led away from simple belief into sceptical thoughts of God and His word, was deeply impressed by such an occasion, and left the court in a different frame of mind to that in which he entered. But if to hear such a sentence from the lips of mortal man be thrilling, what will it be to hear it from God?

“ From heaven did the Lord behold the earth. ” (Ps. cii. 19). Power belongs to Him, He is “ greater than man, ” and dispenses life and death. Into the scene of sin and death where man is, He sent His Son, for “ death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, ” (Rom. v. 12), and He sent Him to give life, not to award death. “ God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned. ” (John iii. 17, 18). Surely all would then believe on Him, certainly all would turn to Him and live! Ah, no—Jesus mourned

that "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life," (John v. 40), and "Because I tell you the truth, ye believe Me not." (John viii. 45).

How will God treat those who slight such a priceless gift as that of His only Son! He passes sentence on them thus: "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God . . . . He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 18, 36). Thus it comes to pass that unbelievers—unbelievers who are refusing life and salvation, are under the sentence of death: their *sins* merit punishment in hell, but "Of how much *sorer* punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the *Son of God*"? (Heb. x. 29). All who refuse Him are adding a crowning iniquity to their sins, and God cannot be just and yet justify them; but inasmuch as the sentence is not yet executed, (though *pronounced* in God's word) they may still turn to Him and live. "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" (Eze. xxxiii 11).

If God in His mercy delay the execution of this dread sentence, it is not that He forgets, or that there will be any back door of escape *then* for those who refuse to bow to Jesus *now*—oh no—*God has His books*. Men are careful over their accounts; to speak with reverence, God is much more so, for all He does is perfect, and divine, and infinite. "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is

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the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. xx. 12-15).

Reader if you are among those who are "condemned already," remember that you may change places *now*, you may join the company of believers *to-day*: when the time comes for the sentence to be carried out, it will be too late. "Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke; *then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.*" (Job xxxvi. 18).

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Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do with JESUS?  
—(Matt. xxvii 22).

Reader, what will you do with Jesus?—

Be it known unto *you* . . . that through this man is preached unto *you* the forgiveness of sins: and by *Him* all that believe are justified from *all* things.  
(Acts xiii. 38, 39).

This may be your *last* day's work.

This may be the last time you will *read*.

This may be your last night's *enjoyment*.

This may be your last *warning*.

This may be *your* last night on earth—

And then ETERNITY, but *where* dear soul?

What will *you do* with JESUS?

“FOR HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE, IF WE  
NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION; WHICH  
AT THE FIRST BEGAN TO BE  
*SPOKEN BY THE LORD.*”

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LET me ask, Is there no need for this exhortation? What can be thought of the fate of the man who neglects what God, by His own Son, has proclaimed? What the condition of him who neglects a salvation that could only be accomplished by the mission, and sorrows, and sufferings, and death of God's Son.

God will vindicate His word when spoken by angels; but much more will He visit for the outraged dignity and the rejected love of His Son; for the despisal of that grace which flows only from His glory, His sufferings, and His death!

It is a serious thing for men to neglect their *own salvation*, and it is a legitimate thing to reason with them on the hopelessness of the condition, which such a neglect involves. But there is something deeper than this presented here; it is the neglect of *God's* salvation; the neglect of that intervention of mercy, which only can render it possible for any sinner to appear in the presence of God. This is another idea than the neglect of my own well-being. It is the neglect of God, of His glory, of His holiness, of His authority, of His grace, of His love, of the provisions, of His mercy; the neglect of the salvation accomplished in sorrow and suffering, by His only begotten Son, and is now proclaimed, through the testimony of the Holy Ghost, sent down from above.