

THE SOWER.

SATISFIED.

Sweet was the hour, O Lord, to Thee,
At Sychar's lonely well,
When a poor outcast heard Thee there
Thy great salvation tell.

Thither she came; but, oh, her heart,
All fill'd with earthly care,
Dream'd not of Thee, nor thought to find
The Hope of Israel there.

Lord! 'twas Thy power unseen that drew
The stray one to that place,
In solitude to learn from Thee
The secrets of Thy grace.

And, Lord, to us, as vile as she,
Thy gracious lips have told
That mystery of love, reveal'd
At Jacob's well of old.

In spirit, Lord, we've sat with Thee
Beside the springing well
Of life and peace, and heard Thee there
Its healing virtues tell.

No hope of rest in aught beside,
No beauty, Lord, we see;
And, like Samaria's daughter, seek
And find our all in Thee.

PEACE IN BELIEVING.

VII.

DEAR friend:—You will find enclosed a letter which the friend of whom I have recently spoken has written. May the Lord bless the reading of it to you. May you be encouraged to put *all* your confidence in Jesus—He has certainly done enough and suffered enough to wholly win every heart.

I am glad to hear that your sister has found peace. In the letter which tells me this you ask me various questions. I will take them up and answer them in the order presented—as far as possible in the very words of God, as the Lord may enable me.

1st question: Does God love us whether we believe or not? Or rather does He love us only when we believe?

Reply: “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”—(1 Jno. iv, 10.)

“But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”—(Rom. v, 8.)

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, *even when we were dead in sins*, hath quickened us together with Christ.”—(Eph. ii. 4. 5.)

2nd question: Can I say that I have faith in the blood of Jesus while I am not able to assert that I have been washed from my sins in His blood?

Reply: Had not the dying thief faith in Jesus

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when he said: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into thy kingdom?" But was he then able to say: "I am washed in the blood of Christ?" When we have confidence in a medical doctor, we consult him and take his remedies before we are able to say that he has cured us of our ailment.

To say in sincerity, that the blood of Christ has washed me from my sins, is *assurance*. To trust in His blood as an infallible remedy, mercifully provided by God to blot them out, is *faith*. The relation between these two positions is—and it is God that says it—that if we have the one, we have a right to the other. If I am truly attached to Christ as my only hope, my only refuge, and believe that His blood has efficacy to take away my sins, God says that the blood has taken them away, and it is my happy privilege to say it also.

3rd question: It is not faith that saves us is it? It is Jesus; and all we have to do is to receive it.

Reply: Doubtless. Faith in itself has no efficacy. If what you believed was not true, what value would it be to believe it? It is in the object of faith, it is in Him in whom we believe; it is in Jesus that all saving virtue dwells. To believe, is only to receive Jesus, and is it not a strange thing that so much pains has to be taken to induce us to receive Him? "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."—(1 Tim. i. 15.)

4th question: Is not Jesus always before the throne of God?

Reply : He is seated there. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."—(Heb. i. 3.)

5th question : Is not His blood there as a sacrifice for sin ?

Reply : "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption"—(Heb. ix. 12.)

"Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood."—(Rom. iii, 25).

6th question : If I go to God as a poor sinner, trusting upon this sacrifice, will not God receive me ?

Reply : "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."—(Heb. vii. 25.)

"Will God receive me?" you ask. Has not God besought you, and is He not still beseeching you to believe in His love—to take Jesus as your Saviour, and to rejoice, and to have complete rest of soul? "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."—(2. Cor. v. 20.) Can any doubts remain as to His willingness when He thus sends an ambassage of peace, to ask immediate reconciliation ?

You say again : "I cannot present a single merit, for the more I know, the more I see of evil in myself."

If then you have not in yourself a single merit, you will surely be satisfied with the full and perfect sal-

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vation which is found in Jesus and His expiatory work. *God offers this salvation as free as Jesus Himself, the richest gift and the most signal proof of His love.* Do not consider yourself at all. Put completely to one side all that there is of good or evil in you in order that the excellency of Jesus may arrest you, the one in whom God has so completely found His delight that He can accept the vilest and most sinful who comes to Him—trusting in *His name, in His blood, in the work accomplished by this perfect and only Saviour.*

But I must close. Do not imagine that your numerous questions upon a subject so vital and so important could possibly weary or trouble me. May God only bless the replies He has enabled me to give for peace to your soul. Then, indeed, I would not find that they had given me too much trouble.

