

# THE SOWER.

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## THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS.

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What think ye of Christ?"—MATT. xxii, 42.

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"What think you of Christ?" is the test,  
To try both your state and your scheme;  
You cannot be right in the rest,  
Unless you think rightly of Him:  
As Jesus appears in your view—  
As He is beloved or not,  
So God is disposed to you,  
And mercy or wrath is your lot.

Some take Him a creature to be—  
A man, or an angel at most:  
But they have not feelings like me,  
Nor know themselves wretched and lost  
So guilty, so helpless am I,  
I durst not confide in His blood,  
Nor on his protection rely,  
Unless I were sure He is God.

Some call Him a Saviour, in word,  
But mix their own works with His plan;  
And hope He His help will afford,  
When they have done all that they can:

If doings prove rather too light  
 (A little they own they may fail),  
 They purpose to make up full weight,  
 By casting His name in the scale.

Some style Him "the Pearl of great price,"  
 And say, He's the fountain of joys ;  
 Yet feed upon folly and vice,  
 And cleave to the world and its toys ;  
 Like Judas, the Saviour they kiss,  
 And while they salute Him, betray.  
 Oh ! what will profession like this  
 Avail in His terrible day ?

If ask'd what of Jesus I think,  
 Though still my best thoughts are but poor,  
 I say, He's my meat and my drink,  
 My life, and my strength, and my store ;  
 My Shepherd, my trust and my Friend,  
 My Saviour from *sin* and from thrall ;  
 My hope from beginning to end,  
 My portion, my Lord, and my all.

Reader, what think you of Christ ? Is He your Saviour ?—that is, has He saved you ? for if He has not saved you, He is not your Saviour, though He be the Saviour of others. If Christ has not saved you, you are lost, and if cut off in this state you will be lost for ever—you will never enter heaven ; and your keenest anguish and heaviest condemnation will be that you have rejected the message of mercy now proclaimed to all, and refusing to receive Christ as your Saviour, you have refused salvation.

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## THE WAY THE LORD HATH LED ME.

FROM a child I had been anxious about my soul, and would often go to my mother and tell her how troubled I was. Not being converted herself and depending on her own good works she would advise me to pray more, and to be more careful about keeping the commandments. If I did these, she knew the Lord would take me to heaven when I died. Although I tried to be good and obedient, I failed as all do, who depend on their own good works. I grew more dissatisfied with myself, for though I went to church and Sunday school regularly, I was wholly ignorant of the plan of salvation. One day a school friend called and invited me to go with her to hear an evangelist preach. He took for his text Isaiah 6, and as he described the state of a lost soul, I trembled with fear, for it was my case exactly, and holding down my head I wept bitterly. He then told of the love of God in sending Jesus, His Son, to die for us. But I had not faith to believe that Christ became my substitute and took my sins upon Himself, and put them all away so that in God's sight it is the same as though I had been crucified.

A friend seeing my distress begged me to take God at His word, and to trust in Jesus, but I could not; I thought I had to improve before Jesus would forgive me, I went home feeling much worse than when I went to the meeting. Going to my room I prayed

earnestly for God to save me. That night I had a strange dream, I dreamed that I had to cross an abyss, and as I stood on the edge planning how to cross, the ground upon which I was standing gave way and I went down a short distance until my feet stood upon a small ledge of rock. As I stood in that perilous position, with my eyes closed to keep me from looking down, I heard a gentle voice saying "Trust yourself to me, and I will save you."

Opening my eyes, I saw on the opposite side, the Saviour with His hand out for me to take; but I was afraid to give Him my hand; for I thought, putting out my hand might cause me to lose my balance, then I would be lost for ever; but I had not long to think, for the shelf of rock upon which I was standing commenced to crumble, and in a few seconds I would go with it; so in agony I held out my hand, which was quickly grasped by the firm hand of my Saviour, and as I stood by His side He looked kindly down at me, and said, "Now you are saved, never doubt any more."

Though Satan is ever ready to worry and make us doubt; the Lord is ever near to support us through it all. It is such a precious thought that God looks at the believer through and in Christ, and sees no sin upon him, but covered with the righteousness of Christ we are complete in Him, our risen Head.

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And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest. (Is. xxxii, 2).

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## A LAMP WITHOUT OIL.

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**A**N old lady about eighty three years of age gives the following account of the way she received her first impression:—She was at the time about sixteen years of age and was at a gospel meeting where the preacher had taken for his text the parable of the ten virgins, (Matt. xxv). Towards the end of his discourse he said that at one time having heard of a young man who was very sick he went to visit him, but he had refused to see him.

