

THE SOWER.

“BEYOND THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE SUN.”

ACTS XXII, 11.

I WAS journeying in the noontide,
When His light shone o'er my road;
And I saw Him in that glory—
Saw Him—Jesus, Son of God.
All around, in noonday splendour,
Earthly scenes lay fair and bright;
But my eyes no more behold them
For the glory of that light.

I have seen the face of Jesus—
Tell me not of aught beside;
I have heard the voice of Jesus—
All my soul is satisfied.
In the radiance of the glory
First I saw His blessed face,
And for ever shall that glory
Be my home, my dwelling place.

Sinners, it was not to angels
All this wondrous love was given,
But to one who scorned, despised Him,
Scorned and hated Christ in heaven.
From the lowest depths of darkness
To His city's radiant height,
Thus in me He told the measure
Of His love and His delight.

THE GOSPEL OF OUR SALVATION.

THE gospel, by which we are saved, is that, "Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the scriptures." There is nothing about realization here. No doubt, it is happy to realize. It is a very happy thing for one, who was just on the point of being drowned, to realize himself in a life-boat; but, clearly he is saved by the boat and not by his realization. So it is with the sinner that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is saved by death and resurrection. Is it because he realizes it? No, but because God says it. It is "*according to the scriptures.*" Christ died and rose again; and, on that ground, God pronounces him clean.

"No condemnation, O, my soul!
'Tis God that speaks the word."

This gives immense peace to the soul. I have to do with God's plain record, which nothing can ever shake. That record has reference to God's own work. It is He Himself, who has wrought all that was needful, in order to my being pronounced clean in His sight. My pardon no more depends upon my realization than upon any "works of righteousness that I have done," and it no more depends upon my works of righteousness than it does upon my crimes. In a word it depends exclusively upon the death and resurrection of Christ. How do I know it? God tells me. It is "according to the scriptures."

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I CANNOT REPENT.

I WAS urged one day to go at once to see a young man who was seriously ill ; when I asked, in what state of soul he was, I was told that : " He is morose, difficult of approach, and opposed to all religious conversation."

I went to the sick man, and after having asked about his health I spoke to him of Christ and of salvation. He rudely interrupted me, saying :

" Don't torment me before the time."

Seeing my astonishment he added :

" It is not through enmity I am speaking thus ; but through despair—I have tried religion, and it led to nothing, and now I ask you to let me rest."

As I begged him to explain himself more clearly, he continued :

" At the commencement of my illness a friend came to see me and exhorted me to repent—I asked him what it was to repent, and he replied : ' Repentance is regret for having sinned ; love for God, and a sincere desire to serve Him.' And when I begged him to tell me how I could have this repentance, he told me that it was the gift of God, and that I should ask Him for it. I followed his advice diligently, but not being in the habit of praying I did not know how to set about doing it—I got a book of prayers, and several times a day I read, and repeated, what I found therein—when I became exhausted, my friend continued praying, and often I fell asleep with fatigue while listening to him."

“And what were you asking all this time?” I said to him.

“That God would have compassion on me, that He would grant me repentance and faith, and that He would pardon my sins,” he replied. “My spiritual adviser praised me for my zeal, and assured me that God would certainly answer my prayer. I became so much accustomed to these spiritual exercises, and to pious language, that I really believed the Lord had heard me, and that I was a converted man. But my illusion was very soon dispelled. For about a week I felt much improved in health and believed I was going to get well. But alas, with this hope all my former dispositions revived. I read with deep interest a journal devoted to hunting, which was taken at the house, while the book of prayer and the bible, only disgusted me. This discovery completely discouraged me. All is lost I said, and I am still altogether unconverted, as far as ever from repentance. If I should recover I would certainly take up my old habits of life—so I resolved I would not pray any more as it did no good. Now I divert my mind as well as I can, and banish all thoughts of the future which is so dark before me. This is why I interrupted you—I do not wish to hear anything more about repentance, what good is it? I cannot repent.”

I listened to the end of this sorrowful confession, then I said quietly; “My friend, you are mistaken, I did not come to speak to you about repentance.”

“Not speak to me about repentance?” he said with astonishment, “what about then?”

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"I wish to speak to you of the infinite love of God for sinners, and of His mercy towards them."

"Yes," he replied impatiently, "of His love for believers, of His mercy towards those who repent, is it not?" I have already told you that I am not of that happy class," he added with irony.

"You do not understand me," I replied. "I speak of the love of God towards the *unrighteous*, and of His mercy for *sinners*."

