

# The Sower

A GOSPEL MAGAZINE.

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VOL. IV.

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In the morning sow thy seed,  
And in the evening withhold not thy hand :  
For thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that  
Or whether they both shall be alike good.

Eccl. xi 6.

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1894.

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How can a sinner know  
His sins on earth forgiven?  
How can my gracious Saviour show  
My name inscribed in heaven?  
What we have known and seen,  
With confidence we tell;  
And publish to the sons of men  
The signs infallible.

We who in Christ believe  
That He for us hath died,  
We all His unknown peace receive,  
And know His blood applied;  
Exults our rising soul,  
Disburden'd of her load,  
And swells unutterably full  
Of glory and of God.

His love, surpassing far  
The love of all beneath,  
We find within our hearts, and dare  
The pointless darts of death.  
Stronger than death and hell,  
The mystic power we prove;  
And, conquerors of the world, we dwell,  
In heaven, who dwell in Love.

## MAN'S UPRIGHTNESS AND GOD'S SALVATION.

(JOB XXXIII).

IT is often a long time before a soul that has known something of the graciousness of God is brought, thoroughly and practically in conscience, to bow to the truth of its condition before Him as He reveals it, and so to be cast over, simply and entirely on grace. But to this, sooner or later, God does bring every soul that has to do with Him. This chapter reveals to us the way in which God brings about this blessed result for man, till then ignorant of Him and of himself. He speaks once and again, but man heeds it not. Then He makes His hand to be felt, as in Ps. xxxii., and for the same reason—because the soul is keeping silence and refusing to own sin. He lets the light of His holiness shine in and reach the conscience, and the life draws near the grave. But all this is God's own work in grace, to give man the consciousness of what he is before Him, and to put the truth into him; to bring him to be in the true knowledge and acknowledgement of what he, a sinner and a creature is, in the presence of a God of holiness and grace, whom he has despised and neglected. This is the first thing.

Then secondly, a messenger comes; not to speak of grace in this instance, but of truth. And O! how

*rare* is such an one—"One of a thousand"—to declare unto man his uprightness. And what is man's uprightness but confession?—The only *true* place a sinner can take before God. But there is uprightness for a sinner even before God; and that is self-judgment in the justifying of God's verdict against him—taking God's part against himself. This the interpreter of God's ways explains. He explains that the hand of God is on the sinner just in order to this; and that the moment the soul comes to this—the moment it says with David, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," there is forgiveness. So here, "He will be *gracious* to him;" for the controversy is at an end. The sinner leaves himself *self-condemned at the mercy of God*. And O, what wondrous mercy is now revealed. "I have found a *ransom*." "*Save*," says God. *He* becomes the soul's salvation: and this, too, through a ransom. *He finds* the ransom; and *He* says, "Save." *He* becomes the Redeemer Himself of the soul that repents—that owns His righteousness in the confession of its own utter want of it.

Now mark the blessed result of it all. "He shall pray unto God, and *He* will be favourable unto him; and he shall see His face with joy." He is brought to God—to God as his Saviour, his Friend. The whole state of his soul has been up in question before God in judgment. All has come out. He is in the truth—upright in the unpalliating confession of his utter want of uprightness. And, then, *God is active*. *He* it is who delivers. He says, "Save," for *He*

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had found the *ransom* ; and that, too, ere ever He began this process and exercise. He expected *nothing from the sinner* to give him a place with Himself. He had found all. But He must strip the sinner of himself. He must stain his fancied self-goodness, that He may fit him for the valuing and accepting—and of grace, too—that which is divine. God wants to have a man with Himself in righteousness, so as to enjoy Him in love. But only a divine righteousness can suffice. Creature—righteousness there is none ; though man, alas ! goes about to establish one of his own. But in God's presence it all turns into filthy rags : his comeliness turns in him to corruption ; and he can only lay his hand on his mouth, and say, "Unclean, unclean !" Thus does God strip off what is of man, that He may clothe him with what is of Himself, even Christ, His righteousness for sinners.