Remember me to your sister with whom we sincerely rejoice. May the Lord grant her the grace to continue to rest simply upon Jesus and to follow Him conscientiously, drawn thither by His love. And when you receive these lines may you also be a partaker of her joy.

Yours, &c.,

The ground of settled peace, in the midst of a world of sin and sorrow, is to assure my soul that God is true when He says, that He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

THE SALVATION OF GOD.

“THE salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it.”—(Acts xxviii.) What a fact that is, that it is “the salvation of God;” nothing less than that great and blessed thing that has been now sent of God into this wide, wide world! God will satisfy Himself, when He speaks in *law*, to speak in a sequestered nook of the earth, and in the hearing of the smallest of all the nations; but when He comes to speak of grace or of salvation, at the end of law, He must let the whole earth hear.

And of salvation He had been speaking from the first, “It shall bruise thy head,” told of it. Patriarchal stories, Mosaic ordinances, prophetic voices, evangelic records, all had witnessed it, and now that God was leaving Israel and going abroad, would He go as bearing with Him less or other than this same glorious and precious thing, His own salvation, counselled and accomplished by Himself?

The close of the book of Acts tells us this; and then all the Epistles, in different ways, unfold the excellencies and the glories of this salvation; and then again in the Apocalypse we find this same thing the salvation of God, celebrated in the heavens and on the earth of the millennial world, in the nations of the blest, and in the ages of eternity.

Salvation is too great a thought for the heart of man to suggest. God must provide us with it. The

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religious mind of man resents it as inconsistent with the obligations he owes to God, and with the relationship and responsibility under which he stands to Him. The natural mind resents it as being no security for practical life and righteousness. How deeply at fault they both are! How unequal is the best human thing to reach the divine! While neither man's religion, nor man's morality gives toleration to the idea of salvation, God, as we see, is occupied with it from first to last. The mention of it, the history of it, the gradual display of it, the exercise of it, illustrations of it in one sinner after another, stretch along the whole volume. He dispenses it now, and calls on us to enjoy it; He will perfect it by and by, and will call on us to celebrate it.

The salvation of God comprehends a wondrous system of high and glorious privileges, which are all ours, through the faith of Jesus. But while it comprehends all this and more of like excellency, that on which it rests is simple as it can be. It is *satisfaction*—the satisfaction which God has found in the sacrifice on Calvary. This sustains everything. All rests on the simple fact that Christ has satisfied God, in that which He has done for us sinners. The rent veil and the resurrection, His seat in the highest heavens, on the right hand of the throne, there in the character of the Purger of sins, and the presence here of the Holy Ghost, are the blessed witnesses of this satisfaction. We are to accept salvation from God because He has accepted satisfaction

from Christ. We have to receive it with all thankful, worshipful assurance. Confiding faith is the due answer to abounding grace. If God has rent the veil, it is obedience in the sinner to enter. If God is satisfied, we ought to be reconciled—consciously saved. Satisfaction sustains everything as we have said. When I lay my burdens and load on God's foundations, knowing that they will be sustained there, I am *glorifying* as well as *using* the foundations.

And further, the salvation of God is a *present* salvation. We wait not for a judgment day to accredit the cross. The rent veil has already accredited it, and so has the resurrection, and so has the mission of the Holy Ghost; and so likewise faith in the cross waits not to know its rights and privileges and possessions; it is entitled to know them *now*—"receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." The judgment day will have its own business to do, but it is not committed to it to accredit either the cross, or faith in the cross. The cross has already led Jesus to His glory; faith in the cross leads the sinner at once to peace and favour, to the things that accompany salvation, and that witness a present salvation of the soul.

"Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour," is the language which conveys the sense of a present salvation. Mary's song and Zacharias prophecy, are breathings of the soul over like blessings. "He hath visited and redeemed," is the burden of each. Simeon too, when holding the child in his arms, spoke as one who knew that he was, at that

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moment, in possession of salvation ; and Anna spoke of Jesus to all those in Jerusalem, who were then looking for redemption. In her esteem that child was the end of their expectations, set for the purpose of turning hope into enjoyment.

