

# THE SOWER.

## THE LIGHT OF THE MORNING.

The light of the Morning is tinging the highlands;  
The mists of the night, are fast fading away;  
'Tis the roseate hue, which but hints of the splendor,  
The Sun will reveal, as He brings in the day.

### II.

Awaken, ye sleepers! think, think of the promise,  
The absent One left you, to comfort and cheer!  
Soon, soon will you see the bright Star of the Morning;  
E'en now can rejoice, that the rising is near.

### III.

That rising so blessed, for them who are watching,  
Who look for the morn, with its promise of rest;  
The night, with its darkness and shadows, dispelling,  
The end of all weariness, pain, and unrest.

### IV.

But let us remember, that those who are ready,  
Alone, of the waiting ones, enter the door;  
Five virgins discover, that empty profession,  
Quite current with men, can avail them no more.

### V.

Alas! for a world, now so deaf to the pleading,  
Of One who, in patience and love, still entreats  
Despising the mercy; rejecting the pardon;  
Now fills up the measure; its guilt it completes.

### VI.

Oh fly, then, unsaved one; take refuge with Jesus,  
The arms of His love are outstretched to enclose—  
Oh haste thee—delay not—the door is still open;  
Trust, rest, in His love—on His bosom repose!

## THE MERCY OF GOD.

THESE is a false idea abroad with many as to the mercy of God. It is said that God never created man to cast him into hell. They acknowledge that there has been failure in many respects, but they are comforted with the thought, that if they do the best they can, and are honest before God and men, God will not be too exacting as to our failures, and at the last will allow us to pass into heaven.

This is both true and false—It is true that God did not create man to punish him, but on the contrary to enjoy with Him the perfect rest which He announced on the seventh day. But man allowed himself to be caught in the devils trap. He disobeyed God, and sold himself body and soul to Satan for the momentary satisfaction of the gratification of his desires. From that time all his relations with the living God were broken—No longer mutual confidence; no longer communion. Man became Satan's captive in such manner, that if God had not interposed in grace, man would have gone where his sins led him. He heard the devil and accepted him as his master, and the just judgment of God consigned him to eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt .xxv. 41, Rev. xx. 10-15).

God intervened in grace, and at the very time of the fall He announced the victory which the seed of the woman—His own Son Jesus our Lord—would achieve over the serpent. The enemy came in like a

flood, but the Spirit of the Lord lifted up a standard against him. (Is. lix. 19.)

But it is necessary that an individual work be wrought in each sinner to take away his sins and give him an entrance into the kingdom of God.

Suppose for a moment that God should not be "too severe," and that He would open heaven to him who had done his best. Heaven is the eternal dwelling place of the sovereign God, where absolute holiness and perfect light exist. What could one do there, who, by his own admission, had at least several failures to reproach himself with, in his effort to do good. I ask you, dear reader, how could you endure the penetrating look of the eternal God in such a light. If Adam and Eve with the burden of *one single* sin of disobedience on their consciences, sought to conceal themselves from God, how could we possibly endure the brightness of that glory, and the holiness of that place with our innumerable failures, when on all sides is heard the unceasing cry: HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, (Rev. iv. 8). Would it be mercy to allow a sinner to enter heaven unless perfectly cleansed from his defilement and made pure?

The thought which we oppose is only a device of the enemy who makes sinners hope that God will be as indifferent to their sins as they are themselves. It is not the case, but God extends grace to us, His absolute righteousness having been satisfied. He is just in justifying the ungodly who believe in Jesus Christ. (Rom. iii. 4); for the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses from all sin. This is His mercy.

SALVATION THROUGH WORKS  
 VERSUS  
 SALVATION THROUGH FAITH.

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[Being the substance of a conversation with a Catholic priest.]

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ON returning home from an open air meeting we had been holding one Lord's day, I met at the Brooklyn bridge, a Catholic priest. In course of conversation with him I learned that he had traveled much in the far west, where he had more than once successfully refuted those who contended that there was no God.

The works of Tom Paine were especially obnoxious to him, but he was still, alas, a stranger to salvation through faith alone. As we were changing from the bridge train to the elevated road, I asked him, "Do you believe sir, that man is, in God's sight, a total ruin morally?"

"No, I do not," he replied, "there is much that is good in man that may be developed and brought out."

