

THE SOWER.

JOHN iv., 29.

LUKE vii., 48.

FORGIVEN ALL! what all forgiven?
My great and countless sins;
'Tis here indeed that mercy's tale
Of rich surprise begins.

The conscious sinner, brought to God,
Unveiling all he knows,
Meets there the Eye, which at a glance,
His history can disclose.

But ah! before that searching eye
The blood of Christ is seen;
And God, the Holy and the Just,
Declares the sinner clean.

The wrath which must have met his sin
When life its course had run;
Is quenched for ever in the blood
Of God's beloved Son.

Nor this alone: that precious blood,
In pure and cleansing flow;
Brings nigh to God the guilty one,
Washed whiter than the snow.

Well may the pardoned sinner sing,
Well may he seek to live
To glorify the God of grace,
Who loveth to forgive!

PREPARE FOR ETERNITY.

ONE beautiful summer morning a young woman, upon whose countenance disease was stamped entered a compartment of a railway carriage in which was an aged lady. The effort which the invalid had made to enter the carriage caused a violent fit of coughing which painfully shook her enfeebled body.

"You are suffering much my friend," said the lady in a tone of compassion—Have you been long ill ?

"Some months, but I am better now than at the beginning of my illness," replied the young woman.

"You will never be better," interrupted the other in a decided tone of voice.

"But my doctor says I will get better."

"Then your doctor has deceived you. My experience tells me that you have not long to live, and for that reason I exhort you to prepare for eternity."

Having spoken thus the lady settled herself in her corner with the air of having fulfilled a duty, and with a smile of satisfaction on her placid countenance.

It was well for the poor invalid that the tender hand of her God and Father sustained her, without that the words spoken with so little grace would have crushed her. A slight color rose to her cheeks as she replied :

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for eternity—It was not by my own effort, but by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ who became my substitute more than eighteen hundred years ago. By His stripes I am healed. I am ready to leave the world, ready to meet Christ, whenever He calls me.

“You have more presumption than I dare have in being so sure of eternity. I am many years older than you are, and I have endeavored from my childhood to walk in the ways of God, so take care that you do not let your imagination deceive you, you ought not to hope for the assurance of happiness in eternity by leaning on such uncertain hopes as you entertain—How long have you had the views you have given expression to?”

“Fourteen years ago, madam, I came to Christ as a poor sinner believing His own word ‘Whosoever cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out.’ Since that time I have known pardon for my past life, and a happy assurance of the future.”

“You deceive yourself,” replied the lady warmly. “We must lead a good life and do our part toward making ourselves as fit as we can for heaven. Perhaps God at the last will receive us.”

“I do not think your way of looking at it is correct, according to the bible,” replied the sick one; but I hope you may be able one day to rejoice, as I do, in knowing that you have eternal life dwelling in you—May I venture to ask you to accept these” she continued, presenting the lady with some tracts—These little books

will tell you for me, what I would be happy to express if my failing powers would permit me."

"I cannot accept your books, my young friend, give them to those who have need for them. My library is full of works by the most eminent theologians."

As the train stopped at a station the lady had only time to add, as she wished the invalid good day.

"I hope you will not find that your preparation for eternity is a delusion."

Before the close of the year the invalid fell asleep in Jesus and her body was committed to the earth, there to await a glorious resurrection at the coming of the Lord Jesus for His saints. A calm confidence in God characterized her last moments.

"I wish you to remember," said she, that I have no uncertainty as to the place where I am going. I rest on the Rock of ages—Death has no terror for me. If I should fall asleep before Christ comes all is well. The Son of God has loved me and given Himself for me—I have the certainty of my acceptance." These were her last words.

Do the words which fell from the lips of this dying believer in Christ appear presumptuous to you my dear reader? Do you believe that a preparation for eternity based upon faith in Christ as a Saviour is an illusion? If you should think this, may God convince you that it is at reality before you are also called to enter eternity.

