

THE SOWER.

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GOSPEL INVITATION.

(ISAIAH LV.)
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Ye sons of men, who seek, and seek in vain
For that which satisfies the craving heart ;
Ye who for wisdom rack the laboring brain,
Ye that for riches crowd the busy mart,
Ye sons of pleasure, who excitement crave,
Drinking those draughts that make you thirst the
more,
Ye who for glory, death and dangers brave ;
Ye full, yet empty ; wealthy, and yet poor,—
Ye labor hard, but bread ye cannot gain,
Ye spend your money earned by feverish toil,
Nought that endures can all your wit obtain,
Nought that of death is not the certain spoil.
Come unto Me, ye weary ones, for rest ;
Ye hungry, thirsty, helpless, come to Me ;
There is a home of safety in My breast,
Peace in the blood I shed on Calvary ;
Come unto Me, your souls shall then be fed ;
Come unto Me, all other springs are dry ;
Come, for I am the living, heavenly bread,
Drink from My side the streams that satisfy,
The fatness of God's house, the milk, the wine,
All, all are yours, if you will but be mine."

PEACE IN BELIEVING.

VIII.

DEAR Sir,—I know that you will rejoice with me in that the one who has been so long a time dead in trespasses and sins is now able to say that I have passed from death to life in Jesus—God has given me to take hold of Jesus as my Saviour and although it is as yet only with fear and trembling yet I am able to say: What joy and what happiness to know Him as my redeemer and God as my father!

It would be difficult to tell you how the light at length penetrated my soul. As I read your letter with Mr. ——, he said to me: “Well, that is very clear, can you doubt any more? You have the assurance that Christ only can save; you believe in the efficacy of His sacrifice; now do you think that Jesus wants you to be saved?” *I could not doubt it*, and thus I put all in His hands.

I was not, however, altogether happy; but the Lord used your last letter and especially the one from your friend to dissipate my doubts and open my eyes to the contemplation of the riches of the fulness of His free salvation.

I was able then in some measure to confide in Jesus, and I thought I had reached the end of all my troubles; but O, dear sir! what a sad state I was in all last week: tossed here and there by doubts, fears and uncertainties, and by sin until I began to think it was all a delusion. But I see that your friend, who has had the kindness, to write to me, and whose

letter has been such a help, has passed through the same troubles—with him I can now say: "It is only when I can—in spite of my doubts—look to Jesus that I find rest." Even now I feel myself hardly saved, but when I look to Jesus I *cannot* doubt. Pray for me, in order that I may rest upon what God says, because He says it and not because I feel it. Ask that my eyes may be unchangeably fixed upon Jesus. My faith is very feeble and my unbelief very great.

Since my deliverance I have read and re-read your first letter, and I am astonished that I did not see and understand, as I do now, what you said.

My sister is always very happy. She does not appear to be troubled by a single doubt. In thanking you for your letter she wishes to be remembered to you.

I remain yours, &c.,

Oh, how many a poor professor's candle is blown out and never lighted again! I see that ordinary profession, and to be ranked amongst the children of God, and to have a name among men, is now thought good enough to carry professors to heaven but certainly a name is but a name, and will never bide a blast of God's storm. I counsel you not to give your soul rest, nor your eyes sleep, till ye have gotten something that will bide the fire, and stand out the storm.

HE HAD NO SONG.

SEVERAL years ago, while passing out of meeting one evening, a lady asked me to go with her and see her husband, who was quite sick. On the way, she told me he was anxious about his soul, knowing he would soon have to die. When I entered the room, I found him seated in an easy chair, as he could not lie down without coughing. After a few words about his bodily sufferings, I asked him about his soul—did he think his sufferings would end when his body yielded and death came.

“Well,” he said, “I think my chances for getting to heaven are pretty good.”

“Do you believe heaven is a reality?” I asked.

He said, “Yes.”

“Is it true there is a hell?”

He replied, “Yes, I believe it.”

“And you have an immortal soul that will soon be in one or the other of these places forever.”

“Yes,” he said, earnestly.

“You just now said you thought your chances for heaven were pretty good; you believe heaven is a reality, and hell is a reality, and your precious immortal soul will soon be happy in heaven for ever. You must have some reason for it. Would you tell me what it is?”

