

# THE SOWER.

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## FAITH.

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**F**AITH is a very simple thing  
Though little understood,  
It freesthe soul from death's dread sting  
By resting in the blood.

It looks not on the things around  
Nor on the things within,—  
It takes its flight to scenes above  
Beyond the sphere of sin.

It sees upon the throne of God  
A victim that was slain ;  
It rests its all on His shed blood  
And says " I'm born again."—

Faith is not what we feel or see—  
It is a simple trust  
In what the God of love has said  
Of Jesus as the Just.

What want I more to perfect bliss ?  
A body like His own  
Will perfect me for greater joys,  
Than angels round the throne.

The perfect One that died for me,  
Upon His Father's throne  
Presents our names before our God  
And pleads Himself alone.

## DELIVERED FROM THE POWER OF SATAN.

“**W**HEN a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.” (Luke xi. 21, 22).

One of Satan's captives was lying upon his death bed. He was eighty-one years of age, but as to his soul in great darkness. An expression of despair was stamped upon his pale and suffering face. My heart was deeply touched for him as I looked upon him.

“My poor friend,” I said to him, “you are very sick; are you ready for your removal to a heavenly home?”

In a deep, hoarse voice, he replied: “I am waiting to be soon called to go below, to hell.”

“What! although Jesus died for sinners?”

“Oh! not for me, not for me. There is no forgiveness for me. I am tormented day and night. The devil does not allow me a moment's rest, and as soon as I fall asleep I waken again with terror.”

“And why do you think there is no pardon for you?”

“Because I have sinned against the Holy Spirit, and the bible says that this sin cannot be pardoned, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.”

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“ In that you make a great mistake, because you do not understand the scriptures,” I said. “ The Lord Jesus addressed those words to the scribes and Pharisees, who, in their hatred against Him, attributed to the prince of the devils the miracles which He wrought. That is what we read in the gospel of Mark. See the third chapter.”

“ Yes, but it is said there is no place of repentance for him who has sinned *presumptuously*, and many times I have done so, once even after taking the sacrament, although I knew it was sin. I have sinned against the light which I had, against the knowledge of the truth ; I have crucified the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame, as it is said in the epistle to the Hebrews.”

“ It is quite possible that you have done so, but the word of God says : ‘ The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.’ ”

“ I know it, I know it ; but that word is not for me who has trodden under foot the blood of Christ.”

“ You may have done that and more, but now God wishes you to believe His word. He says : ‘ The blood of Jesus Christ His Son purifies from *all* sin.’ What God says, He says seriously.”

“ I know that God speaks seriously, and that is why there is neither pardon nor hope for me, for He says : “ It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.’ ”

"But why will you only apply scripture which condemns you? Surely you do not understand it. Listen to the invitation of the Lord Jesus, full of love: 'Whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' Come to Him, such as you are. Even murderers find pardon in Him."

"Ah! murder is nothing in comparison to *my sin*." And leaning towards me, he whispered in my ear the sin he was ashamed to mention in a louder voice.

"Yes," I said, "It is very bad, indeed, but God is a greater Saviour than you are a sinner. Do you not believe that He is able, and that He is willing to save you?"

"I believe that He is able, but I do not believe that He is willing to save me."

"Then you make God a liar?"

"No, no, for He says of those who are like me, 'it is impossible to renew them again to repentance.' And my heart is so hard. Oh! if I could only weep."

"The apostle," I continued, "speaks in these passages to Jews who had become Christians, and who were in danger of giving up christianity completely and of returning to judaism. That, however, is not your case. You could not give up Christ; quite the contrary. You know that He only can save you, and you would like to be acceptable to Him. But I must leave you. I hope to come again. If the enemy torments

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you meantime, repeat to him this verse: 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin.' And remember the Lord's words: 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'

"I will try. But do you really believe that the blood of Jesus was shed for me, and that it is sufficient to cleanse me from my sin?"

"Certainly; the blood of Jesus Christ is so precious in the eyes of God that you can count upon it for the pardon of your sins."

Some days later I was again by his bedside.