Some days after he was asked to come and see the same young man. He responded willingly to the invitation, and as he entered the sick room he was received with these words:

“Friend B — give me a little of your oil, for my lamp is going out.”

The preacher replied, “Go to Him who sells and buy for yourself”—but he had hardly uttered the words when the vessel broke and the young man died.

The preacher recounted the incident to the audience to show them the danger of postponing to a future time, the important matter of salvation. And I repeat it to you dear young friends, to press upon you to come to Jesus now, that you may have oil in your lamps, for “TO-DAY is the day of salvation.”

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Of all the sad words of tongue or pen.

The saddest are these, “It might have been.”

## A WORD TO PROFESSING CHRISTIANS.

DEAR reader, if you are a professing Christian, the history of Israel has a voice for you and the same history is calculated to give occasion for thought, to the decided unbeliever. It should open his eyes as to the existence of a living God who is just and true, for it is certain that the mention of the Jews as proof of the divine origin of the Bible, has shut the mouth of more than one amongst those who reject the truth.

Perhaps you will say—I am not an unbeliever—I am not so blind as to deny that there is a God. I believe even that the Bible is true: so much the better—but the history of Israel can teach you more; even as they are not all Israel which are of Israel. So it is with those who call themselves Christians. It is not all those who say “Lord, Lord”—shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; take care that this word does not apply to you, and that the Lord may not be obliged to say to you “thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead.” (Rev. iii, 1). As God has fulfilled His threats in regard to Israel and has hardened and scattered them, in the same way He will execute the judgment which He has pronounced, against dead Christianity, of which He has said, “Having the form of Godliness, but denying the power.” It was of this the Lord says, “I will spue thee out of my mouth.” The apostle Paul foresaw this judgment and addresses himself thus to professing Christianity. “If God

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spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee." It is a very serious thing for you to be a professing Christian, without possessing the reality. Much has been given to you—much will be required of you—remember what has happened to Israel. Remember the parable of the king who made a wedding feast for his son, and of the man who was there without a wedding garment. He expected doubtless to take part in the feast as a joyful guest, but instead of that he was bound "hand and foot and cast into outer darkness." (Matt. xxii, 13). And why? Simply because he had not the wedding garment. He thought that he had a full right to be at the feast prepared by God, clothed in his own garment, which doubtless appeared to his eyes good enough. But God does not judge like man, and to those who resemble that man He speaks thus: "These things hast thou done . . . thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself, but I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes." (Psalms 1, 21). You know the history of the ten virgins—what crime had those five foolish virgins committed to be excluded from the wedding feast? They were neither impious, nor of bad reputation. On the contrary they carried lamps, they made them ready—and they even set out to meet the bridegroom. But the oil was wanting; the new life; the Holy Spirit.

And you dear reader, where are you? Are you contented until now with carrying and preparing your lamp without having the oil for feeding it? The lamp is the outward profession of faith to which people

cling and which they carefully adorn. But where there is a true faith—a saving faith—is found also the oil. What then this is faith and what is the oil? I could not tell in one word what this faith is, but I know what it produces and possesses.

Somebody has said :

Faith is to accept the grace,  
Which giveth joy to sinful man,  
To put the Saviour in our place,  
And trust divine love's glorious plan.

This faith which alone can save, is also a personal faith, and from the heart; which takes God at His word; and which with a sense of need, and with thanksgiving, lays hold of the perfect salvation which God has accomplished in Jesus Christ.

To this faith, the oil, that is to say the Holy Spirit will not be wanting. When a soul has received the witness which God has given, as to the efficacy of the blood of Christ and to His resurrection, that is to say when it has taken hold of the salvation for itself—the Holy Ghost comes and dwells in it. As the Scripture has said: "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." (Eph. i, 13), and this is true for all.

