

THE SOWER.

A CALL TO CHRIST.

WILT thou, sinner, be converted,
Christ, the Lord of glory see,
By His own denied, deserted,
Bleeding, bound, and scourged for thee?
Look again O soul, behold Him
On the cross uplifted high;
See the precious life-blood flowing
See the tears that dim His eye.
Love has pierced the heart that break,
Loveless sinner, for thy sake.
Hearken till thy heart is broken,
To His cry so sad and sweet;
Hearken to the hammer smiting
Nails that pierced His hands and feet.
See the side whence flows the fountain
Of His love and life divine,
Riven by a hand unthankful,
Lo! that hand is thine.
See the crown of thorns adorning
God's beloved Holy Son,
Then fall down in bitter mourning,
Weep for that which thou hast done.
Thank Him that His heart was willing
So to die for love to thee;
Thank Him for the love that maketh
This world's joy but gall to be.
And till thou in heaven adore Him
Fight for Him in knightly guise;
Joy in shame and toil and sorrow,
Glorious is the prize.

A HAPPY MEETING.

I HAD left the city, when on looking behind me I saw a man who had the appearance of an old itinerant workman. His shoes were attached to a belt over his shoulder, and he had on an old pair of slippers which only partly covered his feet. He presently overtook me, and in reply to my question said he had already walked about twelve miles.

"I would have taken the railway" he added, "but I hadn't enough money."

"How old are you?" I asked.

"Past seventy."

"And have you any hope for a better world?"

"There's nothing else for me but heaven," he replied in a tone of entire assurance.

"Indeed! and what makes you so sure of going to heaven?"

"Oh! I have never done anything wrong; and I have done all the good I could; there cannot be for me anything except heaven."

"If what you say is true," I replied, "whatever will become of me. I have not done all the good I could, but on the contrary very much evil. I have been very bad."

"Indeed" said he, regarding me with surprise, "you don't seem like that."

"You can't judge people by appearance, I have been wicked to such a degree that I have broken the whole law. I have been guilty of great crimes, even of murder."

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This statement greatly alarmed the old man. Fixing his eyes upon me, for some time, he said :

“How does it come then that you are here ?”

“Oh, people don't always get what they deserve, but for that I would not now be here. You see I am not like you. What ought I to do ?”

With evident pity for me he said : “I am quite confounded. I do not know what you ought to do. I see nothing for you than to do the best you can for the future. Then you will not be punished so much, for you know that the bible says that some are beaten with many stripes, and some with less.”

“Yes, but where do the ones and the others go who get these stripes ?” I asked. “Oh to hell of course,” said the old man with great solemnity.

“And when they have received the stripes do they get out of hell ?”

“No, no, they remain there forever.”

“But I do not want to go to hell at all. I want to go to heaven. Can you tell me how I can get there ?”

“No sir I cannot, but it isn't true is it that you have been so wicked ?”

Remaining silent for a moment and looking him straight in the face, I said, very seriously :

“It is true ; and I can tell you that you are just as wicked, and I can prove it.”

With a look of mingled surprise and anger he replied sharply : “I am sure you cannot.”

“You are so, and I will prove it to you, for it is God who says it. Listen : “*Whosoever shall keep the*

whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Now tell me honestly, have you ever been drunk?"

"Oh, I have sometimes taken a glass too much."

"I dare say you have given way to an oath more than once."

"Yes, that's true, I can't deny it."

"You have not always told the truth."

"No, not always."

"Without going further, you see you have failed on several points, consequently you have broken the law of God and that more than once. Consider what it says in another passage: 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' You will find that in the epistle to the Galatians, you see that if you had only transgressed the law *once* in all your life you would have been under the curse. Now if you are guilty of having broken several of the commandments, you have broken the law which says, 'Thou shalt not kill.' You are then guilty of murder, 'for guilty of all' is saying that you are guilty of murder.

The light evidently began to break in on his soul, for at this point of our conversation he said with astonishment:

"Can that be true?"

"Yes," I said, "and now turn your thoughts in upon yourself, and try to recall your past life, then tell me if you have really always loved God, for the greatest commandment is this: *'Thou shalt love the*

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Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." And the second is like: "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*"

"Well I have sometimes said my prayers."

"When?"