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Weigh these words of the Lord Jesus: "Verily verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." (Jno. v. 24.)

WHY SHOULD I COME TO CHRIST?

BECAUSE He died for you.

Because He loves you.

Because He calls you.

Because He seeks you.

Because you have no other refuge.

Because you cannot face God alone.

Because none other can save you.

Because the devil hates you and wishes to have you in misery with himself.

Because death must come to you one day.

Because *Eternity* is before *you*.

Because your spirit must dwell for ever, either in eternal misery or eternal happiness.

Come for the door is open,

Jesus has died to save.

Come or His voice will cry depart

Beyond the empty grave.

I came to Jesus as I was

Weary and worn and sad,

I found in Him my resting place

And He has made me glad.

CONVICTION AND CONVERSION.

CAIN said, "Mine iniquity"—Gen. 4: 13
[Margin].

Pharaoh said, "I have sinned against the Lord your God."—Ex. 10: 16.

Balaam said: "I have sinned."—Num. 22: 34.

Judas said: "I have sinned."—Matth. 27: 4.

Cain limited God. Did not believe that his sin could be forgiven. "Mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven."—[Margin.]

Pharaoh only wanted to be rid of the *consequences* of his sin.

Balaam had the desire in his heart to go on in his own way *after* he knew it was not the way of God.

Judas was full of remorse, but he did not seek for pardon, though he must have known something of the tender heart of Christ. He did not believe in His love, nor seek it for himself.

David said "I have sinned," and claimed pardon and cleansing.

The Prodigal said "I have sinned," and went to his father to ask forgiveness, and to take the lowest place in the father's house.

The Publican cried: "God be merciful to me a sinner," and the thief on the cross owned his guilt and pleaded, "Lord, remember me."

It is not enough to feel a burden. You must get rid of it. It is not enough to see yourself. You must see Christ crucified. It is not the

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knowledge of the disease that cures us, it is *the Physician*, although the knowledge of the disease is the first step, and absolutely necessary.

Said a young girl to me once: "I am like that one in the book you gave me, 'I do not *feel* hungry.' One in high life did not know that he had cancer of the tongue, until a dentist saw it, and urged him to *go at once* to a specialist. He lost his tongue, but his life was saved. Thank God for whatever wakens you to the *state*, but go at once to Him.

A YOUNG woman lay dying. In vain her mother tried to comfort her by pointing to her "blameless" life. She was face to face with the reality of death, and saw her unfitness for God's presence. To a christian who had heard of her condition and come in, she said she was not good enough for God. He at once acquiesced, but immediately pointed to Christ, who was good enough and who had shed His precious blood that all who believe in Him should be accepted in Him. (Accepted in the Beloved. —Eph, 1: 6). The young woman was pointed away from herself to Christ, and got in her soul that peace which passes all understanding.—Phil. 4; 7. May God give us grace to be real and bow to His truth, remembering that while He is a God of righteousness, He is also a God of Love, a God of Grace, and a God of Peace.

AFTER MANY DAYS.

IN July of this year, taking up the local paper, I read of the death of "Diana Bacon, aged 102," or 108, I cannot remember which. On reading it aloud to my friends, with whom I was staying, they exclaimed, "Why, that is our dear old friend," and showing me a photo of a sweet, peaceful old face, told me the following;—

One summer morning about thirty-five years ago, they were out walking, and they saw sitting under a hedge, in the country lane, an old body making cabbage nets. Feeling interested in her they went and sat beside her, and spoke of Christ. She listened; seemed pleased, but evidently did not know Him as her Saviour. They asked her could she read? "No, she couldn't read, but she had a little grandson who was a good scholar." They had given away all their tracts, so taking a piece of paper, one wrote out this verse, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Reading this to her, they told her to be sure and get the little grandson to read it to her often. Then telling her of the pardon through the precious blood, and that even an old body like herself, living so long without Christ, might find cleansing and peace through this blood of God's dear Son, they passed on their way.