But we must not forget another point—viz., that if the sinner needs a righteousness, if he needs to be clothed before God, he also, and first needs a *ransom*. He is an heir of *the pit*. He is drawing *nigh to the pit*. Ah ! that is the deepest part. Here, again, Christ comes in. How possibly spare such a vessel of wrath ? How let him escape ? Here is the answer—"I have found a ransom." "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." "He appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." God now frees the man from all that he did and was, because of the ransom which He Himself provided, even Jesus, "The pro-



pitiation for our sins." The sinner is saved from death, because another passes under it in his stead. Herein is love. God provides the Lamb for the sacrifice. Oh! precious ransom! God's own provision for condemned and guilty man drawing nigh to the pit. But now He takes away the filthy garments and clothes him with change of raiment. Now all is changed, and *for ever*. He has come to God, and in His presence all has been out and judged in the conscience; and, oh, how welcome the pardon in the name of the Blessed One who gave Himself a ransom for our sins! Ah! *we* have but to own our deserving the judgment; He bore it for us on the tree. How sweet such a reprieve; the witness of such divine love, and based on divine holiness and justice. The soul is brought to God: it sees His face with joy, and this is forever. He is to be with Him. He gets a place in and with Jesus. "Being justified by faith we have *peace* with God *through* our Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom also* we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." God grant each of my readers to stand clean and clear in the consciousness by faith of having had the whole question of his everlasting condition all settled by God and before Him; and in the assurance that all his salvation is *Jesus*: nothing that ever will be in himself, or of himself; but that he starts with this divine settlement, which is the foundation of all progress, and which no progress ever can make more perfect; though we shall know its perfection and blessedness increasingly, and be grow-

ing in the knowledge of *grace* and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

First, a ransom—the real actual bearing of our sins on the tree; then, the true peace with God *in Christ*, as our righteousness and our beauty. O, how dear and lovely Christ becomes then! and,

“How our hearts delight to hear Him,  
Bids us dwell in safety near Him.”

One more remark: The exercises are needful, but they do not deliver; they bring unto the truth; but nothing that goes on in us, or that comes out of us, can be a ground of deliverance. God delivers through Jesus Christ. He has found a ransom. Faith now welcomes salvation by *grace*; and says, “To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,” be all the praise for ever and ever. Amen.

God's claim must be met either by judgment upon His own Son, or by judgment on the sinner. Oh, what a solemn thought that this world is ripening for judgment!

The testimony of God's grace is going on. Dear reader, are you saved?

Grace will have its limits, and refuges of lies soon shall crumble into dust. Think of that “shout” that is to come; are you ready for it? “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout!” (I Thes. iv. 16).

Will it be to gather you out of the impending doom, or will it be but the signal for your destruction Left behind for judgment! Shut out! What an awful portion!

## WHY DO YOU NOT DO IT THEN?

SOME time ago J—— was led to feel that he had need of a Saviour. He was very unhappy and did not find peace although the gospel of the grace of God had been presented to him many times. They told him that Jesus had come for sinners, that it was “to seek and to save that which was lost,” (Luke xix. 10), that He had left the glory and became a man; but all that, did not bring any relief to poor J—— who continued to be completely miserable. At length in his distress, he spoke to his wife of what was troubling him and said to her:

“I greatly desire to go to Christ.”

“Why do you not do it then?” she replied.

God blessed the words. J—— understood that Christ had finished, upon the cross, the work by which the righteousness of God was satisfied; that God offered him now salvation as a gift entirely free, and that he had only to submit to the word of God which told him these good news. He came to Jesus as he was, and now for a long time has gone on his way rejoicing.

Dear reader, if you are not saved, why do you not come to Jesus? Are you troubled as J—— was? Then why do you not come to Jesus as you are. Bad as you know yourself to be, Jesus knows much better than you do the wickedness of your heart. He knows all, and yet He invites you. “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.” The word

which He speaks to you is : " Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." (Jno. vi. 37); for "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." (Jno. i. 12); "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom. viii. 17). Do not however deceive yourself, none of these precious promises are for you if you are far from Christ. It is only *by Him* that remission of sins is proclaimed. God wishes that there should be between Him and you an intimacy of communion without a cloud. This intimacy cannot exist until you have opened to Him the inmost recesses of your heart. O! do not delay to come; "Now is the acceptable time."

Unsavered reader, what are you waiting for? Why do you delay? Shall I tell you? You are waiting for damnation! You are delaying till the storm of eternal judgment overtakes you. Now, the mighty hand of God has stayed the tide of resistless judgment, swept it back while the sweet words of His grace are told out, while men are persuaded to accept salvation! Salvation is pressed on you, and there is nothing kept back from you but judgment!

The salvation is brought to you, and you are shut up to this, either to receive what God sends or to reject it. Which will you do? If you reject it there may meet you at the next step, God's terrible judgment, and can there be wrath and indignation more terrible than will be poured out on those who have despised God's salvation?

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## A CHART OF HEAVEN.

I WAS one day seated behind the counter, said a clerk in a book-store, when an old sailor entered, and regarding me with a serious air said :

“Young man, I want a chart.”