"You would not however say that God loves *such as I am*?"

"Yes, that is just what I say," I replied, seriously and impressively. "Our Lord Jesus Christ has said; 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,' and it is that world of which it is written that it lieth in wickedness, (Jno. iii. 16; 1 Jno. v. 19). The apostle Paul also says; 'God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us' (Rom. v. 8). Since, then, you belong to this world which lies in wickedness, and that you are a sinner, you are one of those whom God loves."

He regarded me with surprise and said; "If such is the mercy of God, tell me how I can obtain pardon."

"The love which pardons our sins" I replied, "is manifested in the cross of Christ, who hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust," (1 Pet. iii. 18). "Christ died for the ungodly, while we were yet sinners He died for us," (Rom. v. 6-8). The message concerning the death of Christ is announced

to the sinner in order that he may believe and repent. It is pardon through the blood of Jesus. It is the message of God to the sinner, it is to you that He now addresses it, based upon the death of the Redeemer, the message of grace and pardon is proclaimed in all the world, it is announced to all, you have only to accept it for yourself and thereby enjoy the forgiveness of sins."

As I spoke to him of the salvation which is in Christ, I saw that he listened with increasing interest. At length he said.

"I had always thought that God could not love me until I became better, and that is the reason I so earnestly desired to repent."

"And there is just where you have deceived yourself," I replied "God loves you now, and the cross of Christ shows you how much He loves you—let this thought of the love of God fill your heart, and my visit will not have been fruitless—thereupon I left him. When I came to see him again it was easy to resume conversation on the subject he had at first so resisted.

"What you said to me has constantly occupied my mind," were the words with which he received me when I entered his room. "When I look at the cross my soul is enlightened, but there are many things I cannot understand; you say that God loves us as we are. Does not this make repentance useless?"

"No," I replied, "Repentance is turning to God. You know the parable of the prodigal son—If any one had said to him when he was feeding the swine,

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that his father loved him, and sighed after him, do you think he would have replied; 'Very well, in that case, I do not need to return to him?'"

"Certainly not, this message on the contrary would have pressed his return to his father."

"Very well, that ought also to be your case. The assurance of the love of God, as it is presented in the scripture, should encourage you to return to Him with all your heart, and as the hymn says."

"Just as I am—without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come."

With emotion the invalid asked; "What does it mean to come to the Lord?" "That is to say, to look to Him with desire and confidence, to believe in Him who died for us upon the cross according to the counsel of God. If you truly believe what God has done for you at the cross, you will find peace."

"But what is it to believe?" replied the young man.

"The bible says, 'He that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar,' now His word says that He loves us; that for us He has given His Son to judgment and to death; that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. When then you believe God (not only that you believe in God) then all that, is sure and certain for your heart,

"Is that all?" asked the sick one anxiously.

"Yes, that is all!"

He appeared very much surprised at my reply. After a time, he said :

"I always thought that faith was a meritorious work, and that as long as I did not possess it, God could not love me."

"You have deceived yourself," I said. "Trust simply in what God in His free mercy has done for you by Jesus Christ His Son. It is only thus that you can enjoy salvation and peace."

He remained a moment in deep thought, then he said. "How is it then that any one can be lost?"

"You will find your answer in these sorrowful words of the Lord. '*Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*'" (Jno. v. 40). Men do not turn to Him, they go on in their hatred and indifference to God, and suffer the consequences; they do not seek the grace of God, they despise and reject it, and so perish without remedy. The heart which turns to Christ, whom God in His love for us has delivered up, and upon whom, in His perfect righteousness, He has made the punishment fall which was our due, finds in Him peace and pardon—It is by faith in the Son of God that we are saved."

This terminated our second conversation.

Some days later I received a pressing message asking me to come and see the sick man—I feared that it was on account of his approaching death that they had sent for me, but he received me with a face beaming with happiness.

"I know for a certainty now, he cried on seeing me that God has given me repentance unto salvation. Last night I could not sleep and thinking of all that you had said of the love of God as shown in

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what He has done for me, my heart was melted before Him and I was able to believe. Oh how much I hate my past life which has been spent walking in sin and black ingratitude. And whilst all this time God has loved me, I have continued so many years in blindness, hating Him and trampling under foot His salvation. Last night I poured out all my heart before Him, confessing that all my life had been passed in sin and far from Him. I believe, with entire assurance, that however great has been my culpability the love of God and the work of Christ, are still greater; it is thus that I have found peace of conscience, and that I am happy, very happy in my heart—I weep as I think of all my sins in which I have lived, I am most unworthy and cannot sufficiently thank God that He has given His Son for me, but now I understand that there was no other way of salvation for me.”