"But," I continued, "do you not believe that the scriptures are inspired of God?" "Yes," he responded, "every word of them." Opening my Bible to the 3rd chapter of Romans, I read as follows:

"We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: \* \* \* There is none that doeth good, no, not one. \* \* \* Now we know

that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

"But how about Paul," interrupted the priest, "was he not doing good when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans?"

"Yes, but he had bowed to God's judgement that all had sinned."

"Howbeit," Paul continues, "for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." (I. Tim. i. 16.)

"Well then, Paul did do good," he replied.

"Yes, after he believed from the heart, the gospel. Have you ever noticed the scripture in the 6th chapter of Genesis, 5th verse.

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually?"

"Every imagination," being evil did not admit of any good, and that little word "only" shows that there was no intermission, for it was "only evil continually."

The verse admits of no other interpretation, it interprets itself.

"But how about Noah?" interposed my companion. "Noah, as Paul, believed God," I responded, and accepted God's one means of salvation. We read in Heb. xi. 7, "being warned of God of things

not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

Christ is God's refuge for the lost now; as the ark was for the temporal safety of Noah and his family then; and Noah was justified by faith.

"Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost."

"Yes, but not altogether lost," said the priest.

I turned in my Bible to the 2nd chapter of Ephesians which states—"and you hath He quickened who were *dead in trespasses and sins*. \* \* \* \* \* For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works; lest any man should boast.

"What is grace?" queried my friend.

"The unmerited favor of God," I replied.

"Unmerited favor?"

"Yes unmerited; man deserves nothing from God."

"You are wrong," he retorted, "it is sometimes merited and sometimes it is unmerited. What is your ground for stating that grace is always God's unmerited favor?"

From the 4th chapter of Romans, I read him the 4th verse.

"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

The apostle shows conclusively that if one merits the reward, he receives it as a payment of debt, and it cannot consequently be grace. The 2nd chapter of Ephesians quite agrees with this, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

Paul could not say that our good works form no part of our salvation, if grace meant anything else than unmerited favor.

"But," the Priest answered, "James tells us that as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

"True," I said, "but scripture cannot contradict itself, Paul is speaking in Ephesians of salvation and James of justification. Good works form no part in our salvation as Paul so positively states, but they do in our justification.

"How do you distinguish the two?" he questioned.

"Salvation is God's work," I replied, "through faith in Christ 'who died for us and rose again,' 'Christ did the work on the cross for us.' As to justification, in the 4th chapter of Romans, Paul teaches us that before God, it is by faith only, and James tells us we are justified before men by works, (3rd chapter of his Epistle.)"

God sees the faith and it is enough for Him; but I cannot see the faith of another save as it expresses itself in works. This is most clearly shown by Paul and James in these very chapters. They take Abraham as one who illustrates these truths.

As I have said, faith must always come first; and one is justified by faith, first. The good works only show how real the faith is. Consider, for a moment, what Paul says about Abraham, in the 4th chapter of Romans.

“For what saith the scriptures? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” Now the question would naturally arise, when in Abraham’s life, was his faith counted for righteousness? Was it before or after the time that James speaks about Abraham being justified by works? In Gen. xv. 5-6, we read that God brought Abraham “forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.” Now let us turn to the 2nd of James 21st verse, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?” If you will turn back again to Genesis you will find the account of this given in the 22nd chapter; many years having elapsed since the time that Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Isaac was not even born at that time.

I think you will see, sir, if you believe the scriptures, that “to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Rom. iv. 5.) The statement is simple and cannot be misunderstood.



"Yes, but you are interpreting," retorted the priest.

"No," I responded, "it is the simple statement of scripture."

"Well, but how do you know it is inspired?" he questioned.

I reminded him that at the beginning of our conversation we were perfectly agreed on that subject, he having stated, very positively, his belief that the scriptures were inspired from beginning to end. "Further-more, you will find in your own Catholic translation; the same statement which I have quoted to you from Romans."

"But how do you know *that* is inspired?" and so saying, he arose quickly, and bidding me good night, left the car, which had now arrived at his destination.

I leave the above account with the reader, trusting that through God's rich mercy, he may, like Abraham, believe God, and thus give Him the glory, (Rom. iv. 20).

The Jews said to Jesus, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?"