“Very well sir,” I replied, “what chart do you wish, the Gulf of Gascony or the Mediterranean ?”

“Stop, stop,” said he, “how ready young people are ! I want a chart, but these you have mentioned would be of no use to me. I want a chart which will guide me to heaven, for the one I have been using up to the present is out of date. Do you understand me young man ?”

(Ps. cxix. 9, 11, 105).

I understood at once that he wanted a bible, and taking down several I placed them before him. He selected one, evidently happy that I had so soon caught his thought. He asked the price, paid it, and before leaving turned to me, and said with earnestness of voice and manner :

“Do you understand this chart ?”

“I often read it,” I replied,

“That is well,” said the old man, “and I am glad to hear it, but remember young man, that is not enough.”

Reader, perhaps you are also one of those who often read the bible, but the question is this—Has it made you wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus ? (II Tim. iii. 15).

"GOD LOVES YOU."

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"HYMN, 'Jesus loves me this I know, For the bible tells me so,'" said the young clear voice. They sang it through.

And now I am going to give out my text. (John iii. 16). "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

It was given out something after the fashion of his father perhaps, but the little face was all aglow, and he evidently loved the word of God, and the love of Christ.

A few chairs arranged before him, on one of which sat his younger brother—and I think on another, the old nurse—comprised his audience.

"Now Harold, how do you know that God loves you?"

Harold shook his head, he could not tell.

"Weil," said the earnest voice, "You are not in heaven, are you Harold?"

"No." Harold knew certainly that he was not in heaven.

"And you are not in hell, are you, Harold?"

"Oh! no." Harold was quite startled.

"Then you are in the *world* aren't you? And God so loved the *world*. So you see how you know that God loves you," triumphantly concluded the little fellow, and whether Harold saw it or not, the sermon was at an end.

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Only a child's "pretend preaching." But how quickly the young heart had learned the right to claim that wondrous love. Reader, do you know it?—God loves *you*. You, infidel perhaps, hating Christ's name, and spending all your intellect to prove His word a myth. You, drunkard, trying to deaden your sorrows by drink. You, half wild with despair, not knowing where to turn except to death, and afraid of that. Dear ones, it is not such as Joseph, Daniel, and David that God is thinking of when He tells us by the Holy Spirit, that "Christ died for the ungodly," and "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Although we know all whom Scripture speaks of were sinners. But it does not say, "God loved those who were striving to follow Him"—but "the world." The same world that closed around the cross, after crying, "Away with Him." "Away with Him."

The world that to-day denies and blasphemes His precious name. All day long while the heart, is a (perhaps, alas! willing) receptacle of Satan's thoughts and ways, God's love is brooding over you. He sent His blessed One to call "*sinners* to repentance." Not "the righteous." No! Thank God. For then none would have been saved. But sinners, He came "to *seek*, and to *save*."

Oh! that every thing might echo this as you go along, and that you might be forced almost, to accept that love, and hide yourself under the precious blood once shed while still He "waits to be gracious," to the world He died for.

## PEACE IN BELIEVING.

1.

MY dear friend: In thinking over our conversation of yesterday, I have been struck by certain expressions of yours which reveal more clearly than I had at first seen, the nature of the difficulty which troubles you. You said that "You cannot have peace, unless God speaks peace to your soul," that "Without Him you cannot believe in Christ," and you asked me, "If God was angry with you since He did not speak peace to your soul." Will you give me your attention while I seek to put before you some thoughts in connection with these subjects.

It is quite true that God only can speak peace to the conscience. It is also true that our hearts are so little given to believe the witness of God, that it is only by His power and His grace that we all, such as we are, can be led to believe or made capable of believing. But do not by this imagine that God will speak to you by an audible voice, or by some new and special revelation other than that which you have already in His word. Do not suppose that a new revelation or an immediate impression upon your mind is necessary to make you capable of believing, or that this is the way God should use to put you in a state to come to Christ. God has already spoken, and very explicitly *in His word*, and "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by *the word of God*." Fix then your attention *upon what God has said in His word*, and while meditating thereon, trust Him fully to enable you to comprehend and receive it.

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In the tenth of Acts—verse 36, God is spoken of as, “Preaching peace by Jesus Christ.” Is that not “speak peace” by His word? And since He preaches (proclaims openly) can any doubt that He is speaking it? But what is understood by peace? I am not sure that we are of one mind as to that. When you say that you have not peace, that God has not yet spoken peace to you, you mean *the sentiment of peace in yourself*—the inward assurance of having been pardoned and reconciled to God, and at peace with Him. Now, however desirable and important this sentiment may be, it is only *the effect* of peace with God by our Saviour Jesus Christ, and not that peace itself, and it is important that you should understand what God has declared concerning it. May the Lord give me the ability to present it clearly before your soul, and that thus the effect which you so ardently desire may be produced, that is to say the inward sentiment of peace, and of reconciliation to God.