"Oh! when I have been walking along the road I have said: Lord help me during this day; and He has done it."

"And did you thank Him?"

"Certainly."

"But do you believe that you would have asked Him to help you if you had not been afraid that you might not have enough to eat, or that other needs might be unsatisfied?"

"No I do not think I would."

"We'll pray in that way is not to love God, it is to love yourself. Let me ask you one question. After God has helped you, and you have thanked Him, have you tried to please Him or have you forgotten Him until you have again needed His help?"

These last words produced their effect—his conscience was touched and he began to see things in a new light. Thinking that the Spirit of God had convicted him of sin, I sought to show him that the law of God requires a perfect obedience, that by works no man can be justified before God; that the just penalty for sins is eternal death; that the review of his life showed clearly that "all his righteousnesses were as filthy rags;" that his heart was not right in the sight of God.

Whilst I was taking away the illusions which he had formed, and thus destroying his hopes, and his false confidence, it was very touching to see in his face the indication of emotions which were agitating him. They became more and more intense and at last, unable to restrain himself, trembling, in tears and a broken tone of voice he cried out :

“Ah! I am as wicked as you! I am as wicked as you! what shall we do?”

I was unable longer to restrain my tears as I contemplated this aged sinner who thus saw the prop upon which rested all his hopes for the future suddenly destroyed, and whose expectation of future happiness was in a moment changed into an expectation of judgment to come. He felt his position—about to enter eternity and unprepared! his heart was broken, he was literally ready to perish.”

“Don't be discouraged,” I said, “I know what we can do.”

“What?” said he anxiously.

He realized that there was not a moment to be lost.

“We must look to the Lord Jesus Christ. You have heard of Him have you not?”

“Yes; did He not die on the cross?”

“He died upon the cross, was buried, rose again and ascended to heaven, where He is now seated on the throne of God—He loves sinners such as we are, and a great sinner said of Him: ‘He loved me and gave Himself for me.’ And He Himself has said: ‘Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest,’ and again: ‘Look

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unto me and be ye saved.' What we have to do is to look to Him, to trust in Him, and He will forgive us all our sins ; give us His Holy Spirit who will make us holy and happy here, and then take us to be with Himself in heaven."

The fact that salvation was a free gift from Christ seemed to the poor old man too good to be true, and so I added :

"I am sure of this, for I went to Him." With a look of surprise he said :

"Did you really go to Him?"

"Yes and it turned out exactly as Jesus has said. I had been wretched for some time, much as you are now. I realized that I was a great sinner, all my life had been very bad, and my heart was very wicked. I saw that I could not save myself. In spite of all my efforts I could not find rest day or night. Then I heard that God had given His own Son to die for sinners in order that they might be saved. I thought of the marvellous love of Jesus who came down from heaven to suffer in my stead, and I said to myself : '*He loved me, and gave Himself for me.*' My heart was then filled with love for Him, and looking up I said : 'I believe in thee,' and immediately I was filled with joy. Now I know that I am going to heaven, not because I have been good, for I have been very bad, as I have told you, but because Jesus suffered in my place."

The old man listened to these simple words with intense interest ; then fixing upon me a questioning look, he said :

“Do you think he would save an old sinner like me?”

“I am sure that he would. It is His work to save, and in that He finds His delight. He saves all who come to Him, for He says: ‘Whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.’ ‘He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities * * * all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all,’ He died, the Just for the unjust.”

As I explained these passages to him and showed him that salvation is in Christ, that Jesus accomplished all and suffered all for us, and that He has left nothing for us to do, his face lighted up with great animation, as he cried out:

“I have never seen it like that before.”

Whilst we continued to speak together the old man suddenly stopped as though lost in thought, then continuing his walk, he said:

“I see, I see!” and again stopping and striking the ground with his stick he cried out in an accent of joy:

“Blessed be His name! I love Him, yes I love Him! I believe in Him.”

After another pause, he said “Just to think that I met you this morning! It is as though you had been sent expressly to me.”

“Exactly so; the Lord sent me to you, but think of the love of Jesus who came Himself to meet you and make you happy.”

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We had still upwards of a mile to walk together, and what think you we would have to think about and speak about but Jesus and what He had done for us ?