It was a great joy to me to see the sick young man so happy in the enjoyment of the love of God. He had found peace in believing in the great salvation which God has prepared for lost and guilty sinners—Being justified by faith, he had peace with God (Rom. v. 1). He was able to say with Ephraim; “Surely after that I was turned, I repented” (Jer. xxxi, 19). Thus after having found rest with Jesus he deplored more and more that so late, he had known and believed the love of God, and in the presence of this great love which had broken up his icy heart and set him free, he realized more and more how far he had been from God and how great his iniquity had been.

But he knew also that the blood of Christ had washed away all his sins and that God would remember them no more forever (Heb. x. 17).

He had now the repentance to which he had been before exhorted, and to which through all his exercises, and all his efforts, he had been unable to attain; exercises and efforts which had so exhausted him, that he resolved to banish from his mind all thought of God and of eternity. He had this repentance unto salvation, having found peace in the knowledge of the love of God and of His great salvation.

In the joy of this profound and assured peace he passed the remainder of his days of suffering. His soul triumphant through faith, passed away to be with Jesus, there with all the redeemed, and without a cloud to intervene, to behold in Him the love of God, and to celebrate His praises in an unending song.

OH! what a spectacle will the glorious, and triumphant return of Christ present, so surely promised, and so near! What will be the triumphant shouts of the angels! What will be the glory of the risen saints? Their reign will commence, the new Jerusalem will arise. Then will come the final scene — then will be set the great throne of judgment to the confusion of those who have mocked at it, and set it at nought.

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THE BLIND WOMAN OF B,----OR SINS
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TO scoffers, sceptics, and infidels ; to the moralist, formalist and false professor ; to weary wayward wandering ones ; to poor lost sinners for whom Christ died ; to a sin stricken world that has rejected God come in grace, and cast out His beloved Son ; these lines are penned—the following incident is related that God may be glorified and precious souls saved.

It was several years ago, during the month of November, that what I am about to relate took place. It was on one of those lovely autumnal days seldom seen at this late period of the year ; a day when all nature seemed aglow with joy and gladness as though for the last time she had gathered together her wasted energies to bid a final farewell to the parting season. The warm and cheering rays of God's glad sunlight shone with unusual brightness on all beneath it. The sparkling brooklet, the dry and faded leaf alike seemed cheered and gladdened. Everything spoke of God's goodness and love, it was so bright and beautiful. Now it was on such a day as this, that the writer entered the hot steamy kitchen of a poor old blind woman, and asked for some water. His request was granted. Discovering her to be blind he remarked : " You are like the man in the 9th of John, but God opened his eyes ; are your eyes opened ? Are you saved ? *Sins all gone ?*" And now reader what was her reply ; what was the reply of this poor old

blind woman, shut up in this hot steamy kitchen ; her eyesight gone ; all that was beautiful in nature shut out forever ? One might well have expected naught but murmuring and discontent at her pitiable condition ; but it was far otherwise ; her answer came out of a full heart. " Yes thank God they are"—but was this all ? far from it, for as she replied, from those old sightless eyes, tears of joy were seen to course down her withered cheeks. Yes, reader, tears of joy, as her face lit up with a heavenly smile, she continued to speak of the One whom by grace for years she had known. Ah ! sceptic, scoffer, or infidel, I ask thee what produced those tears ? Why was she so affected ? Why did tears come from those old sightless eyes, as a *stranger* whom she could not see, whose voice she had never before heard, asked these simple questions. The answer is plain, her heart was touched *at once*. She thinks of the Man on the middle tree ; Jesus her Lord, the One who died on Calvary's cross, Jesus, the Son of God ; Jesus, Lord Jesus ; *this, and this alone* solves the difficulty ; this, and this alone is the key to it all. O, poor empty christless professor, thou hast never so shed tears ; thy heart has never so been moved ; and yet thou hast put on the garb of profession. And what of the poor infidel ? or be thou who thou may, Christ is coming, wake up ! wake up ! poor lost one, ere it be too late. And what a heart has the Lord Jesus Christ : large enough to take in all, and by His grace this poor woman found it out, yes, " His blood can make the foulest clean, His blood atones for me."

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NO TIME TO BE LOST.

“**H**E HAS HAD TIME FOR EVERYTHING.” Such were the few but serious words of a Christian at the funeral of one who had died suddenly.

He had reached the full limit of human life and consequently had had more than one opportunity to settle the most important of all questions affecting humanity.

