

THE SOWER.

A GOSPEL HYMN.

Tune, "Sandon."

THE Father's Son into this world of sin
In love was sent ; [win,
By grace and truth He sought lost man to
And thus He went
Into their midst, to bless, and seek, and save :
Man's final answer was the cross and grave.
Raised from the grave, He sits upon the throne
Of God in heaven ;
Through faith in Jesu's blood, and that alone,
Sins are forgiven :
The vilest now may come—God doth receive
All who repent, and on the Son believe.
Soon He will come, and call His saints away
To worlds above,
Unto the Father's house, oh, blessed day !
Oh, depths of love !
In garments white, the church, His bride so fair,
Reflects His beauty, and His glories share.
Then He will rise (alas !) and "shut the door"—
Judgment is nigh :
From those who spurned His love and grace
before,
All hope will fly.
Not yet too late ! escape eternal doom !
To Jesus haste ! Oh, enter while there's room !

THE OLD BLIND BEGGAR.

AS I was walking one day in the vicinity of the city of V—— I overtook a beggar who was walking before me. He was an old man, with white hair, blind, and led by a dog. I said to him:

“White hairs are a crown of glory,” Solomon says, “if found in the way of righteousness.” Is it so with you my friend?

“I suppose sir,” he replied, “that you wish to know if I have gained my soul; (a common expression among Roman Catholics in Ireland which signifies the salvation of the soul by works, such as prayers, penances, pilgrimages &c.)

Well, yes, my friend, is it your case?

“Alas! no sir,” said he, “I am very much afraid that I am not all right; I have passed through two orders, the order of Saint——, and the order of Saint—— but if I were able to enter the third order I believe I should die happy.”

And what have you to do in order to enter this order?

“Well sir, in the first place the penance is very severe; besides, father X—— is very hard, he says he cannot receive me for less than three shillings, and I do not see how I can get so much, for times are not good sir, and it is not an easy thing to provide at the same time for the needs of the body and the soul, with what the good people are able to give me. However, I have been able to save nearly a third of the sum,

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and to-day I have got a little more, but it will take a long time to get the full amount, and if in the meantime I should die, what would become of my poor soul."

All this was said with an air so serious, and a sincerity so evident, that I felt the deepest desire to speak to him of the free salvation the gospel makes known to us.

My friend, I said to him, I am but a young man, yet I have reached an order much higher than those you have mentioned.

"Really sir! And what order is it? I have never heard of an order higher than those I have mentioned."

It is the order of Jesus Christ, I said to him.

"No one has ever told me of that order sir. May God Almighty bless you! Tell me how much you have had to pay to enter it."

Not a penny.

"Not a penny! repeated the beggar, overwhelmed with astonishment. But what penance have you had to do?"

None.

"What had you then to do?"

Like you, I have confessed my sins to One who told me to look to the Victim who has suffered for them. He told me that if I would do so, all my sins would be pardoned through the love of Him who was nailed to the cross.

"I believe I understand what you are saying,"

interrupted the blind man. "You are speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Just so; and the One to whom I have confessed is God the Father. I have done what He has told me; I have looked at the Saviour, dying on the cross, and to what God has said, that His blood cleanses from all sin; I have consequently been washed from all of mine.

"Oh! sir," he cried with a face radiant with joy, "I understand! I understand! I have never heard anything like it. These are truly good news."

We went through an opening to the other side of the hedge which bordered the road, and going down on our knees, I commended my new friend to God. When we rose up his face was wet with tears.

"Sir," said he, deeply moved, "I have a request to make to you if it is not too presumptuous. Let me kiss the lips that have announced to me these precious news."

I could not refuse his request.

After asking him where he lived, we separated. I went afterwards often to see him in his wretched dwelling and told him more fully the gospel which he had received with such simplicity. Sometimes I read to him in the gospel of John the history of the man born blind, to whom the Saviour had given sight; again in Luke that of the woman who was a sinner, whose innumerable sins, the Lord had forgiven, and of the other woman to whom He had given the

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living water springing up to everlasting life. One day I told him of the effect the gospel had on those whose history is recorded in Acts XIX as practisers of curious arts, how they brought their books together and burned them. At this, he drew out of his bosom a crucifix, and putting it into my hands, said: "Take this, I have no further use for it."