At parting, I reached out my hand, and as he took it he said :

“ We shall soon be in heaven, and I shall know you there—I haven’t much longer time to remain here.”

Then speaking of our precious Saviour, he added joyfully :

“ Blessed be His name ! Blessed be His name !” and we separated.

Dear reader, upon what are you resting your hope for heaven ? Is it upon the good you have done, or upon Jesus only ? Do you love Him ? He who first loved you and gave Himself for you ? Can you say with this old man : Blessed be His name ?

THE Lord Jesus Christ has “ made peace by the blood of His cross ; and therefore, God is now in a position, consistently with His own truth and holiness, to “ come out and entreat ” (Luke xv. 28), poor sinners to come to Him. This He did first by His Son, next by those who heard Him, (Heb. ii. 3), and now He is doing so by those whom the Holy Ghost hath sent forth, (Acts xiii. 3), as ambassadors, or heralds, to declare the glad tidings that “ He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

A FULL AND FREE SALVATION.

THE gospel of Jesus Christ, as perfectly meeting man's nature, condition, and character, is comparatively little known, and less proclaimed. Hence, the numerous doubts, fears and unsettled questions, which fill the hearts and perplex the consciences of many of God's dear children. Until the soul is led to see that the entire question of sin, and the claims of divine holiness, were all and forever settled on the cross, sweet, quiet, rest of conscience will be but little known.

Nothing can meet the urgent cry of a troubled conscience, but the one perfect sacrifice of Christ; offered to God, for us, on the cross. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. There, and there alone, it will find a perfect answer to its every claim, because there it will find, through believing, all ground of doubt and fear removed, the whole question of sin eternally settled, every divine requirement fully met, and a solid foundation laid for present, settled peace, in the presence of divine holiness. Christ "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification," settles everything. The moment we believe the gospel, we are saved, and ought to be divinely happy. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (Rom. iv. 5. : John iii).

We see the greatness of God's love to the sinner, in His judgment of sin, in the person of His own dear Son, on the cross. There, God in perfect grace

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to us, dealt with sin according to His infinite holiness and justice; He went down to the depths of our ruin, and all our sin; measured it, judged it, and put it forever away, root and branch, by shedding the precious blood of the spotless victim. "He condemned sin in the flesh:" that is, He there condemned the evil root of sin which is in our flesh—our carnal nature, but He also "made an end of sins," of the actual sins of every believer. There, between God and Christ alone, the entire question of sin was gone into, and finally settled on the cross. "Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered, whither I go, thou canst not follow me now."

Just as Abraham and Isaac were alone on the top of the mountain in the land of Moriah, so were God and Christ alone, amidst the solemnities and solitudes of Calvary. The only part we had in the cross was, that our sins were there—Jesus alone bore the full weight of their judgment, (Comp Dan. ix. 24: Rom. viii. 3: II Cor. v. 21.: Heb. ix. 26-28).

Wherever this blessed truth is learnt from God's own word, and maintained in the soul by faith, through the power of the Holy Ghost, all is peace, joy, and victory. It takes the believer completely away from himself and his doubts, fears, and questions, and his eye now gazes on One, who by His finished work, has laid the foundation of divine and everlasting righteousness, and who is now at the right hand of the Majesty in the highest, as the perfect definition of every true believer. With Him, with Him alone, the believer's heart is now to be occupied.

Faith is fully assured, that when God puts away sin, it must be put away entirely, that when Jesus exclaimed, "It is finished," the work was done, God was glorified, the sinner saved, the whole power of Satan completely destroyed, and peace established on the most solid basis. Hence we find, "The God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." He was the God of judgment at the cross, He is the God of peace at the opening grave. Every enemy has been vanquished, and eternal peace proclaimed, through the blood of His cross. "He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father." He rose "in the power of an endless life" and associates every believer with Himself, in the power of that life in resurrection. Having been cleansed by His blood, they are accepted in His Person. (See Eph. i. 6. : Coll. ii. 10. : I John v. 20).

Jesus having thus fully accomplished the work that was given Him to do, and gone up on high, the Holy Ghost came down as a witness to us that redemption was finished; the believer "perfected forever," and Christ glorified in heaven.

The apostles then began to publish the glad tidings of salvation to the chief of sinners. The subject of their preaching was, "Jesus and the resurrection." And all who believed on Him as risen and glorified, were immediately and eternally saved. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son; he that

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hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John v. 11-12).