He had had plenty of time to eat and drink, to buy and sell, to amuse himself and to live in the midst of abundance ; yes for all that and much more. He had had time to look into the future and to ask himself how he stood as to eternity. He had had time to repent, to believe, to be pardoned, to become a child of God, and to live for His glory. But had he done all these things ?

Reader, I am sure that you also have had the time for these questions, have you not ? I do not know your age but it is not necessary to be advanced in years to need salvation. No, it is a question which should be settled *immediately*. Every moment that passes makes it more serious and more pressing. Look the future in the face. If you are not saved, all is dark and full of uncertainty. You know that you have sinned, and do you not fear meeting God in your sins ?

Many have the thought that they will be converted before they die. They speak, to quiet their consciences, of the Master calling labourers for His vineyard at the eleventh hour—they would fain

amuse themselves during the ten preceding hours and they fancy that the few last moments will suffice to be occupied with their eternal salvation—What a terrible snare of the devil! what irrational reasoning!

There are two prime reasons which overturn this pretext for delaying conversion. The first is that in no place in scripture is mention made of the eleventh hour for salvation. It proclaims loudly a present salvation, and each of its proclamations imply that it must be *now* or *never*, and scripture cannot contradict itself.

In the passage to which reference is made it is workmen employed in the vineyard that is in view, and not sinners in their sins—It is a householder seeking workmen and not a Saviour seeking sinners (Matt. xx); and a sinful man, as such, cannot be a servant of God. The difference is of all importance.

In the second place, supposing that it is salvation that is in question, who can say that it is not *now* the eleventh hour of his life?

Besides, the fact is that no one had engaged these labourers—they had been all the day doing nothing—and note too that they accept the *first* offer. They do not hesitate a moment, who can say that they had time and time again refused the offer of salvation? Reader, is it not your case? And now coming back to what I said before, God presses souls to decide immediately; and frequently warns them of the consequence of delay. “Son remember that thou in *thy life time* receivedst thy good things * * * but *now* thou art tormented.”

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“Thy good things!” Reader, I beseech you, do not despise them; these appeals: these exhortations; these warnings; these proofs even; are intended to urge you to repentance. Will it soon be said to your soul in response to all that you can advance: “Remember?” Will it be that this remembrance, instead of recalling the moment when grace sought and found you; when you were washed in the blood of Christ; and made a child of God; instead of recalling how you had been sustained in the path here below, and conducted to glory; recall to you only your continued refusals; your coldness; your hardness of heart; in the face of all the mercy God has shown you? Oh what a retrospective view! What remorse will pierce the soul before such remembrances!

“I have had plenty of time, yes, plenty of time,” the agonized soul will say; well then make use of this time *now*. The moment which follows may be “too late.” It does not belong to you. Are you a sinner? Come to Christ. Are you a great sinner? Come to Christ—Are your sins like crimson and red like scarlet? Come to Christ; He is fully sufficient for all. But *come now*, yes now.

SIN is lawlessness.” (I Jno. iii. 4. R. v). “All unrighteousness is SIN.” (I Jno. v. 17). “A high look, and a proud heart * * issin.” (Prov. xxi. 4).

“The thought of foolishness is SIN.” (Prov. xxiv. 9).

“Whatsoever is not of faith is SIN.” (Rom. xiv. 23.)

To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is SIN.” (James iv. 17).

DEAR reader, you and I must pass out into eternity one day—will you let some passing straw hold you from Christ—can you lay your sins at the feet of any other? Will it comfort you in hell to remember that it was moral beauty you worshipped, gentleness for which you staked your soul? Will it ease your spirit when you see Christ in all His wondrous beauty as God and man, and know *whom* you rejected; *whose* love you cast aside; to see the childish image you clung to, instead of to the divine outstretched arm? He looks upon you *now*, a *risen Man*—the living Jesus—He calls you *now*. And as surely as you read these pages so surely will you one day stand face to face with Him. Will you not accept His love *now*? Will you not shelter beneath His blood and let it make you as safe as He Himself is." "Him that cometh *to Me* I will in *no wise* cast out." He may never call you again. His spirit may never strive with you again. Tomorrow you may be gone. "What shall it profit *you*" if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul."

AN unsaved person is one who is in his sins, in Adam, in the world, out of Christ on the road to the lake of fire, ready for it and deserving it.

A saved person is one who is not in his sins, out of Adam, not of the world, in Christ, on the road to glory, and ready for it, though utterly undeserving of it.

Reader, which are you?