

THE SOWER.

NOTHING BUT CHRIST.

THE one who writes these lines recently received from a christian friend, a deaconess in a foreign infirmary, the following recital.

A man was taken ill and came to our institution who up to that time had lived in all the pleasures and distraction of the world. He was grateful for all the care that was shown him, indeed, for the affection with which he was ministered to, and wished in some way to express his gratitude to us. One day he offered a deaconess sister a ticket for a theatrical exhibition, to give her, as he said, "a pleasant evening." The sister refused it, saying that she never went to the theatre because she was a Christian. The following day the invalid offered the ticket to another sister, who was also a believer, and he received the same reply. Two or three days after he pressed a third sister to accept his ticket. This one, like the others, had the happiness of knowing the Lord Jesus as her Saviour; knowing that she was a child of God and an inheritor of His glory, she answered in a more explicit manner: "I possess, for my heart, something that gives me joy infinitely beyond anything that all the theatres and all the pleasures of the world can give,—my place is no longer in the theatre, and the theatre has no longer a place in my heart, which is filled with peace and joy in the Lord."

These words were to the poor man both strange and incomprehensible. The three testimonies, given by three different persons, astonished and troubled him. He asked the sister; "How have you become a possessor of such happiness? And do you think that I, who am about to die, can obtain it?"

The sister had not time at the moment to speak with him, but she gave him a tract headed, "Bad, but not bad enough." Singular title was it not? But there are indeed many persons who have this thought, they are willing to acknowledge that they are neither good enough, or holy enough to stand before God, but to be so bad and so guilty that they are wholly lost they will not believe and consequently put away from themselves the grace of God which is offered them. It is on this account that so few come to Jesus to find in Him the salvation they need.

The invalid read the tract and two or three days after he said to the sister that it was an exact presentment of his state of soul which he found just, except in one point.

"And what is that point?" asked the sister with some curiosity.

"Well" said he, "your tract speaks of a man who is bad, but not bad enough in his own eyes to need a Saviour, but does not speak of the case of a man who is too bad to dare to come to Jesus, and that is exactly my case. Ah! you do not know, sister, what a great sinner I am!"

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"No," replied the sister, "I do not know; but God knows, and He says in His word by the mouth of the apostle Paul: 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.' (I Tim. i, 15-16.) And now the one who calls himself the chief, or the greatest of sinners, is in heaven, having been washed from his sins by the blood of Christ."

The poor invalid could not at once lay hold of these precious truths. It was too much and too high for him. For several days he continued in dead silence, meditating upon the most serious of all subjects. He even seemed to desire to be left to his own reflections, although he visibly suffered under the weight of this question, "What must I do to be saved." But at length such a change was effected in him that it was apparent by the expression of his face, he had PEACE. The sister one day on bringing him something to eat, he said to her.

"Oh! sister, I have something to tell you but I cannot find words to express it, I am so ignorant in these things. But I am so happy yes, so happy, so full of joy that I do not know how to tell it."

The sister desiring to hear from his own mouth the reason for his happiness, asked him :

“ Whence came this new found joy ? You have appeared so unhappy for some time past.”

“ How can I tell ?” replied the sick man. “ I do not know how to explain it, but so it is. When beforetime I thought of the past, when I looked back I only saw my life as sins upon sins; but now when I look back I only see *Christ and His work on the cross*. Yes, and as to my actual position I only saw suffering and misery; to-day I see everywhere nothing but Christ and His love. If in the past I thought of the future I saw nothing before me but darkness and eternal torment, but now I seem to have nothing before me but Christ and eternal glory.”

Such were the words of the sick man. Happy the one who has nothing but Christ. Is it your case, dear reader ?

O God ! thine everlasting grace
 Our scanty thought surpasses far :
 Great in almighty gentleness,
 Thine arms of love wide open are ;
 On this by faith my soul relies—
 Father, thy mercy never dies.
 Yes ; I have found the ground wherein
 Sure, the soul's anchor doth remain—
 E'en Christ—who to atone for sin
 Was as a spotless victim slain ;
 Whose worth shall still unchanging stay
 And never, never know decay.