All the recitals in the gospels delighted him, but he especially loved this verse which I had explained to him: "AS MOSES LIFTED UP THE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS, EVEN SO MUST THE SON OF MAN BE LIFTED UP: THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. (Jno. iii. 14, 15).

Some time after, he fell sick, and when I went to see him, it was evident that he was about to enter into his rest. Shortly before his death he became delirious, and the ignorant people with whom he lived told me they were sure that some dreadful animal had bitten him. for, said they: "he talked all the time of a *serpent which bites*, and of a *serpent which heals*."

"And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom."

Believe me dear reader when I tell you, that one of the happiest thoughts I have in connection with eternity, is that of meeting again in that glory of which Christ is the centre and source, that blind beggar redeemed by His grace.

Shall you be there also?

I CAME WHEN I WAS IN HEALTH.

IN a certain village a young man was dying. I was called to visit him, and on entering the room where he was lying I saw at a glance that his moments were numbered.

The serene expression on his face which denoted perfect peace did not leave any doubt as to his sentiments, as the moment approached when he would launch upon the shoreless ocean of eternity: He belonged to Christ. I spoke to him of the happiness of knowing the grace, and the infinite love of God revealed in the gift of His well beloved Son; of the marvellous redemption accomplished upon the cross, and of the importance of possessing a perfect assurance of salvation.

He turned his eyes towards me, and in broken accents replied: "Yes, the Lord be praised * * * I came to Him * * * when I was in health."

Seeing that he wished to say something more, but that it pained him to speak, I replied; "You desire to say that when one is upon a sick bed there would be many things to think about, if one had not come before, and that then there would be little strength to do it."

"Yes," said he.

I came to see him again some days later but he had lost consciousness. The only words I could distinguish were: "Lord * * * Jesus * * * Lord."

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At my next visit I found he had departed to be with his Saviour, there to await the blessed moment, now so near, when according to the words of the apostle: "The dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them" to be "ever with the Lord." (I Thess. iv. 16. 17)

Reader, what are your prospects for eternity? You may soon be called, and while still young and in health, and at an unexpected moment, to leave the things here below, to which you have given your time and perhaps your heart. Are you ready to meet God? For meet Him you must, either for eternal happiness, if you have been saved by the grace of Christ, or for your condemnation and eternal misery, if you meet Him without having Christ for your Saviour. Listen then to the appeal of grace which He addresses to you, and come to Christ *now*.

Perhaps you say: "I will think of these things later, on my death bed." Thousands of souls who have reasoned thus, have perished in their sins. Oh! that these words of my young friend might reverberate in your ears and in your heart: "Bless the Lord! I came to Him when I was in health." His death bed was peaceable; he knew that he went with Jesus to meet God, and that, for him, there was neither judgment nor condemnation to fear. Happy, thrice happy such a death bed, where is found, salvation, peace and eternal life.

Many things will occupy your mind when sickness lays hold of you; when the poor body is enfeebled and broken by grief, the mind is absorbed, and what strength remains for thought? Besides, death may come upon you suddenly, without giving you a moment for reflection. How many instances of sudden death do we not see! Lend your ear to the word which God would have you hear: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." He still waits, waits to bless you. Yes, although you have long ignored His love and despised His grace, He still addresses to you once more this message: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

The Judge who pleads with you, and who has perfect right to condemn you without appeal, is the one who wishes to acquit you, by cleansing you perfectly from all your sins; for Jesus has submitted to the judgment of the cross, which you have deserved. The word of God remains in its immovable certainty. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses from all sin."

Come then while you are still in health and while your strength remains. The one who suggests the thought of delay is the enemy of your soul; He is a liar from the beginning. You will never find a more favourable moment than the pre-

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sent, for God has promised nothing for to-morrow. Come while it is time, for before this day closes you may have been called into eternity, and to what part of that unseen world will your released spirit have taken its flight? Will angels have conducted it to the realms of happiness and glory, or will it be to awake to the anguish of an unquenchable flame, and an undying worm?