His voice was weak, and I waited for his answer as it came slowly: “Well, I’ve always been kind to my wife and children, and I have not intentionally wronged my fellow-men.”

"That is all very good," I said, "and it is nice to be able to say that; but now tell me, what kind of a place do you think heaven is, and what do they do there?"

"Well," he said, "I think there is no sin or sorrow there. It must be a happy place, and I think they sing there a good deal."

Turning to Revelation i. 5, I said, "Yes they do sing there, and I'll just read you a song they sing. It is this: 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.' You see, they are praising their Saviour, the One who loved them and died for them. I'll read it again: 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.' I want you to take notice; they have not a word to say about what *they* have done; it is all about what He has done. He loved them, and died for them. Now suppose you were up there, and had got there in the way you say—because you had been good to your family, and so on; there would be one sinner in heaven that had never been washed from his sins in the blood of J sus. You could not join in the song they sing, could you?"

I waited for an answer. His head had dropped, and his eyes were turned to the floor. I shall never forget his look as he raised his head and turned to answer me. It was as one waking out of a life dream. He was now coming face to face with eternal realities, and his only reply was,—

"Well!—I—nev—er—thought—of—that—before!"

"But," I said, "God has; and He has written a

verse for persons just like you—who are willing to take their chances, as you said, on their good works, and are deceiving themselves by the false hope of getting to heaven in that way. I'll read the verse. It is the fourth verse of the fourth chapter of Romans: '*Now to Him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.*' Let me explain this. When you were well and could work, you received your wages because you had earned them. You were under no special obligations to the man that paid you. You would come home to your wife and say, 'Here is what I made to-day.' You could talk about what *you* had done, and what *you* had got, and you would not have a word to say about the man that paid you. That is just what God means by that verse. If you could get to heaven by what you have done, there would be no grace about it. You would know nothing of God's love as shown in Jesus. You could not sing, '*Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood;*' for you would be there without a Saviour, and you would have no song. Do you think you could be happy."

He was now ready to give up his ground, and for the first time frankly owned, what his wife had said, that he was anxious about his soul, and wanted to have the question settled. He fully confessed that in spite of all the good he claimed, he was a sinner, and needed a Saviour. It was with joy I read to him this scripture (1 Tim. i, 15): "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus*

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came into the world to save sinners." He repeated, "To—save—sinners!—to—save—sinners."

"Yes," I said, "to save, sinners—not to HELP sinners to be saved, but to SAVE sinners. He is not a helper, but a Saviour, and God's word is, '*To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*' And again, '*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*'" He did believe, I left him that night, after reading other scriptures to him, with a new hope—not based on what he had done, but believing what God says about what *Christ had done.*

I called the next morning to see him. As I entered, he looked up with joy in his face, and said, "Oh, I'll have a song now! It will be "*Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.*"

He was with us about a week more, and fell asleep happy in the Lord.

Reader, will you be able to sing that song? or will you have to say, "I am tormented in this flame?" It will be one or the other. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16.) Again, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (Jno. iii. 36) And again, "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 judgment, but is passed from death unto life." (Jno. v. 24.)

THE GATES OF GAZA.

IT was midnight, (Judges xvi) and in the town of Gaza was silence, save for companies of its citizens who laid in wait in the gate of the city. Around one dwelling place too was a cordon drawn, for the Gazites (who were Philistines) had heard that Samson, God's man, had come thither, and in the morning they counted on taking his life. Great deliverances had been wrought for the people by the hand of God's servant, and Satan and all his legions were now in league against him. At midnight Samson arose; of the Gazites we hear no more, but the doors of the gate of the city with the two posts, bar and all, Samson carried away upon his shoulders to the top of a hill before Hebron! The devil was defeated. Gates and bars could not detain God's man, and watchful hosts were vanquished without a blow. Strong men armed had been keeping the house, but a stronger came upon them and overcame them and spoiled their house.

Again it was night:

"The darkest night this world has known." God's Son, God's Man was in the grave, the citadel of Satan, and against Him were arrayed all his demons. He was in the place of weakness and death. The Pharisees and chief priests had taken every precaution at the bidding of Pilate; they rolled a great stone to the door, they sealed it and they set a watch. Through the long hours of darkness and light they

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watched, they made the grave *as sure as they could* (Matt. xxvii), and the Devil who had hitherto wielded the "power of death" does not want to relinquish it. Heb. ii, 14. "Who shall roll us away the stone?" (Mark xvi), say the trembling followers of the One whom Satan seemed to hold so securely. Ah, none apprehended *who* He was, and that "*it was not possible that He should be holden*" of death! Acts ii, 24.