And surely, I may say, the joy that fills all this most precious scenery, which itself fills the opening chapters of St. Luke, is not the joy of hope, but of fruition ; not the joy of a probable, but of a certain salvation. Heaven there is seen announcing such a blessing, faith on earth is seen accepting it. And then the passage in Isaiah, with which the Lord opens His ministry, as we get into the fourth chapter of the same evangelist, tells of a present salvation in the same way. The Spirit that filled the prophet of old was the Spirit which was now uttering Himself through anointed vessels such as Mary, Zacharias, and Elizabeth, and was of one mind with the glory, and the angelic hosts, touching God's salvation. For that prophet, like these vessels, like the glory and the angels, told of a *present* healing, quickening, cleansing, reconciling work, "an acceptable year ;" a season or ministry of acceptance for sinners with God, as now really and actually arrived.

All this is in concord. And shortly afterwards, in this same gospel, Peter illustrates present engagement of this present salvation—salvation *on the spot*. He discovered himself in the light of the glory. There convicted, he takes his place and character as "a sinful man." But quickly Jesus told this convicted sinner not to fear—His language to all such—and Peter re-

ceiving this word walked forth, or rose up, in the liberty of a present salvation. He feared not, he doubted not. He no longer judged that distance from the Lord became him, but he left all else in the distance, that he might then and there, at that moment and on that spot, in nearness to Christ, begin the long and bright and happy future of his eternity. (Luke 4.)

And a little further still, a little onward in the same chapter, as though to bring this matter to the simplest, surest conclusion, we get the case of the palsied man. There, the Lord says, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." And when this offends the religious human mind which instinctively thinks of forgiveness as a future thing, a thing to be reserved for another and a higher court, for the day of judgment rather than for the cross of Christ to decide and pronounce, Jesus has but to repeat the thought, and say, "The Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins;" and seals it by healing the man of his palsy. He insists on a *present* salvation. If the prophecy of Isaiah, as we lately observed, was in company with the angels, and the glory, and the anointed vessels of the Spirit, so are the works and the words of the Son of man now.

It is indeed salvation that has come down from heaven to earth, a present salvation, and all join in uttering and celebrating this great mystery. But how, I ask, has this been communicated? What style has accompanied the gift?

The opening of St. Luke, already referred to, is full of character in connection with this. All is sal-

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vation there, and all is joy in heaven. The angels speak of salvation, and so do the vessels, anointed, and filled by the Spirit; and rapture of no common measure animates them all in this their service. The glory itself, angelic hosts, and anointed vessels, shepherds, priests, old men, babes, and maidens, and long-waiting, patient saints, are alike summoned to share the joy of that moment, when salvation was coming down from heaven to earth. And I now ask has heaven repented of this joy, or changed its tone in the sight or thought of the salvation of God? Let the 15th chapter of that same gospel give its answer to this. It will tell us that this joy is as fresh this moment as it was in the day of Luke, i, 11. If it accompanied the announcement of it at the first, it has ever since, and still does, celebrate the acceptance of it by a poor sinner.

Excellent surely these secrets are! Can we get our welcome to God's salvation sealed by more blessed witnesses? And the title of a believing sinner to the salvation of God is written out in the same language, and may be enjoyed with the same liberty and assurance of heart.

Following the thought of God's salvation still for a little longer, I may put another question. To whom does this salvation address itself?

Poverty and powerlessness marked the scene that was visited by it at the first, and when it comes to be ministered by the Lord Himself, it is only the needy that get it, yea, they who have discovered their need as *sinners*.

Blessed thought! Sinners are welcome to Christ, but none other.

This we see in the same Peter, the fisherman of St. Luke. In him conscience and faith did their several needed work. He discovered *himself*, in the light of the glory which filled his boat, and then he discovered *the Stranger* who could set him at ease in the presence of that overwhelming moment. He was a sinner, and conscience had now discovered that; the divine Stranger was a Saviour, and faith had now discovered that. The poor fisherman's boat became holy ground, a sanctuary.

And now let me ask, has the "Salvation of God," promised, and sent forth into whatever scene of judgment it might have been; has it, I ask, ever disappointed the poor, wretched, exposed or guilty sinner that committed himself to it?

Has it ever disappointed you?

At the beginning it was sent after guilty Adam, as he hid himself behind the trees of the garden; he trusted it, and came forth; and the Lord God responded to his faith and covered Adam with a robe of His own making.