"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." (John vi. 28-29.)

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"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

## BURNED HERSELF WITH ACID.

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Toronto, Aug. 25th. 1892.

“To the Editor of THE SOWER,

DEAR SIR,—Inclosed, you will find a slip cut from the *Globe* of the 24th. inst.; giving an account of a troubled soul. Would it be asking too much of you to go to the hospital with the story of the cross, to that poor soul?”

May the Lord be with you,

CHRISTIAN.

“C——— H———, who lives at 111 L——— St. was removed to the hospital in the ambulance yesterday afternoon. She was suffering great pain from burns on her body caused by the appliance of carbolic acid. It is understood that in this manner she tortured herself as penance for her sins. She believed that this was the most effectual way of blotting out her sins, and on several previous occasions she applied the burning acid, but not in so serious a degree.”

This was a case, and how many such there are, where the work of the cross had been accepted for personal guilt, but not for the sinful nature. How many souls are in anguish, almost in despair, as the wicked thought, or word, or deed, reveals an inherent depravity, from which they thought they had escaped; and the devil taking advantage of the soul's distress, questions the reality of the conversion and casts it back in helplessness and uncertainty upon itself, and upon the world. Step by step, the enemy of souls resists the grace of God, and if he cannot prevent the acceptance of the gospel, he will endeavour to make the apprehension of it as feeble as possible in the

soul, so that the greater number of those who have really been born again, and have eternal life, have no joy in Christ; no sense of present deliverance; and no power for walk. They are, if one may use the expression, but half converted, and the life which should be a testimony to that peace which was a special bequest from the Lord to His own in the world, is a testimony to nothing but its own weakness.

It is the will of God that His people should be happy in Christ; "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." (Phil. iv. 4,) but to be so, it is a necessity that the gospel in all its fulness be believed. In the seventh of Romans a soul is groaning under an intolerable burden, and the last verse of the chapter shows that God's remedy for the nature is the same as that for the guilt, the cross of Christ—He "was delivered for our offences," (Rom. iv. 25) is one side, "He hath made Him to be sin for us," (II Cor. v. 21,) is the other—"Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" (Acts xiii 38), meets what we have done, "Planted together in the likeness of His death" (Rom. vi. 5), meets what we are—Sins are forgiven, the nature judged, condemned, and set aside.

If these lines should be read by one who has been attracted and detained by the glorious Person of the Saviour, but has failed to see the completeness of the work of expiation; may the blessed announcement that "if any man be in Christ it is a new creation;" (II Cor. v. 17), lead to an apprehension of the further truth "that all things are become new, and all things are of God," and all through the work of Christ by which we have been reconciled to God.

The Lord in His grace deliver souls from this unhappy bondage.

## PORTRAIT OF MARY IN HEAVEN.

[Copy of a letter from the Abbess of St. Mary's to the painter, Joseph de St. Pierre, Cloister of the Assumption.]

ST. MARY'S ABBEY, Feb. 16, 1567.

DEAR BROTHER IN OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST,—I write to you with a heart filled with joy and with the purest pleasure. You have done me the greatest service, do not doubt it; it is only just that I should endeavor to perform a similar service toward you. You thought you sent me an inanimate portrait, whereas you have given me a living being! You thought you should make me better acquainted with a mediatrix near to Jesus; you have been the means of revealing to me God my Saviour! But this needs explanation. I will go back to the beginning.

You will understand that on the arrival of your picture and your letter, I looked first at the portrait. It startled me! I read your letter, and, although with difficulty, I received your reasons. At length I hung the blessed portrait in my cell—yes, the blessed portrait, as you shall see. The more I looked at that thin, aged countenance, the less I was enchanted with it, and my veneration for Mary became weaker. I was dissatisfied with myself; but I reflected that after all Mary remains the same; if she be neither young nor beautiful, Mary has not less power as an intercessor.

Vainly I repeated this strong argument; I always felt that I was losing my affection for my patroness,

and at length I was compelled to acknowledge that what I had chiefly loved in the virgin was her youth and beauty, her pure and graceful form, not her moral character, nor her intercession with Jesus Christ.