"He hell in hell laid low,
 Made sin, He sin o'er threw,
 Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
 And death by dying slew.

So the morning of the resurrection came, they who had been watching became as dead men, and there was an earthquake, and an angel descended (Matt. xxviii) and rolled away the great stone and *sat upon it*. The gates of Gaza were upon the top of the hill! The Pharisees, chief priests, Herod and Pilate with Satan at their head were conquered, for the Lord was risen!

"By weakness and defeat
 He won the meed and crown,
 Trod all our foes beneath His feet
 By being trodden down."

The fearful women, the unbelieving disciples, who all their lifetime, through fear of death, had been in bondage were free now, for the devil's power was broken. "*God raised Him from the dead.*" Acts xiii, 30.

The gates of Gaza could not confine Samson, far less could the great stone, or watching soldiers be any impediment to the Son of God.

Do you know what this means for you, trembling believer? "He was raised for our justification." Rom. iv. He bore your sins on the cross, He endured the penalty of death for you, and He rose triumphant over all, having left behind Him your sins, death, the grave and judgment. Your sins are gone, for Jesus has risen without them and He is in God's presence in proof of it. You may look up and see Him there, a man in the glory of God. Satan's power is no more to be feared in death, for Jesus came out from among the dead. When the disciples saw the empty grave: *they saw and believed, so may you.* John xx, 8, 31.

Oh, poor fools, who are beguiled with painted things, and this world's fair weather and smooth promises, and rotten worm-eaten hopes! May not the Devil laugh to see you give out your souls, and get in but corrupt and counterfeit pleasures of sin? Oh, for a sight of eternity's glory, and a little tasting of the Lamb's marriage supper! Half a draught, or a drop of the wine of consolation, that is up at our banqueting house, out of Christ's own hand, would make your stomachs loath the brown bread, and the sour drink of a miserable life. Oh, how far are you bereaved of wit, to chase, and hunt, and run, till your souls be out of breath after a condemned happiness of your own making.

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LIFE AND SALVATION.

A LADY recently said that she believed in Jesus, that He died for all, that every word of the Bible was true—would be afraid to disbelieve it—but, she added, “your faith and assurance that you have eternal life, and are saved, must be a most comforting belief.”

“Indeed it is, but my faith goes further than yours in this respect, I believe that because Christ died for all,” as the Bible says (2 Cor. v, 15), He therefore died for *me*. But more, that what He died to accomplish was accomplished, for He rose again from the dead, and is seated on high at God’s right hand. See Acts’ ii, 33. I therefore ‘live,’ and am not henceforth to live unto myself, but unto Him who died for me and rose again. Doubts or questions as to my safety forever, I have none, because I believe the Bible is true. It says, ‘Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life’ (John vi, 47); for by grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it (faith) is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast’ Eph, ii, 9). Faith is God’s gift, and it comes by hearing His word. See Rom. x, 17. These scriptures are written for the one who believes God’s word, and to give him assurance of having life and salvation through a dead, risen, and exalted Christ.”

“Yes, but it seems so wonderful. How can such a sinner as I am be saved in that simple way? It seems to me that something more than mere faith in Christ is required from the sinner.”

“But you are now looking at yourself and your sins, and not to Christ on the cross as a sacrifice for sinners. Was he there because atonement was required of God? Was He a sufficient sacrifice for sins? Did He satisfy God, and answer to all His claims against the believer in Jesus? Surely He must have done so, or He would not have been raised from the dead, and accepted into full favor upon God’s throne as having fully satisfied His justice in respect of sin! Certainly, His exaltation of the One who died on the cross, and His session upon the very throne of justice, are evidences of the full satisfaction of God for the sins for which He suffered, and that was for the sins of *every* believer, and now God is just in justifying the believer in Jesus (Rom. iii, 25, 26). ‘Without the shedding of blood there is no remission,’ but the blood of atonement has been shed once for all, and remission belongs to every true believer. His assurance is through faith in the word that testifies of the fact, and these are divine facts. Therefore, with the eye of faith upon Christ on high, who was upon the cross, I understand how it is that He can save me through faith in the Lord Jesus only; and that there can be nothing whatever left for the sinner to do but to believe God’s record of His Son for life, and His testimony of the value and effect of what Christ has accomplished for my salvation in His death and resurrection—it is a finished work, a finished and perfect salvation, and there is nothing more to be done, but to believe it. See John xix, 30.