One word more dear reader. It is suggested to me, by the parable of the ten virgins, which we have just considered. The Lord says that they had gone out to meet the bridegroom. The first Christians

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—whether they had come out of Judaism or paganism, expected daily the return of the Lord, the coming of the bridegroom. It was in view of this that they had been converted. (I Thes. iv, 17. Phil. iii, 20. I Thes. i, 9, 10). Soon, as the Lord had tarried, this hope and expectation of His return had become weakened in the church; all the virgins slept. In our days the Lord has acted by His Spirit and has brought back this forgotten hope in the hearts of some. The cry has been heard—“Behold the bridegroom, go ye out to meet Him.” (Matt. xxv, 6). And many souls have rejoicingly understood, that their only expectation here below, was that of the approaching coming of the Lord according to His word—“Surely I come quickly.” (Rev. xxii, 20). Even to-day the Bridegroom may come, and who will He take? The virgins who have not only a lamp, a profession of Christianity, but who have oil in their lamps. They will enter with Him to the wedding and the door—the door of grace will be closed on the others. What a terrible position! without hope—without other expectation than the judgment; and the outer darkness—eternal separation from God, from heaven and from glory. This is thine reader if you are not saved; if you have not believed in Jesus, if you have not yet received the new life, and are not sealed by the Holy Spirit. Oh! listen to the word which invites you to come to Jesus, and “flee from the wrath to come.” Jesus has said, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” And God repeats “Behold now is the day of salvation.”

## COME SHORT.

A YOUNG MAN said, my religion is honesty—honesty with myself, with my neighbor, and with God. Although he admitted putting himself first and God last, yet he affirmed his honesty toward God. This word was quoted: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." (Luke x, 27). He owned, "According to that I have come short." But instead of *honestly* confessing the truth before God, and enquiring "how should man be just with God." (Job ix, 2), he took the usual shift of doing "the best I can," thus listening to Satan's cheat rather than to God.

Would it not have been "his uprightness" to "say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not?" Then grace would have answered, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." (Job xxxiii, 23, 27). Scripture not only convicts of having come short, but if there is true confession, grace meets the sinner at that very point, and it is ruinous not to repent, for "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke xiii, 3). "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. iii, 23), and the moment this place is really taken, the penitent learns, not that he must do the best he can; that would never satisfy the justice of God; but, that "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might

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bring us to God." (I Pet. 3, 18); and that by faith he is "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiation *through faith in His blood*. . . to declare *at this time* His righteousness; that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii, 24, 26).

How very near one may come to the infinite blessing of justification by faith, yet be turned fatally aside through Satan's lie, that he must merit God's favor by good works. If so, then, "he hath whereof to glory; *but not before God*." (Rom. iv, 2, 5). That would be a flat denial that Christ had finished the work, all of it, and satisfied God in all the claims of His nature, so that He might righteously justify the ungodly through faith. For justification before men works of faith are required. (Jas. ii); but for justification before God there is nothing for man to do nor to boast in. If self-judged he is simply to receive the testimony of the word of God as to the all sufficiency of the blood of Jesus.

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. . . by the law of faith; therefore we conclude that a man is justified *by faith* without the deeds of the law." (Rom. iii, 27, 28).

Christ "was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, *therefore* being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And if there are fears as to the future wrath of God, it further says: "being *now* justified by His blood, we shall be saved *from wrath* through Him." (Rom. iv, 25. v, 1, 9).

“LET US ALONE.”

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SOME time ago while travelling from L— to G— a fellow passenger with whom I was seated, seemed rather concerned about a certain change of cars which would take place at the next station, which we were fast approaching, saying “I will ask the conductor about it, and you do the same, for its best to be *positive* about these things. I want to be *sure* about it.” Readily I assented to his proposal, adding that while many were concerned and anxious about having temporal things resting on a solid basis they seemed quite unconcerned and careless as to whether their soul’s eternal welfare were resting on the Rock of Ages, the finished work of Christ, or whether with the mass they were fast rushing on to that awful “lake of fire.” I then asked him if he had eternal life, *God’s free offer* to each, to *all* the guilty sons of Adam’s race. (Rom. vi, 23). If he knew this precious Saviour, whom by God’s grace (and this alone) I found so precious to my own soul, while out of the abundance of the heart my mouth was speaking.

I don’t know that I shall ever forget his look ; so full of utter contempt, nor yet shall I ever be able to erase from my memory, his reply; as in a cold, repulsive manner he said, while apparently measuring each word before he spoke, with marked precision.

“Such subjects should not be spoken of in public and I wish to *be let alone.*” Previous to this however we had conversed of things in general, but when the

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subject was introduced Jesus, and His love, or “the only solid basis” on which one could rest his soul for time, and eternity, viz. the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, he wished to be let alone; and so, later on in our conversation, I was not surprised to find him scoffing at *the fact* that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” After a few moments pause I said: “Were I introducing certain vexed questions respecting ones own private life, I should then consider an apology necessary, but to speak of God having so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John iii, 16): this surely should not give offence when spoken of in public.”

