

THE SOWER.

Oh! Lamb of God for sinner's slain,
Thy glorious name our song shall be ;
Bearer of all our guilt and pain,
We gladly turn our eyes to Thee,
Since Thou for us hast shed Thy blood,
And died to bring us back to God.

That dreadful cross ! oh, who can tell
The agonies Thou didst endure ;
Sorrows of death and pains of hell,
Encompassed Thee, oh, Christ most pure :
God's waves and billows, Thee o'erflowed
In wrath ; divine, bless'd Son of God.

Can it be nought, ye passers by
To see such suffering ? surely no,
'Tis the great Lord of earth and sky,
Dying the death of shame and woe.
Beneath God's wrath He bows His head,
And sinks in weakness 'mong the dead.

Joy to Thee now exalted Lord,
High seated on the Father's throne ;
On earth, in heaven above adored,
Thy sufferings o'er, Thy labor done :
By this we know our sins forgiven,
And look to meet Thee, Lord, in heaven.

"I AM JOSEPH."

(GEN. XLV. 3).

THESE were the words uttered by Joseph when he made himself known to his brethren, about twenty-two years after they had sold him to a company of Ishmeelites who carried him into Egypt, and sold him there. When they parted company with him at Dothan, little did they think that they would ever meet him again, much less under circumstances like those in which they did meet him in Egypt. But God is above all the wickedness of man, and often brings about a very different issue from what man anticipates. Joseph's dreams were being verified, notwithstanding their wicked taunt, "We shall see what will become of his dreams." They did not expect this issue, but God brought it about. So it was when they put the Lord Jesus to death, and laid him in a rock-hewn sepulchre, making it secure with the great stone, sealing it, and setting a watch. Little did they think they would ever meet again this one whom they branded as a "deceiver." But if God lifted Joseph out of all his sorrows, and exalted him to the throne of Pharaoh, how much more shall He not honor His Son? God *has* raised Him up from the dead and exalted Him to His *own* throne, and the day is fast approaching when His brethren after the flesh shall stand before Him, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced." Thus it is written in Zechariah, and repeated by the apostle

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John. Joseph, exalted to the throne of Pharaoh, was a type of the risen and exalted Jesus, and beautiful it is to see the way in which he dealt with his brethren, before he made himself known, as Jesus will also deal with *His* brethren before He makes Himself known to them.

When Joseph made himself known to his brethren he said to them : " Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life." (Gen. xlv. 5). Beautiful spirit in Joseph ! but beautiful truth also ! They sold their brother from envy and hatred, but God was over it all. He was going before them to preserve life. He would over-rule their wicked act to preserve *their* lives, and the lives of millions besides in the time of the seven years famine. But if their lives were to be preserved, they must also be made to feel and *own* their wickedness and sin, in their treatment of their brother. So with the sinner now. God has sent Jesus before him to preserve life, yea He *gives* eternal life, but he must feel, and own, and judge his sin before God. God is light, as well as love. And if we have to do with Him, we must have to do with Him according to what He is. His love provides for the sinner, but His holy nature must expose and judge sin. And we must have His mind about it, and judge it too, morally, or else we cannot be in His presence. And this is what God leads to, in order that we may have assured forgiveness.

The stress of the famine brought the sons of Jacob down to Egypt to buy corn, and there they were

brought before Joseph, "the governor over the land," and "bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth." Joseph knew them, and remembered his dreams. But he was now no longer a "child," (chap. xxxvii. 30), he was an exalted ruler, and spoke in another tongue; and while he knew them, they knew him not. He made himself strange to them, and spoke to them roughly, and charged them with being spies, come to spy out the nakedness of the land. In vain did they plead, "We are all one man's sons; we are true men; thy servants are no spies." Their treatment of him at Dothan certainly did not prove that they were "true" men. And Joseph proposes to test them. He would put them in prison, and refuse to let them go till one of them had gone back home and brought their youngest brother, and so he puts them all in prison for three days. On the third day he said to them, "This do, and live; for I fear God. If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses: but bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die." (Chap. xlii. 18-20). All this was mingled goodness and severity. Why did he treat them thus? It was that their sin might be brought to mind and judged by them. And this was the effect of his treatment. "And they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying,

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spoke I not unto you, saying, do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required." Thus their sin was before them, and they spoke of it to one another. Joseph heard and understood all, but this they did not know, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. Did the thoughts of their sin against him twenty-two years before, now brought afresh to his mind and theirs, produce any bitterness towards them? None whatever. Grace had lifted him above all that. Although there was severity in his manner, his heart was yearning over them with tender compassion. "And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes." This, no doubt, seemed a hard way to deal with "true men," but he knew what their hearts were, and the needs be. And God knows how to deal with us, too, poor self-righteous, self-justifying sinners, claiming to be "true men," notwithstanding our having despised, and dishonored His Son. But if there is seeming severity in His ways toward us, all comes from One who loves us infinitely, but who must teach us what is in our hearts, in order that He may bless us to the full.