“Yes, that makes it all clear; I see now that all

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I have to do is to believe what God says, in order to know that I have life in his Son, and am saved through the blood of the crucified One ; that nothing can be added to what Christ has finished, and God has approved. I now understand how it is by faith alone, it could not be otherwise, without detracting from Christ who finished the work, and I now understand the force of the verse (1 John v, 13), 'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye *may know* that ye have eternal life;' and also of 1 Cor. xv, 1-4, 'Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.' But what does that mean, 'unless ye have believed in vain'? It means that if Christ is not risen, your faith is vain, and you are yet in your sins. See verses 12-20 of same chapter. Some were denying the resurrection of the dead. But notice it says (v. 17), 'And if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.' Therefore, if Christ has been raised, our faith is *not* vain, and we are *not* in our sins."

"Ah! I see it all now, and your faith and assurance I have and know, and it is most comforting indeed. How very precious is the word of God."

But it may be asked, is it possible to lose this great blessing? Certainly not, if Christ be risen, and if you keep in memory what the Apostle preached. But how can you forget such glad tidings? If you become self-occupied, with your eyes off Christ, listen to false teachers who are without scriptural assurance for themselves; or become worldly, or careless in your walk, neglecting the word of God and prayer, you will lose the joy of salvation (and so you ought, and it is a mercy that it is so); but God never takes back His gifts (see Rom. xi, 29), nor can the believer ever perish, "Because I live," says Christ, "ye shall live also" (John xiv, 19, also Rom. v, 9, 10); and no one is able to pluck the believer out of the hands of the Son and of the Father, for both the Father and the Son are pledged for their safety. See John x, 27-30. Remember David said, "Restore unto me the *joy* of Thy salvation" (Ps. li, 12). He did not say restore to me Thy salvation, it was the joy of it only that he had lost. But having lost the joy of salvation, which is likely to be the case, if you are not watchful and holy (see 1 Peter i, 13 to end), you must confess your sins as David did (xxxii, 5), and "if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We are not to sin, we need not, if there is watchfulness and care, but if we should sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins." See 1 John ii, 1-2. The erring child knows of the Advocate, returns to the Father in confession, and is restored to happy fellowship

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“with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” If we do wrong He, being holy, causes us to realize our failure, and confess it to Him. This is brought about through our Advocate, and the application of the Word by the Holy Spirit to our conscience. It is the Father’s governmental dealings with His children for their present enjoyment while on their way to their abode in the Father’s house. See John xiii and xiv. His governmental dealings are the proof of His love and faithfulness to His children, and the Son’s perfect service through the Spirit and the Word, and give the lie to Satan’s false teaching that a child of God may after all be lost! We are not to listen to his false teachers (see 2 Cor. xi, 14, 15). He always lied, remember the garden of Eden; and he always will till the end, for he is the father of lies (John viii, 44). The Father deals with us in love because He loves us, and is pledged to keep us for His Son’s sake and for His glory, and the Son chastens us His members “that we should not be condemned with the world” 1 Cor. xi, 31, 32).

The simple conclusion is, if we believe the gospel that Christ died for our sins, was buried and was raised again the third day, according to scripture which says so, then our sins are gone forever, for He died for them, and rose again without them, a proof that they were put away, blotted out by His precious blood, and are to be found no more.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

KNOWLEDGE.

“For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow.”—(Job, 8, 9.)

“Be still, and know that I am God.”—(Psa. 46, 10.)

Canst thou by searching find out God?—(Job, 11, 7.)

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.—
John 1, 18.

We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of *grace* and *truth*.—
John 1, 14.

Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.—(John, 14, 9.)

“Who art Thou, Lord?” “*I am Jesus.*”—(Acts, 9, 5.)

“Through *this man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.”—(Acts, 13, 38.)

“*In whom we have* redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of *His* grace.”—(Ephes. 1, 7.)