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A LETTER ON

MAN'S RUIN AND GOD'S REMEDY.

The following letter was written to an officer in the English navy whom the writer and his wife met in a stage coach in———.

This man was about to take ship, on leave of absence, to visit his wife and children in England, and had been bidding farewell to some friends in———. The previous night had evidently been spent in heavy drinking, and he was in a sad condition, though retaining his senses in a remarkable degree. He had eaten no breakfast and feeling very miserable wished to smoke his pipe. For this he asked the consent of the only lady passenger on the coach, who offered no objection. The driver and one passenger, however, did object, and this objection was resented somewhat warily, the officer addressing himself mainly to the lady and her husband. This opened the way for conversation with him as to his soul's need, in the course of which he took from his pocket a conspicuous bottle of unused liquor, and dashed it to pieces on the ground, and a moment later, with his face buried in his hands, he was sobbing like a child. Again and again in the course of the conversation, as the grace of God and eternal things were pressed upon him, he broke down and wept; and at the end of the journey he took us warmly by the hand, and said, "You have done me good."

Addresses were exchanged, and we parted, we trust not forever; for our hope is, that the grace of God, which has wrought so wonderfully in multitudes of others, will also do its blessed work in this man, who seemed to be by nature a noble specimen of England's sons, though at that moment in such a sad plight.

That the words addressed to him in the subjoined letter may also be helpful to some other needy soul as well, is the prayer of the writer.

My Dear Mr.-----:

You will doubtless remember meeting my wife and myself on the stage coach in-----, a few weeks ago,—a meeting which, to the eye of man, might seem only casual; but which, I cannot doubt, was ordered in the wise and good providence of God.

I will not attempt to recall to your mind much that took place in that coach, the memory of which could only be painful to you; but I would like to recall a little of the conversation that passed between ourselves, only with the desire of turning it to account for blessing which reaches far beyond the present life.

My wife and I both deeply sympathized with you in the trying circumstances of that unhappy hour. We saw what we believed to be a naturally noble soul passing through a deep struggle, as the result of sin which has brought into this world unhappiness, misery and ruin. As the result of sin brought into this world by the first

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man, every one of us has inherited a sinful and depraved nature. The fruits of this evil nature are seen in evil habits, unrestrained passions, pride of heart, self-righteousness, hypocrisy, infidelity, independence of God, and in a thousand different forms. On that coach, where we met, might have been seen not only the weakness of sinful nature in its struggle with an evil habit, but also pride of heart in those who thought themselves better, and who were perhaps ready to judge, and even humiliate a fellow passenger under such circumstances. All this flows from the same source—a heart defiled and corrupted by sin in its very springs. And the pride of heart I have referred to is not less sinful in the sight of God than that which it essays to judge,—nay, was perhaps even more abominable, for the Lord hates pride. (Prov. viii, 13.)

But these things just show what we are in our sinful natures. The very spring of life is corrupted. We are ruined by sin. And the proofs of our ruined condition were very early manifested in the history of our fallen race. Looking down upon the antediluvian world, "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" (Gen. vi, 5.) Nearly two thousand years later the prophet declares, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. xvii, 9.) Man does know his own

heart, for it deceives him ; but it cannot deceive God, and the answer to the question, " Who can know it ? " is, " I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Yes, the Lord searches the heart, and He has told us what He sees coming out of that corrupt fountain. Exposing the hypocritical wickedness of the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, He says: " Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Solemn testimony given by the Searcher of hearts! We might suppose that the application is not universal; but another scripture sweeps away every such thought as utterly false: " As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; " " there is none that doeth good, no, not one; " " For there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. iii, 10, 12, 22, 23.) " No difference! " " no difference! " Alas! alas! then all are ruined. Yes all, all are ruined by sin. But God, blessed be His name, has a sovereign remedy, even for those that are ruined, and the remedy is accessible to all.

But dear Mr.——, it is good, it is wise, to bow to the verdict that God, the infallible Judge, has declared. He declares " all have sinned," all are guilty; and to own this verdict as just, is the way by which we come into the blessing and favor He has to bestow.