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Two years passed away, and one day, walking in this town about two or three miles from

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where they had met the old woman, an old bent form approached them, and making a low curtsey, said: "Oh! ladies, I have been praying to the Lord that I might meet you again." They exclaimed: "Do you know us, then?"

"Oh! yes," she cried. "Don't you remember two years ago you met me in the lane, and gave me a little paper." And then, fumbling in her basket, she produced the little scrap, *very* dirty, *very* thumbed, and one recognized her own handwriting. She said at once, "I can *now* say, the blood of our Lord Jesus *has* cleansed me from all sin." It seems the Lord had cared for the seed sown, and others had been led to tell her of Jesus. They never lost sight of her again. Every Saturday, for many years, as long as she could walk, she came to their house, and though she could not read, seemed to grow in love and grace, and always enjoyed a word of prayer and a little reading. She never forgot her text. "Thank you a million hundred times," she used to say so often. Frequently they went to see her, and every January 1st, her birthday, they paid her a special visit. The first time they went, she said, "I have got a big bible, and I want you to mark that verse, that when people come to see me, I may point out the text and say, That is the verse which brought me to Christ." And now, safely housed, the dear old woman can look back and rejoice in the

light that knows no shadowing, over the way God sought and won her.

Dear reader, if unsaved, are you waiting for something great to bring you to Christ. Some very fine sermon, a shipwreck when you are marvelously saved, a serious illness, when you lie facing death for days and weeks? Nay, God is calling you every hour, and the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, waits your heart every day. Old Diana Bacon had a responsive heart. God called, and she answered. That is all He asks. "Listen, O isles unto me; and hearken ye people, from afar," He cries (Isaiah 49: 1), and He speaks peace and gladness. He tells of cleansing from every stain; of "no condemnation," of sins "remembered no more," and "cast into the depths of the sea." "Blotted out like a thick cloud," and the spotless robe of His righteousness in which to appear before God, as fair, in one sense, and as dear, as His own beloved Son.

SIN AND SUFFER! Men hope by sin to obtain pleasure or profit, or to escape inconvenience or distress to which they are exposed. But sooner or later they find that he who hides a serpent in his bosom will before long feel its bite. He who plays with fire will one day find his house in flames. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

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DEBTOR AND CREDITOR.

I WAS speaking to an old man who had been for some time attending evangelistic services and who had in particular been much struck with what is said in Rom. iii: 22, 23, that "there is no difference, (between man and man) for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." "I had taken up the impression, he said, from what I had heard from previous preachers that God as it were, kept a debtor and creditor account with the sinner, putting a bad mark against him when he did wrong, and a good mark for him when he did right, and so his fate was settled by the balance. Looking then to Tom, Dick and Harry, and comparing myself with them, I had come to the conclusion that I might get as many good marks as any of them, but according to your doctrine, God deals with men simply as sinners." "Precisely so," was the answer, "and because all men are sinners, therefore all men are lost. But let us consider for a moment where your idea of a debtor and creditor account would land you." And here I read from Galations v, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, of the which I told you before as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such

things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." "Here you have the debit side of the account. Now what have you to put on the credit side? The word of God tells you. All our righteousness it declares, are as filthy rags, and thus you have absolutely nothing. But if you come to Christ you have Him and all that He is, and God in that case tells you, 'I, even I, am He that blot-eth out thy transgressions and will no more remember thy sins;' so that now there is no debit side to the account." "Ah," cried the old man, "that is much better." Don't you think so, reader?—

CHILD of God, "May the Lord Himself be more personally with and before us! a NEARER and MORE REAL object than ever. Truth that gives thoughts is not fully the right thing; but truth that gives HIMSELF that is the thing. Faith finds various excellencies in Him, but it is HIMSELF it reaches. Faith sits and sings—

All human beauties, all divine,
In my Beloved meet and shine.