That fact once admitted, I wished to know for myself that blessed Mary whom I still respected, but to whom I could no longer pray without hesitation. I opened the Bible that you sent back to me, and there, in sight of the portrait, I felt my old ideas removed one after another, and the young, the gentle, and beautiful Virgin, mediatrix between Jesus and men, in short, the queen of Heaven, changed into a humble servant of the Lord, happy because she had been received through grace; and who, far from being able to contribute anything to the salvation of others, needed a Saviour herself. This is the passage that struck me most. And Mary said: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." (Luke i. 46.)

If God be her Saviour, thought I, Mary might have been lost; she was not without sin! but I go on quoting from the gospel: "For He hath regarded the low estate of His hand-maiden."

You see Mary speaks of her lowliness! She adds: "All generations shall call me blessed, for He that is mighty hath done to me great things."

So, if Mary has been lifted up, it has been done by the power of God, not through any power in herself. But listen to what the angel Gabriel said to her at the 30th verse of the same chapter: "Mary, thou hast found favor with God."

Now, you know that finding favor implies that she had sinned; you feel that it would be absurd to say that God had shown favor to Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ was without sin.

You must not, however, think that my great joy arises from the discovery that Mary was only a blessed and very happy woman, like any other who is pardoned and saved. No; but from the moment that I took down that idol from the throne it occupied in my heart, room was ready for Him who ought always to have occupied it.

Yes, while seeking in the Bible to know Mary, I have learned better to appreciate Jesus Christ, my only, my beloved Saviour; and what I find in Him is not what I found of old in Mary—a body of flesh molded into such or such a form—but with a mind and heart and love that nothing on earth can worthily express.

Ah! dear brother, when I saw the Son of God quitting heaven to dwell upon earth, when I followed Him step by step, instructing the people, curing the sick, visiting the poor, not expecting anything from them, reproving the great, at the risk of their displeasure, and, above all, when I heard that Saviour say to me: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest;" "He who believes in me shall never die;" "I lay down my life for my sheep;" and, at length, when after listening to Him, I saw Him hanging on the cross to atone for my sins, and crying, when dying, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do," Oh!

then my heart burned within me, emotion overcame me, my eyes filled with tears, and I cried: "My Lord and my God I am saved!"

From that time everything has appeared new to me; the same Christian truths which, until then, I thought I possessed, were like beautiful images, suddenly endued with life and motion. The gospel, Christ, heaven, God, became realities to me. I felt in my heart as though a Divine guest explained to me the Word of God, making it easy to me to do right, while that which was so difficult and distasteful to me, now became sweet. In short, I am like a person transported to a new world where ideas, feelings, indeed everything differs from the former world; and this world appeared new to me from the day that I truly felt that I was completely and freely saved by Jesus Christ.

And as for yourself, dear brother, will you not pursue the route you have half traversed? After having put the Virgin in her place will you not put our Lord and Saviour in His place also? Oh, believe me, there is no true peace, no true joy besides.

Take the Bible again (not the same, for I am keeping it for myself). Accept the one I now send you; read it daily, imploring the gift of the Holy Spirit; and be assured that you will soon find a better mediator than Mary—You will meet with Jesus, our God and Saviour.

Your sister in Christ,

MARIA DE ST. ROMAN.

## THE PERSON AND THE WORK OF CHRIST.

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Comparatively little was known of Christ by either the woman that came to His feet, (Luke vii.) or the man that was cured of his blindness. (John ix.) (The great truth of His death and resurrection was not then fully revealed.) Yet one can easily see in them, both faith, and affection. Neither the deep sense of guilt, nor the difficulties of the Pharisee's house, could hinder the woman from coming personally to Christ. And all the arguments and threatenings of the Synagogue wholly failed to upset the confidence of him who aforesaid had been blind; or to withdraw the affections of his heart from Him who had opened his eyes. The former knew no more of the *Person* of Christ than of His *work*, the latter knew no more of His work than of His *Person*. But with purpose of heart they did cleave unto the Lord, and He revealed Himself to both according to their need. No heart ever really desired to know the *Person* of the Lord to whom He did not reveal Himself. And no soul ever really desired to know the work of the Lord, that will not stand in the full credit of that finished work, before the throne of God, forever. Every desire of the heart towards Christ is of the Holy Spirit, and in due time, shall be fully satisfied. The soul that has got a glimpse of Christ will ever after desire to know more of Him. Nothing will ever satisfy it but Himself.