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You will perhaps remember saying to us you had never done a "dishonorable act" in your life; and this was the ground on which you thought you would stand "a pretty good chance," when the day of reckoning came. Well, it might be true according to the estimate of your own heart (which God says is "deceitful,") or according to the estimate of some of your fellow creatures, that you had never done a dishonorable act; but is it not contrary to the judgment of God, who declares that all have sinned? Is not sin "dishonorable" in His sight? And have not you dishonored God? Have you not dishonored Christ? And has not God declared the utter hopelessness of obtaining salvation by our own works? "Not by works of righteousness which we have done," is His solemn declaration in Titus, iii, 5. On this ground we are hopelessly lost, and the sooner we bow to the fact, the sooner will we find ourselves the objects of God's mercy and favor.

God's way of salvation is through faith in Christ and His atoning work on the cross. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi, 31.) "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." (Eph. ii, 8-9.) We have no meritorious claim on God whatever. But God has revealed Himself as a Saviour-God; and His love has furnished a remedy that cannot fail, and to

which every man is entitled who comes and accepts it as the free gift of God to perishing sinners. That remedy is Christ, God's beloved Son. We had no sacrifice that could atone for our sins. The cattle on a thousand hills would not have sufficed, nor yet the incarnation and sacrifice of myriads of holy angels. But God spared not His own Son. He gave Him freely to be a sacrifice, and the Son gave Himself. Such the love of God—the love of Christ—in meeting our desperate need.

Oh! does this not touch a tender chord in your heart, dear Mr.———? On that stage coach your heart was touched by a little grace on the part of your two unworthy fellow-passengers when others seemed totally indifferent. We were not better than they, and if a little grace and compassionate sympathy was shown to one in need, it was only the fruit of God's grace in hearts that He had touched when they were as hard, perhaps, as any. And if you were touched by this little rivulet of God's grace flowing through two human hearts, what of that mighty ocean of divine love revealed in the cross! That love in all its infinite fulness is for you. Ah! there is no love like that. Many waters could not quench it; the floods could not drown it; the storm of divine wrath which fell upon the blessed Saviour on account of our sins, could not turn that love back in its course: it was love unto death; nay, love that lives beyond death, and

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Will you not allow that love to have its own way with you? Will you not gratify His heart in yielding yourself to His love?

You told us of friends who supplied you with passage money in a time of need when you were on the Pacific coast, and even far beyond what the need required. And I am sure you realized it was good to have such friends. But now you have a voyage to make of another sort,—a voyage not across the Pacific, or the Atlantic, but into *eternity*; and here is a friend who has paid for a passage into the very presence of God, and a title to stand in His presence in righteousness and as a co-heir of His beloved Son. The price has been paid in blood, and God has accepted the mighty sacrifice: why should not you believe it, and rejoice? And we, too, would rejoice to know you had by faith accepted the gift of God. May we not expect to hear from you, and learn that you have done so?

God has been watching over you, seeking you, and speaking to you, dear Mr.——. Surely you will not turn away from such love—such grace! How wonderful that His eye should have been on you every moment, and that His heart should have followed you in all your voyages, and that His hand should have been stretched out to preserve you in time of danger! “Four times” thrown into the cruel sea, and once,

“an hour and twenty minutes in the water,” and yet here you are, still preserved alive, and the door of mercy still standing open before you, and God tenderly calling you to enter! Oh! what grace. What patient love! Surely you will not disregard it. God did not allow you to perish in the deep. Did He not have in view the hour when you would believe in His Son, and receive life everlasting, a life that no man, no devil, nor all enemies together, can destroy? “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.”

Our one desire for you is that you may know Christ, the Son of God, as your own personal Saviour. This is our prayer also, and it is with this hope that we write to you.

With our united prayers and best wishes for your present and eternal welfare.

Yours very sincerely,

The proudest heart that ever beat
 Hath been subdued in me;
 The wildest will that ever rose
 To scorn thy own, or aid thy foes,
 Is quelled, my God by thee.
 Thy will, and not my will be done;
 My heart be ever thine;
 Confessing thee, the mighty Word
 I hail thee, Christ, my God, my Lord,
 And make thy name my sign.