Next, the sons of Jacob are sent home with their sacks full of corn, and when on the way they open their sacks they find each man's money in the mouth of his sack. Here was another strange thing, calculated to exercise their hearts. "And their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to an

other, what is this that God hath done unto us?" They recognized God's hand, and were troubled, but understood it not. When they reached home, they tell their father their strange story; the treatment they received in Egypt; the money found in their sacks; and that their brother Benjamin must go the next time. All this was too much for the heart of Jacob, and he can only utter his sorrow: "Ye have bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." Poor sorrowing Jacob knew no better what God was working than did his sons.

But the famine was in the land, and their corn was soon gone. They must have more food or die. And Benjamin must go too. Jacob must give him up, great as was the trial; and so he sends them back to Egypt, instructed to take a present in their hand, "a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds." They were to take double money also, and the money that was returned in their sacks. And he sends them away with this prayer: "And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." Had he known who "the man" was, how different his language would have been.

Again they stand before Joseph in Egypt, with their present in their hand, and the double money, and Benjamin with them. And Joseph gave instruction to the steward to bring them home to his house,

and to slay and make ready. "These men shall dine with me at noon." So they are taken to Joseph's house, and again they are full of fear. They think it was because of the money, and recount the matter to the steward, who speaks words of comfort to them. "Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them."

The dinner hour arrives, and Joseph comes home, and again they bow themselves before him. He asks them of their welfare. "Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?" Then he fixes his eyes on Benjamin, his only full brother, and said, "Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son." This was indeed the utterance of a heart scarcely able to contain itself; but the time had not yet come to make himself known. His brethren must be thoroughly tested, and with what pain and trial of heart to Joseph as well as to them. "And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there. And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, set on bread."

And now another strange thing takes place. They are seated before Joseph, but all arranged according to their ages, "the first born according to his birth-right, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another." No wonder.

Why should this Egyptian Ruler arrange them thus? How could he know their ages? Then they are helped to messes of food from before Joseph, and when Benjamin is reached, his mess is five times as much as any other. What does it all mean? Strange thoughts must fill their hearts, but they do not understand.

One more test remains. By the command of Joseph, their sacks are filled and money restored as before, and Joseph's cup is put in Benjamin's sack. And after they have feasted in Joseph's house they are sent away at morning light. "And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? Ye have done evil in so doing. And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words. And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing. Behold, the money, which we found in our sack's mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondsmen. And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless." Their sacks are opened, and the cup is found in Benjamin's. What will they

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do now? Will they leave Benjamin to be a slave in Egypt, and return with evil tidings to their father, and bring down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave? Twenty-two years before they had sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver. Will they now let Benjamin become a slave too? Joseph knew well that if their hearts were unchanged they could sacrifice Benjamin and their old father too, with but little concern. And he thus puts them to the test. But their hearts are full of sorrow now. They rend their clothes, and return to Joseph's house. Joseph is still there, and they fall down before him on the ground. He charges them with the deed, and now they make no defence. Judah only says: "What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found." Then Joseph says: "God forbid that I should do so; but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father." This brings out the heart of Judah. Their father was an old man, and Benjamin was a child of his old age, a little one; his brother was dead, and he alone was left of his mother, and his father loved him. Jacob had said of Joseph, "Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since. And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." How then could they go back without the lad? Moreover Judah had become surety to his

father for the lad, and now offered himself instead of the lad, a bondman to Joseph, if only the lad might return with his brethren. Here was proof that there was no envy toward Benjamin as there had been toward Joseph, and that now they had respect for their father in his old age. Joseph could no longer refrain, and caused all to go out while he made himself known to his brethren. "I am Joseph," were the words that greeted their astonished ears, as he stood before them and wept tears of affection and joy, and fell upon their necks and kissed them. Oh! what a revelation to those poor guilty men. Their sin had found them out indeed, and there was no way to hide it, and they were troubled. But grace was there to forgive, and to bless. "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life." No bitterness, no hardness, nor even show of severity now; but grace flowing from a heart that forgave all, and was ready to nourish them and their little ones in a land of plenty, till the famine was over.

What a picture of God's grace revealed in Jesus, not only to guilty Jews who slew Him, but guilty sinners now, who have long despised the beloved Son of the Father. Perhaps like Joseph's brethren, you have been saying "We are true men." But how are you "true men" if you have been enjoying the countless numbers of God's creature mercies, receiving His vast bounty, as a matter of course, while despising His Son, and living for yourselves, and not God?

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Perhaps the Lord has been dealing with you, as Joseph did with his brethren, to lead you into exercise about your sins. "Be sure your sin will find you out." You cannot hide it. Do not try. Confess your sins, and Jesus will tell you that he has gone before you, and borne your sins in His own body on the tree. The grace in Joseph was just a picture of the grace in Him. Can you not trust such grace as that? His words are, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Come, and He will receive you, for He says: "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." (Matt. xi. ; John vi.)