It was sent to Noah, who was then in the midst of a world that had been already judged of God, and was soon to have that judgment executed upon it. Noah trusted it like Adam. According to the word he prepared an ark; and the Lord God put him into it and shut the door upon him, and he was safe in the midst of the waters of death.

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—it was sent to Rahab in the heart of judged Canaan. But to both, all its undertakings were fully verified. Israel was saved, and Rahab was saved; though the sword was there both in Egypt and Jericho, to do its work of death and judgment.

And now, after these patterns, and others like them, it has come forth into this wide world of sinners; and no sinner will it ever disappoint, no sinner can it ever disappoint. It is God's—the salvation of Him who cannot lie. The present evil world is as deeply under judgment as the world before the flood was, as Egypt or as Canaan. The salvation of God is near to us as it was then to Noah, to Israel or to Rahab.

It was then, and is still, to be enjoyed by faith. As we read, "the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will *hear* it." Faith comes by hearing. It did so with Adam, Noah, Israel, and Rahab. We have, like them, to *hear* it, to receive by faith these tidings of it. We cannot get it by working. We dare not count on it by deserving. It is God's salvation, "prepared," as we read, by Him. (Luke ii. 28-32.) It is counselled, wrought out, revealed by Himself. We have but to gaze and to listen; to be debtors to the provisions of divine grace for the most ruined and wretched condition in which creature sin and misery can find themselves. And as salvation has thus been *provided* by God, so is it sent forth by Him. It has been prepared by Him in the face of all people, and now is it published there. (See Luke ii, 31; Acts xxviii, 28.)

Unsaved reader, will you have it?

"AND THEN?"

AN EXTRACT.

A YOUNG man came to an aged professor of a distinguished Continental University, with a face beaming with delight, and informed him that the long and fondly cherished desire of his heart was at length fulfilled—his parents having given their consent to his studying the profession of the law. As the University presided over by his friend was a distinguished one, he had repaired to its law school, and was resolved to spare no labour or expense in getting through his studies as quickly and ably as possible. In this strain he continued for some time; and when he paused, the old man, who had been listening to him with great patience and kindness, gently said, "Well, and when you have finished your career of study, what do you mean to do then?" "Then I shall take my degree," answered the young man. "And then?" asked his venerable friend, "And then," continued the youth, "I shall have a number of difficult and knotty cases to manage; shall attract notice by my eloquence, and wit, and acuteness, and win a great reputation." "And then?" repeated the holy man. "And then!" replied the youth, "why then there cannot be a question, I shall be promoted to some high office in the state, and I shall become rich." "And then?" "And then," pursued the young lawyer, "then I shall live comfortably and

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honourably in wealth and respect, and look forward to a quiet and happy old age.” “And then?” repeated the old man. “And then,” said the youth, “and then—and then—and then I shall die.” Here his venerable listener lifted up his voice and again asked with solemnity and emphasis, “And *then?*” Whereupon the aspiring student made no answer, but cast down his head, and in silence and thoughtfulness retired. The last “*And then*” had pierced his heart like a sword—had darted like a flash of lightning into his soul, and he could not dislodge the impression. The result was, the entire change of his mind and course of his life. Abandoning the study of law, he expended the remainder of his days in the labours of a minister of Christ.



The spectres of long buried hours
 Throng round me—thick and fast,
 The “might have been” of life is lost
 In the unreturning past.

How surely do these lines apply to a waster of life! Insupportably melancholy would they be if there were not the great Redeemer to look to. But humbled in his retrospect as the spendthrift of life must be,—if he come to Christ all will be well; well for him in eternity, well for ever and ever. Well, according to God; and well according to the thoughts of the renewed hearts of saints. Himself, too, shall be able to say, even in time, “It is well!”

DEATH.

"All they that hate me love death."—(Prov. 8, 36.)

"The wages of sin is death."—(Rom. 6, 23.)

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."—(Rom. v. 12.)

"By man came death." (1 Cor. xv. 21.)

"Haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things. Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."—(Rom. 1, 30-32.)

"I am the resurrection and the life."—(John 11, 25.)

LIFE.

"Thus saith the Lord; behold, I set before you the way of life."—(Jer. 21, 8.)

"The gift of God is eternal life."—(Rom. 6, 23.)

"This life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."—(1 John 5-11-12.)

"In Him was life."—(John 1, 4.)

"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 condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5, 24.)