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POLLY MORAN

"Teacher," said one of the young girls in my Sunday school class, "Polly Moran is very sick, and would like you to go and see her."

I of course said I would go, but I was at the moment somewhat surprised at receiving the message, coming as it did from a morose and uninteresting child, whose absence I had hardly noticed.

The place where Polly lived was the most wretched in the city and the people of the quarter the worst. In the centre of a labyrinth of small streets I found the court, and then the number I sought—the door was open and on approaching it I heard from within, a most dreadful oath. Lifting up my soul to the Lord I prayed that I might be kept and guided, and then I rapped timidly.

"Come in" was the response. I entered and found myself in the presence of three villainous looking men, who were seated at a table upon which was a pitcher of beer and a pack of dirty cards.

As they were looking at me with surprise, I said, "Is this where Polly Moran lives? I am her Sunday school teacher."

"If you are our Polly's teacher go up stairs, and don't be afraid; no one shall touch a hair of your head as long as I am here," replied one of the men as he rose up, holding by the table to steady himself.

I went up the stairs and found myself in the only sleeping room in the house. It would be impossible to imagine a more miserable place—there was not a single piece of furniture; some piles of rags here and there and on one of these poor Polly was lying.

When she saw me she tried to raise herself up, but the effort only led to a violent paroxysm of coughing. Her hollow cheeks, and red cheek bones showed clearly that she was one of those victims sacrificed by parents to the demon of drink.

"My poor child," I said to her, "I am distressed to see you so sick." Yes Miss, I am very sick—I cannot get up, only for that I would come to the school," she replied.

"I am very much afraid Polly that you will not be able to leave this room, for a long time to come."

"I shall never go back again, Miss, but I am going to heaven. The doctor said this morning, when Mrs. N. brought him, that it would be useless to take me to the hospital as I am dying."

"And are you afraid to die my dear child?" I said.

"Oh! no Miss, I am so *happy* to go, for people do not drink in heaven, do they?"

Wishing to assure myself of the foundation of her confidence, I said to her: "Why do you think you are going to heaven, Polly? Is it because you have always been a good girl?"

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"Oh! no! no! I have been very wicked; I was in the habit of saying very bad words, and doing all sorts of bad things before that——"

Here a violent fit of coughing, almost with convulsions, interrupted her words.

I made her take a little; light nourishment I had brought and she soon recovered her breath.

"Why have you ceased to say bad words?" I asked.

"One Sunday you had told us that Jesus had so loved us that although He was rich and a great King He had come down to the earth to be poor like us, and I thought that meant that He loved good people and well dressed like you, and at the moment I thought that, you turned towards me and looking directly at me said: "Jesus loves you."

"Yes my dear Polly, Jesus loves you very much, quite as much as though you were rich and noble."

"When I left the school," the girl continued "I said: Thank you Jesus for loving me so, and I promised Him I would do everything He wished me to do, for before that no one ever cared for me, except yourself, Miss."

"Why have you not told me this sooner?" I asked.

"I did not like to do it, but I was so happy that when father was drunk and took to beating me, I would say in a low voice: Jesus loves me, and then I did not mind the blows."

I prayed with the dear child, and left her with my heart full of praise, and in admiration of the wonderful ways of the Lord, who saves the weakest and most wretched child.

I went twice after to see Polly, I read to her passages which speak of the Lord Jesus who loved her, and I prayed with her. At each visit I found her weaker in body, but strong in the faith.

"When I go to heaven," she said, "I will say: I am Polly Moran, whom Jesus died to save, and they will let me right in, won't they?"

Oh! dear young reader, that you might have poor Polly's simple faith! "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Jesus died to save you, you also. He loves you. He was delivered up for you, and all that He asks is that you repent of your sins and believe in Him.

When I came again to see Polly, the neighbor Mrs. N. said: "Polly is dead; her last words were: Tell the lady that Jesus came for me; her head then dropped upon her bed, and she was gone."

What a glorious change. She had left her miserable bed of rags and her sufferings; she had left her abject poverty for the infinite riches of Christ; from grief and misery to endless joy and happiness, in the presence of Him who loved her and died to save her.