There is no blessing outside of, or apart from, the person of Christ the heavenly Man; for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Ever since that time, God has been placing before the sinner, in connection with His gospel, a risen living Christ, as the only object of faith, and "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. x.)

When the eye is kept on this heavenly Christ, all is light, joy, and peace; but if it be turned in on self and occupied with what it finds there, and what it feels, or with anything whatever that may come between the heart and Christ, all will be darkness, uncertainty and unhappiness in the soul. Oh! how blessedly simple is the gospel of the grace of God.

The burden of its message to the lost sinner is, "Come, for all things are now ready." The question of sin is not raised—"Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Christ, having perfectly satisfied God about sin, the only question now between God and your heart, is this: Are you perfectly satisfied with His Christ as the only portion of your soul? This is the one grand question of the gospel. Christ has settled every other to the glory of God: and now the Father is going to "make a marriage for His Son," to honor, exalt, and glorify Him. Is your heart in full harmony with God's on this point? Work is not required at your hands—strength is not needed, fruit

is not demanded, God has provided everything, and prepared everything. It is all grace—the pure grace of God—“Only believe.” “Come, for all things are now ready,” the marriage supper—the wedding garment—royal honors—the Father’s presence—fulness of joy—and pleasures forever more—all are ready—ready now—“ready to be revealed.” Dear reader, are you ready? Oh! solemn question. Are you ready? Have you believed the message? Have you embraced the Son? Are you ready to “Crown him Lord of all?” The table is spread—the house is filling fast—“yet there is room.” Already you have heard the midnight cry. “Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him,” “and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.” “Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.” (Matt. xxv. 6.: Luke xii. 40).

THE end of man is not death, for after death the judgment, but man seldom glances forward even to the first hour which must ensue after his spirit has left his body. How few can say what that hour will be to them. A thick darkness hangs over the last moments of their lives, a darkness thicker still over eternity. But the Christian’s joy is to look onward, and in the word of his God to behold what eternity will be for him.

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REDEMPTION.

IT is a common saying these days that Christ was a reformer, that He lived and died an example for men, and was thus to be imitated in both life and death for the accomplishment of great reforms in the world, which was His object they say, and consequently He died as a martyr to His opinions. This is a scandal upon Him, the thrust of an enemy, and a denial of the necessity of the atonement.

Man is fallen and reformation is totally inadequate to meet his desperate need in the sight of God. He "*must* be born again;" there must be redemption by blood, for without shedding of blood is no remission, "but in Christ" we have redemption through His blood the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (Eph. v. 7). He was not therefore a reformer, but a holy Redeemer; a Saviour of sinners, by faith in Him who died, rose again, and ascended to glory, having accomplished eternal redemption through the sacrifice of Himself on the cross for the righteousness and glory of God, in the judgment of sin, and for the justification of the believer; who knows upon the authority of scripture that he *has* forgiveness of sins, and full justification from all things, not possible by the laws of Moses (Acts xiii, 37-39). The believer in the Lord Jesus *is* justified *before God* perfectly, and without works; which however are *sure* to follow saving faith as his justification *before man*. Comp. Romans iv, 1-8, with James ii, 14-26.

THE CROSS.

THE greatest wonder in the whole universe is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was God manifest in flesh and crucified and slain by wicked hands, by those who were debtors to Him for "life, and breath and all things." For a while, when dead and buried, Jesus seemed conquered. No doubt Satan and his hellish train rejoiced in their supposed victory; but wait until the third morning and the Crucified becomes the Conqueror, the mighty, glorious Conqueror! He had gotten the victory, though He had lain down His precious life; for it was only *through death* He could *destroy him* that had the power of death. (Heb. ii. 14).

But death and the grave could not hold Him. He had finished the work of redemption completely, satisfactorily, gloriously, and the Father for whom He had done the work, set His seal of approbation upon it by raising Him out from among the dead. (Rom. vi. 4). He was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead. (Rom. i. x).

"He was *delivered* for our offences, and was *raised again* for our justification." (Rom. iv. 25). "And by Him *all that believe* are justified from all things." (Act xiii. 39).

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have *peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Rom. v. 1.)

Has the reader peace with God?