IN christianity God is fully revealed, not helpless to show His love, but coming in goodness to the sinner where he is, that this love may give assurance to the heart, and the work of redemption peace to the conscience; so that the sinner may have boldness to approach because God came to him in grace, when he dared not, could not, come to God.

It is this which is the answer of the Lord to the Pharisees who reproached Him for receiving sinners and eating with them.

The shepherd sought his sheep, from the earnest care of his own heart for it. The woman used all diligence to find her piece of money. The joy was the shepherd's and the woman's. And how is the sinner received when he turns to God?

The returning prodigal has his father on his neck while in rags, and the best robe to enter into the house. It was his father's joy to have him back there. Such is the God revealed in Christ.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

THE ABSOLUTENESS OF THIS FORGIVENESS.

THE moment when God forgives a poor penitent sinner, on the ground of the blood-shedding of Jesus, is a moment which occurs but *once* in the history of any soul. The forgiveness is absolute, and the act is never repeated. After that, God may have to say to us as disobedient children, and may repeatedly forgive in a governmental way, releasing us from chastisement under His rod; but this is a different thing, and is not the same as the one absolute and eternal pardon we received when we first believed the gospel.

Under the law, when forgiveness was governmental and connected with sacrifices which were only types, forgiveness was constantly repeated, because these sacrifices could not take away sins. On the day of atonement, according to Lev. xvi. there was a remembrance of sins every year. (Heb. x. 3. 4). The reason was, those sacrifices could not take sins away, and so could not purge the conscience, and set it clear in the presence of a holy God. A better sacrifice was needed, and that came in the sacrifice offered by Christ, when He offered Himself. The sacrifice of bulls and goats might serve as types, or as a governmental provision for an earthly people, availing for a year, after which there was a new

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reckoning, so that the need of the conscience was not met. But when Christ offered Himself, it was a sacrifice of infinite and eternal value. It availed forever, and continuously, so that the one who availed himself of its efficacy through faith was perfected forever—perfected in perpetuity. The abiding efficacy of the sacrifice gives him this position before God, which never changes, and which is never for a moment interrupted. And thus God can say by the Holy Ghost, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 14. 17.) Under the law, sins were remembered every year; now, for the believer, they are remembered no more. God never raises the question, because it was raised once for all with Christ at the cross, and settled definitely and eternally for all who believe. And thus the believer's conscience is purged, so that he can stand in God's presence, in the light of His infinite holiness, in perfect acceptance and without fear. It is abiding peace and rest for the conscience that was once tormented by the thought of that infinite holiness and inflexible righteousness.

Rom. iv. 7. 8. also confirms this blessed truth. Three things are there mentioned, all founded on the propitiatory work of chap. iii. 25, (1) iniquities forgiven, (2) sins covered, (3) no imputation of sin henceforth to the believer. God has been glorified in the death of Jesus, and on

the ground of that death, forgives all who believe. Moreover, Jesus was delivered for the offences of such, chap. iv. 25, bearing the judgment due to them, as He hung upon the cross. That was the divine settlement of the question for every believer, and God has declared His satisfaction with this settlement, by raising up Jesus again for their justification. Thus God forgives the sinner who believes in Jesus, and the sins are all covered by the blood of atonement, and never can come into remembrance. All our sins were thus covered. All were imputed to Christ before ever we were born, before ever the sins were committed (save those committed before the cross) and He drained the full cup of judgment for them. God does not exact payment twice. So we are assured we are forgiven and our sins covered, if we have believed in Christ, and that God will not impute sins to us because they were all imputed to Christ. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

Oh! what a divine and perfect settlement. What solid ground for faith to rest upon! And oh! the peace and rest which flow to the conscience of the one who believes the glad tidings! Is this peace yours, reader? If not, why not? The work on which all is founded has been done. And the work avails for every confessed sinner who believes in Jesus. Why not, then, like Cornelius and his company, believe God's words

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—“whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.” Give up all else, and as a helpless undone sinner, believe that soul-saving message, and all is yours. Sins forgiven, sins covered, and sins no more imputed to you, because they were all imputed to Christ! Oh! could you ask more? Is not this enough? Believe, then, and know the peace which the gospel gives, and which none can take away, peace which is as sure and abiding as the sacrifice of Christ in the presence of God who has glorified Him on high, in answer to the perfect work of the cross.