"No peace, no peace! he said, as he saw me. I have repeated to myself more than a hundred times the words which you quoted, but I am in as wretched a state as before. The enemy torments me continually. I have not a moment's rest."

Oh! my dear reader, what a cruel enemy Satan is! At first he incites his victim to sin, persuading him that the evil is not so great, that it is of no importance; then when the one is completely bound to his service, he says that the sin is too great to allow him to approach God, or to be pardoned by Him. Oh! avoid trifling with sin. Satan can lead a soul to despair, and so far as it depends upon himself, drag down to eternal condemnation all who serve him.

Lifting up my heart to God with deep emotion, I asked Him to show me how this poor soul might be delivered. I then said to the unhappy old man:

"Let me read you a history which will give you to see how God receives with love the poor sinner who comes to Him with true repentance. You do not realise the greatness of the love which is in the heart of God."

And verse after verse, I read to him all the history of the prodigal son, which is recounted in the 15th chapter of Luke's gospel.

The grace of God works by means of His word. My poor listener recognized himself, in the prodigal son who had left his father's house and had fallen into the grossest sins. He knew by experience what was meant by the "great famine," and what, coming to himself, meant.

"And have you not got a step farther," I asked him. "Is there not in your heart a great desire to return to God the Father. Can you not also say: 'I will arise and go to my father?'"

He hesitated a moment and then said:

"Yes, I believe that I can say it."

"Let us then go a little farther, and consider how the father acts towards the repentant son."

I read slowly: "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

I looked at him. It was apparent that every word had produced a profound impression upon him. Tears coursed down his cheeks. "Is it possible?" he cried. "SUCH LOVE!"

As soon as the heart of the poor captive was able to place its confidence in the love of God.

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the bond was broken, and the chains of Satan fell off.

With tears of joy, he cried, after I had prayed :

*“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name !”*

Satan continued for some time to make the most desperate assaults upon his former captive in order to plunge him in doubt and uncertainty. He passed thus many painful hours, but the Lord Himself consoled and sustained him. After some days of great distress and anguish of soul he had twice, the same dream. The Lord appeared before him and said : “Why will you not believe my word ?” That encouraged and relieved him.

I asked him : “Could you not believe without the dream ?” He replied :

“Truly I ought to have done so, but my agony and doubts were too great. I was again near to despair. Then the Lord had pity upon me.”

We know that the Lord can speak to people by dreams as we read in Job xxxiii ; yet it is ever humiliating when the heart is more touched by a dream than by the word of God ; nevertheless the heart of our old friend was at length settled, and only by the precious word of God.

Yes, dear reader, in Jesus there is perfect salvation. By Him God releases the prisoners so that they can praise Him with joy and lightness of heart.

## IN THE GYPSY'S TENT.

I want to tell of the marvellous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that good Shepherd who seeks and saves lost sheep, in the simple history of one who became a happy object of that grace.

George W—— was the son of a pious mother. From his childhood she had urged him to come to the Saviour, but neither her exhortations nor those of his Sunday school teacher, who took a deep interest in her young scholar, had any effect upon his heart. George grew up into manhood, and, rejecting all restraint, plunged into an excess of evil ways and finally abandoned his paternal home in order to give himself up to a life of dissipation. His poor mother however, did not cease to pray for him, but she did not live to see the answer of her prayer on earth; she died with these words on her lips: "O Lord save George!"

George learned without apparent emotion of the death of his mother. He led a wandering life, roaming from place to place, gambling and drinking; sometimes getting work when he was on the point of starvation, only to squander his earnings in drink and at the gaming table. One day as he was on tramp at the end of his resources, without a friend to help him, exhausted by fatigue and hunger, he suddenly felt very ill. Not able to drag himself farther, he lay down under a hedge to die, as he supposed. We will let him recount the remainder of his history in his own words.

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I lay there all night, a prey to a burning fever. I would have given the world for a drop of water, but I was too weak to seek for it. I fully believed I was going to die, and I knew I had been a very wicked wretch. I tried to recall what my Sunday school teacher had taught me but my brain was on fire and my thoughts confused; I could think of nothing connectedly, only I felt as though God was holding me over the fire, whilst I was lying under the hedge. The sins of my past life were in review before me like a black army. Many things which I had not thought so very bad, now appeared to me in all their hideousness; I saw myself as the vilest of sinners, fit only for hell.