You and I have both sinned against God. By nature we *are* sinners, and during many years we have lived a life of sin and rebellion against God. You can accept that now although a little while ago you could not have done so. Perhaps you have always acknowledged that it was true; but now you know and feel that it is indeed the truth. Well then, God had sufficient cause to be angry with us on account of our sins; and, indeed *He is angry against sin*, and hates it with a perfect hatred. But while justly angry against *our sins*, He loved *us* and

regarded us with infinite compassion. His heart was moved with pity for *us*, and He did not wish that we should suffer the just consequences of our sin against Him. But how could these consequences be averted? How could He accept us or receive us into His favour, whilst we were in our sins? and what could we do, you or me, to deliver ourselves from sin, or to turn aside the righteous anger of God? Nothing, certainly. Everything we do is defiled by sin, and could only increase the evil. You have understood this since you have seriously begun to seek the Lord. When you read His word, your thoughts wander, and it is the same when you try to pray, and you told one yesterday how difficult you find it to put your mind upon what God says in His word.

It is evident that we can do nothing worthy to be presented to God, and even if we were able to do good for the future, that could never compensate for past sins. If we only regard ourselves, we are hopelessly lost, but God loved us and desired to see us reconciled to Himself, become the objects of His favour, and made happy under His kindness and care. And although He could not leave our sins unpunished, and we were unable to do anything to deliver ourselves from the burden of them, *He has sent His only-begotten Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* That having been accomplished, God is free now, if I may express myself thus, to satisfy the love of His heart in receiving us to His bosom. What God sought was to have a righteous and holy motive for pardoning us, for saving us, and for receiving us to heaven in spite of

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our sins, and He has found it in the death of Jesus, in the shedding of His blood for sin. It is thus that Jesus "has made peace by the blood of His cross." It is nothing that can yet be done, *it is already done*, and God tells us so in His holy word. "As God is true," the Lord Jesus Christ has "made peace through the blood of His cross." (Col. i. 20); and it is thus that God announces the good news of peace by Jesus Christ. Christ also announces it, see (Eph. ii. 17): "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."

You have been all your life as to appearances much nearer than many others. Brought up by pious parents, accustomed to read the bible, to hear the gospel, to associate with Christians, you have been near, *outwardly*, while many people decidedly wicked, have been *outwardly* afar off. But you have now become conscious that whatever may have been the *outward* nearness in which you have lived, that *inwardly* and *really* you have been far from God. It is then to you that Christ announces peace; peace with God, which He has made by the shedding of His precious blood—God says, that He is satisfied with the blood of Christ, that the blood justifies Him in receiving us, you and me, into His favour. Read, (Rom. iii, 21-26). Why then should it be more difficult to satisfy us than God Himself? That which justifies God in justifying us, may well satisfy our hearts and put our consciences at rest before God. I know that the soul has need of a solid basis on which to stand, but what is there more solid than the word of God? "As God

is true," He hates sin, and must punish it. "As God is true," in place of leaving us to perish for ever in our sins, He has delivered Christ to death upon the cross, in order to have us for His friends, for His children, to dwell forever with Him. "As God is true," He is satisfied with what Christ has done and suffered on our account, and He makes you know it, in order that you also may be satisfied, that you may cast yourself into the arms of His mercy and that you may have eternal life. Go then to Him in all confidence, and tell Him that you can no longer put aside His word or doubt His love. However great a sinner, however worthy of hell you may be, it is God who has told you that He is satisfied with the work of Jesus—with the blood of Jesus—with the sacrifice of Jesus; thus then you cannot but be satisfied with the blessed means of reconciliation between Him and you.

In place of doubting, fearing, or reasoning longer, consider that God is satisfied with what Christ has suffered upon the cross, then go to God and confess to Him that it is sufficient! "Lord! it is enough! I am a sinner, without doubt, but Christ has died!" And hold to that dear friend; although you may not feel an immediate change, remain upon that ground. May your soul rest before God wholly on this foundation. He will never tell you that you are wrong in believing His own word and the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ. "By Him, *all who believe* are justified from all things"; and to rest thus upon Jesus—to be thus satisfied with Jesus—*is to believe*. Your sincere friend.