THE moment we begin to rest our peace on anything in ourselves we lose the enjoyment of it. And this is why so many Christians have not settled peace. Nothing can be lasting that is not built on God alone. How can you have settled peace? Only by having it in God's own way. By not resting on anything, even the Spirit's work within yourselves, but on what Christ has done *without* you. Then you will know peace—conscious unworthiness, but yet peace. In Christ alone God finds that in which He can rest; and so it is with His people. The more you see the extent and nature of the evil that is within, as well as that without and around, the more you will find that what Jesus is and did, constitutes the only ground on which you can rest.

“HATH EVERLASTING LIFE.”

UNSAVED reader, probably the most precious thing which you have is your life.

If you were worth millions of dollars, and your life was in danger, you would give it all to have your life spared to you.

Satan was not lying to the Lord when he said, “All that a man hath will he give for his life.” (Job. ii. 4.) But if this life is so precious to you, a life that has so much of unrest, of turmoil, disappointment, loss, pain, and grief, what would a life be that sweetened every bitter cup; a life which was full of joy and abiding peace, a life in which there was rest of soul, a life which *death could not end.*

You are afraid of death because you know you must meet God; because you know that after death is the judgment, and that if you die in your sins, you must stand before the great white throne and be judged, and that judgment will end in your being cast into the lake of fire. You know this, because the word of God tells you so, and His word you know is truth. God Himself warns you of the judgment which your sins will bring upon you; of the great white throne and the lake of fire. And it is God Himself who tells you of everlasting life.

If this poor life is of such value to you, would not everlasting life be of priceless value? You

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know that this life must soon end. It may not last another day; this day may be the last day of your life. What would you not give for a life that never ended? a life over which death has no power, EVERLASTING LIFE. O unsaved reader, you need everlasting life. Without it there is nothing before you but the judgment of the great white throne, and the lake of fire. But with everlasting life in your possession you are saved, safe, blessed for eternity.

You can have this life, have it now freely. God now offers it to you, offers you forgiveness, salvation, deliverance from sin, power to do His will. You may have everlasting life now while you are reading this. How? By simply taking the sinner's place, acknowledging your sins, humbling yourself before Him and believing His own words of love.

Hear what He says, "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" (see John v. 24). Read the whole chapter and see what it is you have to believe to get this great gift.

There are a few simple truths you have to believe, but it is believing on a divine person, believing in the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who died for you, the One who bore your sins on the cross in whom you have to believe. You know what it is to believe in people. And if you believe in men, how much

more should you believe in Jesus. He has proved His love by dying for you, sinner as you are. He now offers to you everlasting life. He offers it to you freely. You have nothing to pay for it, not a thing. No matter how rich you are, no matter how much you may possess or how much you have done, you have nothing to give to Him for that life. It is, it must be a free gift. The only question is, will you now receive it? This moment you may have everlasting life.

A POOR Indian, of whom I once had some knowledge, who had been a very wicked man, but who became truly converted, was asked to give some account of his conversion; to tell how it was that he had been led to put his trust in Christ. He described it in this manner, said he :

“I was in the mud. I tried to get out; and I could not. I tried the harder; and the harder I tried, the faster I sank. I found I must put forth all my strength; but I went down deeper, and deeper, and deeper. I found I was going *all over* in the mire; I gave the *death-yell*, and found myself in the arms of Jesus Christ.”

When he abandoned all efforts to save himself, the Lord Jesus saved him. That was all he knew about it. And more, that was all there was about it, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”