Again that cold repulsive look came over his face as some sneering remark escaped his lips. Our conversation ended by my saying, “You remind me of the demons who said, ‘Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.’ (Mark i, 24). Though you desire to be let alone I hope the Lord never will let you alone till by grace you *know Him*. (John xvii, 3). Remember Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Oh if you should have to face *that fact* separated from Himself, throughout the countless ages of eternity!”

And now dear reader what do you think of this young man who did not want to hear about Christ, but who wished to be let alone. Talk on any other subject and you had a very sociable companion indeed, but don't mention Christ, this gives offence, (Rom. ix,

33), and it must needs be that offences come, but Oh the awful "woe" pronounced on this poor world because of offences. (Matt. xviii, 7).

Reader, is this thy condition, art thou of the world that's fast going on to judgment. (Heb. ix, 27), Doubtless *you* would not so have spoken. Few say audibly, "Let us alone." Many listen, many ask questions. (about God's good news to the lost and perishing), many wonder, many perish. Reader does the many, include thee? nay put not the question from thee, art thou included in this Christ rejecting mass? "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" for "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John iii, 36). Hast thou got it? (I John v).

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### GOD HATH CHOSEN THE FOOLISH.

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**T**ALKING some time ago with a half witted man I asked if he had ever committed any sins, to which enquiry he replied in the negative, but, from the sequel, I have been led to think he failed to comprehend the question, for a few days afterwards I met him and the following conversation took place:—

"John, did you ever tell a lie?"

"Lots of 'em!"

"And were not these sins?"

"Yes!"

"Do you ever tell lies now?"

"No! nor me don't take God's name in vain neither; better not." (with emphasis on the 'better not').

"And, what has God done with your sins?"

"Put 'em behind Him's back."

Can you, my dear reader, say as much?

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"A BROKEN AND A CONTRITE HEART."

VISITING the Toronto General Hospital recently a nurse said to me, "There is a patient here who is very ill: will you speak to him?" I replied I would; and as we were walking down the passage to "No. 15," she said that the case was a singular one, and the doctor had been unable to make it out. On seeing the patient, I soon came to understand the reason; the science of medicine made no provision for sin-sick souls. I found a man apparently about thirty-five years of age, so overcome with emotion, that the bed on which he lay was shaking; his eyes were swollen; his face wet with his tears; and his voice, when he attempted to answer my enquiry as to his health, was so broken and incoherent, that it was impossible to gather any meaning from his disconnected words. I sat down by his bed, and after considerable time, succeeded in quieting him somewhat, sufficiently at all events to know that he was making very strong and sweeping charges against some one, whom I soon came to know was himself.

Will it appear strange to you, dear reader, that I could have any satisfaction in such an exhibition of unhappiness and distress of soul; and would not the natural disposition be to soothe and quiet? Alas that the solemn reproof should now more than ever be applicable; "they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, peace, peace; when there is no peace." I remember when I was going through an exercise of soul much less deep than my hospital friend, and knowing myself to be under condemnation for having broken God's laws, I was assured by one whom I consulted, that I must be very good. I saw by God's word—and well for myself that I did—that "there is none good but one."

So, instead of telling our patient in "15" that there was no occasion for so much anxiety, I attempted to put before him the remedy which God had so freely and so fully provided.

"O, but," said the poor man, "I have been such a hypocrite."

"Granted," replied I, "yet the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

"There has never been such a sinner as I am."

"There has never been such a Saviour as the Lord Jesus." But he could not see Jesus; he could only see a moral leper, and could only cry "unclean, unclean."

With perfect assurance that He who had bruised, could and would heal, I left him. Business calling me out of town for a fortnight, I wrote to my friend and sent him a New Testament with many passages, which I thought applicable to his case, marked for him. During my absence I was very much before the Lord about him, and on my return was anxious to know of his state, so as soon as circumstances permitted, I found my way again to the hospital. On entering ward 15 my heart sank within me when I saw not only a vacant bed, but an unknown name, where I had seen so wonderful an exhibition of the Spirit's power two weeks before. My disappointment was brief, however; I soon learned that the patient had been removed to another ward, and found him in a distant corner, sitting, clothed, and in his right mind, reading his Testament.

"Well," I said, "are you rejoicing in the finished work of Christ?" With some hesitation he replied, "At times I am filled with joy, and then again clouds arise." But if the Lord were to call you at this moment what would be the result?" "O, I would surely be with Him." "Then," I said, "let us thank God for the salvation of a precious soul," and our hearts went out to Him for all His love and grace.