Early next morning some Gypsies passed along the road; seeing me, one of them asked what I was doing there; I had hardly strength enough left to say, I am dying.

"Poor chap! Let us see what we can do for him", said one of them to his companion; so they brought me to their tent where they cared for me as though I had been their brother.

They left a young girl by me to bathe my feverish burning head. One day when I was half asleep I seemed to hear my mother's voice singing in a low tone to lull me to sleep. I opened my eyes to see that it was my little nurse who was singing; when she perceived that I was awake she stopped.

"Will you continue," I said to her, "sing that again please, I think I have heard it before."

Then she sang, and O! how sweet it was to hear her:

"His blood has power to cleanse the blackest sin,

The vilest sinner may be washed therein,

And by His grace be cleansed and purified—

All through the love of Him, for me, that died."

"Yes," I said, "it is the same my mother used to sing to me; now she is happy above, but I shall never see her again."

"Why?" said the young Gypsy, "you will go to heaven if you will only come to Jesus."

"No, no child, I have been much too wicked ever to come to Him."

"But I am sure you can, for the hymn says: The vilest sinners may be washed therein, does not that say the worst?"

"Yes, yes, but it is too good to be true for me, for I have known the good and have done the evil. It is impossible; I am lost!"

"Listen to what is written in the New Testament which a lady has given me. Jesus said: I am come to seek and to save that which is lost. Is that not you?"

"Yes, yes, it is indeed me."

"And Jesus says again: I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

"Bless God for that word! Yes I see it now—I remember what my dear mother and my

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Sunday school teacher taught me, that I may take Him for my Saviour, and that He will take away all my sins, so that I may be wholly His."

This was George's story—there was at that hour joy in heaven as well as under the Gypsy's tent. God who is faithful and rich in grace had heard the prayer of George's mother. It was He who had brought the Gipsies by that road near to the poor dying sinner, and who had inclined their hearts to succour him. But is it not still more wonderful that under their tent should be found a young messenger of the glad tidings, and that she should be set to attend him ?

George had afterwards more than one struggle to endure, but he cried to the Lord, and besought Him to deliver him, and again the young Gypsy girl was sent to his help, reading to him these words: "According to your faith be it unto you," (Matt. ix, 29) and, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark ix, 23), and his prayer was heard and answered.

His subsequent life showed the reality of his conversion. His great desire was, to bring sinners to the Saviour, and if any convicted sinner would say to him, "I am too bad to be saved," his reply would be, "you are not half as bad as I was, and if Jesus was able to save George W—— there is no one He cannot save."

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (I Tim. i, 15).

## FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

The sinner of the city forgiven. (Luke vii).

**I**N this scripture we have a case of conscious guilt, where the sense of need had drawn a wretched creature to the "Friend of sinners." And here too we find the Pharisees, with the lawyers, and their wise reasonings. They had rejected John the Baptist, and now they reject Jesus. They said John the Baptist had a devil, and that Jesus was "a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" (Luke vii., 29-34). This was the wisdom of men which is foolishness with God (1 Cor. i., 20). These worldly-wise reasoners were not the children of Wisdom. "But Wisdom is justified of all her children," and in this sinner of the city we have an exemplification of this. She was a true child of Wisdom, and showed herself wise where Pharisees and lawyers exposed their own folly.

The scene is laid in a Pharisee's house, where Jesus is invited to dine. Jesus reclines at the table, with His feet on the couch. A woman enters with an alabaster box of ointment, and stands at Jesus' feet, behind Him, weeping. She washes His feet with tears, wipes them with the hairs of her head, kisses His feet, and anoints them with ointment. What does it all mean? What has broken open the fountains of that heart? Why does she rain hot tears on those feet, and wash them—a courtesy the Pharisee