IS LIGHT  IS LOVE

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.

CHRIST also hath once suffered for sins,

FOR

GOD so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (Jno. iii. 14-16).
the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to
(I Pet. iii. 18).

GOD.

I WILL COME AGAIN.

(JOHN XIV).

NOTHING is more prominently brought forward in the New Testament than the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the first comfort of the angels to the sorrowing disciples: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Act. i. 11). And if you turn to the first of Thessalonians, you will find it presented in the end of every chapter as a common doctrine.

It was not at all a strange thing—immediately after conversion to the living God—"to wait for His Son from heaven, * * even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." Again, in Hebrews ix we read "But now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. * * * and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." In the fifth of Thessalonians it is presented in the way of warning, as well as the object of the blessed hope of the saints: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

From this we see the amazing difference between the coming of Christ for this world, and for those who trust in Him. To the world He comes as a judge of both quick and dead; (see Malachi); but in the

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fourteenth of John, we find a wonderful difference in the whole principle and spirit of a believer's expectation of Christ.

"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." (Rev. i.) "But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" (Mal. iii).

Dear reader, let me ask you, can you stand before Him at that day? Do you think that you would have confidence before Him at His coming? Could you say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him?" This is He whom I have loved, and longed for? Men always judge according to what is suited to themselves. In I Thess. iv. it is said, "So shall we ever be with the Lord." Now, are you suited to be ever with the Lord? Have you this confidence? If it is founded on anything good in yourself it is a vain ground of confidence. Peter, as soon as he found himself in the presence of the Lord, felt that he was not suited for the Lord. I am too corrupt, he said. This was a true judgment of Peter; and love for the dignity of the Lord and for holiness. If you are content that holiness should be lowered that you may get off, you do not care for holiness, though you do for getting off. The moment I have seen the holiness of the Lord, and that happiness is in holiness, there is the immediate feeling of my unfitness for that holiness; though there may be the longing for it, which the Lord will doubtless in mercy answer.

“MAN GOETH TO HIS LONG HOME.”

A YOUNG man who had finished his studies in medicine and had been appointed to the staff of one of the large hospitals, was one day called to the bedside of a dying man who had been a porter, and although still young and of a robust constitution, he had been seriously injured by a heavy lifting. He thought at first the trouble might pass away and so continued at his work, but after two days, unable to keep up any longer he had to be taken to the hospital.

Our young doctor with other medical men of the hospital were soon at his bed-side—an examination revealed the fact that he had received a fatal injury and that the poor man had only a few hours to live, he seemed already to be losing consciousness and human skill could do nothing for him.

What could be the thought of the young doctor in remaining by his bedside after the others had gone away? Had he some secret hope of yet being able to save him? No; but he was a Christian, and he thought of this soul which was about to enter eternity. Was it saved? And if not how could he in so short a time make the truths of grace and salvation understood? He lifted up his heart to the Lord and asked that He Himself might give the suited word.

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"Do you know Jesus Christ the Saviour?" he asked the dying man.

A slight movement of the head was the only response he received, but it gave him to understand that Christ was unknown.

"Ah!" said the young doctor, "the word of God is the only thing able to reach him." And he repeated very slowly in the ear of the poor man: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Three times in succession he repeated the words without addition, but there was no indication that the dying man had heard them. He left him without any hope of seeing him again alive. He returned the following day and as he had anticipated the porter was dead. His sister was weeping beside his bed, she had arrived shortly after the doctor had left him.

"Did your brother say anything before his death?" he asked her.

"Ah! sir," she replied, "he could hardly speak; but at the moment of his death he opened his eyes and looked upwards—I put my ear to his mouth and heard him say, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.'"

Who can say what passed between God and the soul of the dying man during those hours when no living being could communicate with him. It may be that the Lord revealed Himself to him as He had done to the thief on the cross.

How infinite the grace of God which can thus bless the word at the last moment for the salvation of a

poor sinner! But, dear reader, I implore you do not delay in putting yourself under shelter for eternity by coming to the Saviour. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Who knows if God may not be saying to you, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." There is not always a death-bed where one can have the time or the necessary faculties to think of eternity and salvation. It was perhaps the first time that the poor porter had heard the message of grace, and have you not heard it many times? But if it is the first time, O! come without delay for fear that it may also be the last, and that not having received the good news, "now," it may never return. There will not always be a *to-morrow* to which you can defer your decision—and what a decision! Even for eternity. O come now to-day—*to-day—now*—all is ready, pardon, peace and eternal life—From the glory which Jesus has entered after having shed His blood for you, He is now calling you; do not turn away from Him—Come, believe and live.

I see a sinner trembling at the foot of the cross, feeling his need of the cross, or he would not be there; but not seeing the *value* of it, he gets no further. He thinks he values it, but if he valued it aright he would not be trembling any longer at the foot of it.