Let not this evangelic age give you the WORK of Christ alone. It tends that way. Without His work, I know, all would be nothing. But let not doctrinal acquaintance with His work turn you from personal acquaintance with Himself."

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THE BEGINNING OF BLESSING.

Rom. 3; 12 and 23—They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

PARADOXICAL as it may seem, the knowledge of this truth is the beginning of blessing, and until I bow to this truth I can get no blessing in my soul. It pulls, as it were, my house of self-righteousness down on my head, but instead of ruining me it throws me on the grace of God, who immediately puts forth redemption through faith in the precious blood of the Lord Jesus.—See Rom. 3; 24 and 25. It only makes me the unhappier if I seek to find good in myself, because I am trying to make God a liar, and I have all the time staring me in the face His imperishable word that “there is none that doeth good, no, not one,” and “there is no difference, for all have sinned.” But the moment I acknowledge the truth of what God says of me and see my true place as a lost and guilty sinner, that moment I can claim all the atoning merits of the precious death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, because He died for just such. It is God that loved, God that gave, and Christ who died; and the word “whosoever” includes me because I believe and “I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature (thing) shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

THREE PAGES OF MY LIFE.

An old man relates the following :

IN my childhood I witnessed a scene I shall never forget. A man had been tied up to a post and there received the lash for some offence, I do not know what. Did any one offer to receive in his place the lacerations which justice inflicted? NO, NOT ONE. He had himself to bear his merited punishment."

"Later when I was pursuing my studies at the university, I was present at another spectacle which made a profound impression upon me; a man, condemned to death, was brought out for execution. His hands were tied behind his back and his agonized features had already the palor of death. Thousands of curious people lined the streets to see the culprit carried by, all were silent as he passed. Did any one come forward to die in his place? NO NOT ONE, and the sentence being irrevocable, he had to bear the punishment of his crime."

"But there was another day which left upon my life a still deeper impression. This time it was not human but divine righteousness that was in question—The culprit was there, ruined, broken, condemned by the law of God as well as by the natural conscience—There was no room for subterfuge! no plea of extenuating circumstances could be set up! no excuse admitted! And this culprit, this sinner, was MYSELF! I was lost, I

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knew it. At this moment, in the midst of my poignant anguish, I understood—which indeed I had been often told—that Jesus Christ had offered Himself IN MY PLACE; that He had died upon the accursed tree in order to expiate my sins. I believed it. An inexpressible joy, the joy of sins forgiven, filled my soul and I raised a cry of deliverance; I AM SAVED! JESUS IS MY SAVIOUR!”

THERE is no need to search for salvation in far off and uncertain places. People seem to have been liable to the same sort of mistake in the time of Paul the Apostle, for he cautions them against it. “Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach; *that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom. x: 6-10).

Is their meaning difficult to understand, or is there any room for doubt as to what He would have us do? There is no uncertainty, no room for doubt.

IT is related of a certain king of ancient times, that becoming alarmed at the rapid increase of immoral practices in his kingdom, he published an edict condemning any guilty of a certain offence to have both their eyes put out by the public executioner. It so happened that the first culprit taken was his own son. However, the law must be carried out, but as soon as one eye had been destroyed, the king said: "STOP! LET THE OTHER EYE BE TAKEN FROM ME, I AND MY SON ARE ONE!" The aged king came down from his throne, and submitted himself to the hands of justice. Historians tell us how greatly the spectators were moved by this scene.

After all, what was this sacrifice in comparison with that of the Son of God, in giving His life for us? More than everything else, more than words can express, the cross of Christ shows us the enormity of our sins, the greatness of the judgment under which Christ came to deliver us, the greatness of the love of God, who gave His Son to save a ruined world. Christ took our place, submitted to judgment for us, and, having believed on Him, He assures us that we are one, frees us from all condemnation, pardons us and gives us eternal life.

"He that believeth on Him is not condemned," "but is passed from death unto life." (Jno. vii: 18. v: 24.)