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had forgotten, or neglected? Why does she reverently kiss them, and anoint them with the ointment? Ah! she is a sinner, and she has found the sinner's friend. How she came to know Him we are not told, but in some way, through His words, or through His acts, faith had made the discovery. He was *her* Friend. Vile, wretched, polluted, detested and shunned by Pharisee and scribe, without friend or helper in the world, she had discovered a Friend, an almighty and gracious Friend, in the despised Jesus. Had He not said, when the unbelief of the Jews was manifest, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi., 37). Here was a poor wretched sinner, without a friend among men, drawn by a sense of her own desperate need, drawn indeed into the presence of infinite holiness, but drawn by infinite love; and vile as she was He would not turn her away; nay, He would cleanse her, and He would go to the cross to do it, because she was one given by His Father, when Pharisees and scribes, would not, and could not, come, because of unbelief. Ah! yes, she had found a Friend, a Friend in need, a Friend indeed. It was this discovery of faith, that opened her heart, and made her weep, and with willing hands break the alabaster box.

And now, in the presence of her judges, will He allow that faith to pass unnoticed and unacknowledged? Far be it from Him to do this.

No, He rebukes the proud Pharisee, who was judging the woman in selfrighteousness, and accredits the faith of which her tears and kisses and her alabaster box were the proof. Her sins were "many," and perhaps she could not have said they were forgiven, but she could trust the heart of Jesus. She could have said: "Though I am utterly vile, and He infinitely holy, yet He has not repelled me; He has not said, as the Pharisees, stand aside for I am holier than thou. Though He be "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners; yet I have read in Him a heart that will not turn the vilest away who come to Him in their need. I can trust Him." And knowing the greatness of the burden she had brought to Him--"her sins which were many"—and for which the discovery of faith could trust Him, "she loved much." And this love of hers, begotten by love immeasurably greater in Him, manifested itself, lavishly, as she told it out at His feet in the Pharisees' house. And Jesus would have them know the grace that had answered this woman's faith, and openly declares to them, "Her sins, which were many, are forgiven." Nor was it enough that He should rebuke the reasonings of selfrighteousness; He will also speak the word to *her*, that will send her away with a glad heart, a heart relieved of its heavy burden, and filled with the "peace" which He alone could give. "And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven." And if this blessed

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utterance calls forth the sneer of unbelief, He only adds to the woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Blessed Saviour! happy sinner saved by grace!

And did not this woman know *now* that her sins were forgiven? If she had trusted the Pharisees, she would not have known, for she had heard their sneering question, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" But she had a more sure resting place for faith than words of Pharisees or doctors of the law. Her faith had read the heart of Jesus, and the heart of God in Him, and she had heard His own words. The person and the words of Jesus, were the place of sure rest for her soul. And if the unbelieving doctors of the law, or even the devil himself, had tried to make her doubt, she could have said, "I *know*, for I heard Him say to me: 'Thy sins are forgiven.' I had read his heart before, and I trusted Him, but now I have His own words, so plain that a little child could understand. Yes, my sins *are* forgiven, for *He said it.*"

And can you, reader, say *your* sins are forgiven? Remember, it is the same Jesus still. His heart is just the same. He still refuses none who come, but receives them all as the gift of His Father. Can you trust Him? Do you believe? Then be assured, His words to the woman are His words to you, "Thy sins are forgiven." You may not understand why, or how this can be. Neither did the woman; but

she believed Him just the same. She had learned that He was the sinner's Friend. And have not you? She trusted Him, and he gave assurance to her faith, by unmistakable words, that her sins were forgiven! And why not to you? Are you a sinner? He is the Friend of such. Trust Him. Believe, and know the blessedness of sins forgiven.

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**H**OW awful the fate of the Christ rejectors will be, when in the presence of those eyes as a flame of fire; that holy and unchanging judgment; and in the hearing of that voice which will shake heaven and earth, they will be condemned to endure the wrath of God forever; shut up in the gloomy caverns of the damned where mercy never comes, wherein no ray of hope ever enters, but where the gnawings of remorse, and the unquenchable flames, call forth from the unhappy objects of divine wrath a response of this awful character: weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Oh! God grant that the reader's voice be not one of those that comes up from that pit of despair.

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“**B**EHOLD, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” (Rev. xxii. 12, 14.)