

# THE SOWER.

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## I HEARD THE VOICE OF JESUS SAY,

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I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Come unto me and rest ;  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
Thy head upon my breast."  
I came to Jesus, as I was,  
Weary, and worn, and sad ;  
I found in Him a resting place,  
And He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Behold, I freely give  
The living water ; thirsty one,  
Stoop down, and drink, and live."  
I came to Jesus, and I drank  
Of that life-giving stream ;  
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
And now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"I am this dark world's light :  
Look unto me, thy morn shall rise,  
And all thy day be bright."  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
In Him my Star, my Sun ;  
And in that light of life I'll walk  
Till travelling days are done.

## SAVED BY GRACE.

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“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that BELIEVETH.” (Rom. x., 2, 3, 4).

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I HAVE been one of the most self righteous men that ever lived. For years I have groaned under my folly, expecting to find peace by regulating my life according to the word of God. I could not but believe the Bible true, which told so plainly the secret evils of my heart. So I sought carefully for all the commandments of the new Testament, but I found no commandments as I understood the word. Oh! yes, I read, “He that hateth his brother is a murderer,” or, “For every idle word which men speak they shall be brought into judgment,” and others of the same character, but they terrified me. I sought quickly to forget them. I read also, “Seek not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink,” but it did not seem to be for me; my daily labour brought in abundantly. I read also, “Sell what ye have, and give to the poor,” and then I wished, “Oh! that I were only rich, that I might sacrifice all.”

Then I found baptism and the Lord’s Supper; and in my anxiety to do everything, I took them for commandments. But, after doing all, and living an irreproachable church-life, I got no settled peace. The “rejoice evermore” of the Bible was a mockery to me.

When I was baptized, I expected some mysterious change, but there was none. I wept at the Lord's table; but there was no peace. I prayed in secret and in public, often so earnestly that others thought me mighty in prayer; but yet there was no peace. "O Lord!" I cried in my agony, "why hast thou not been plain in Thy word, that I might know exactly what to do? I would run and do it even at the peril of my life." I now visited the sick, and spent much time in reading the word of God and still more time in prayer. I preached too—yes, dear reader, I preached—I pretended to be a bearer of glad tidings, while my own heart writhed in agony. What did I preach? What others had preached to me: "Do thy best, give the glory to God; be a valiant soldier of Jesus Christ, and then He will save thee." But no peace! no peace!! In spite of all this supposed duty fulfilled, there was no peace!!!

One day I called on a sick man, and quickly introduced the subject of religion, as that was my object in calling. "Ah, sir," he said, "they used to tell me to do my best, and I tried and tried, until I found there was no best to be reached. When I examined myself, I found I was still the same old sinner. Then I watched my instructors, to see if I could detect in them what I found in myself and they failed so visibly to live up to what they taught and professed, that I set them all down as hypocrites, and turned infidel. But here, read this;" and he passed to me a Testament, open at Romans iii. I had

often read it before; but now the declaration, "There is none righteous—no not one," was strangely solemn to me. I read on: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall be no flesh justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. . . . Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." And as I read, the Holy Ghost opened my blinded heart, and I beheld it all. Then and there, in that log cabin, I got what Cornelius got when Peter told him that remission of sins was by believing in Jesus. (Acts x., 43). But, oh, the shameful pride of the natural heart! I felt like breaking forth in "Glory! glory! to the Son, who has met all the requirements of justice against me, and has given me eternal life by simply believing that 'it is finished!'" Yet I stifled it. What! I, who had been a church member for years, and a good one too, I, acknowledge that I was then only brought to the knowledge of the truth! It was too humiliating; it is not so now. Jesus, the mighty Saviour, is also a sweet and meek teacher; and when we get acquainted with Him we learn the sweetness of hiding our poor mean self, and showing Him only.

And you dear reader, where are you? Are you praying, too? Are you seeking after the commandments to do them? Are you proposing to make Jesus your model before you know Him as your Saviour, your peace, your righteousness, your sanctification your all! You may try and try again; but at last you will look back and say with me, "What a bottomless pit this doing is!"

But I have a brother whom I loved as my own soul. My soul went after him. My treasure was too great to be hoarded. I wrote to him, and told him that I had been blind, but now I saw. I told him of that Man that is called Jesus, of the work which He finished on the cross, and of the wonderful results of simply believing on Him. He replied "that he was in great distress sometimes, and did not know whom to believe. One said, Do this; another said, Do that; and all seemed earnest. It was very puzzling." I blessed God for this, for it showed that the Holy Ghost was dealing with his soul.

One day he wrote, "All you tell me is true. I have compared it with the word. One thing only I cannot understand. You say, 'it is useless to try to better that which cannot be bettered,' and add, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh.' Surely you do not mean to say we must not strive to improve ourselves, else how could the Lord have said, 'Except your righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven?'"

I prayed to the Lord that He would guide me in my answer, and thought of the joy of being made the instrument in bringing my dear brother to Jesus. I then replied, "Yes, that is just what I meant to say. I meant that it is needless, and even folly, to strive to better what cannot be bettered. 'Ye must be BORN AGAIN.' We are completely lost, without hope, desperately wicked. Nor does the Lord anywhere promise, as so many pretend, the strength

needed to do anything towards our own salvation ; and you have no right to pray for it. You certainly have never understood the words, ' For by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight,' or you could not expect ever to accomplish more in that way than the Scribes and Pharisees. The Lord takes them for examples because they were the leaders of the people. You will never be able to accomplish more in that way than they did, pray and strive as you may. Your only hope is in what another, even Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has done for us. This is humiliating, but there is no other way. ' He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.' This is the testimony of the whole word. Believe, and you are Saved."

A few days after I received his answer. " Give glory to God, my beloved brother (doubly so now). I see ! I see !! Jesus, and Jesus *alone*, saves me. He is now my all. Since yesterday, it seems, I understand more than half the word, which before was all darkness. I received your letter yesterday morning, and, as usual, I read it over and over. I read the passages you mentioned, and they were there. I could not deny it. But I was miserable. I went to my task heartlessly and insensible. Towards evening a gleam of hope reached me. I fell on my knees and prayed, and while there the whole redemption which is through Christ Jesus was opened to me. I desired to see and feel it with such force that my heart might leap for joy, but I only got a deep, solemn, strange

peace within. My wonder is that in view of such a salvation I can remain so calm. I almost tremble lest I should lose such a precious rest."

Yes, glory to Thee, O my God! Glory to Thee for such a salvation. Glory be to Thy name for ever that, in Jesus, my brother also is safe. We are safe for evermore!

Dear reader, are you safe? Some will say, "I think so," when they have undergone some strong emotion or excitement. But can you say "Yes" in the depth of your soul — a quiet, happy "Yes, in the presence of Him who has seen you from your first breath, and has known your most secret thoughts, because you know that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin? Alas! how many there are who, in face of the repeated declarations of God's word that they are not only "condemned already," but are "dead in sins," go about to establish their own righteousness. Conscious that they cannot render a perfect obedience even according to their own estimate of it, they make up a code of their own and call it their duty. And in doing what they call their duty they are smoothly, religiously sliding to hell. Reader, have you ceased from your own works and taken the place of "him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly?" Then also do you assuredly know "the blessedness of the man unto whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works."

## THEY SLEPT AWAY THEIR OPPORTUNITY

A FEW weeks ago there occurred a disaster to a yacht with two men upon it, off Long Point, in Lake Erie, which illustrates in a very striking way, the danger of letting the opportunity slip, and reminds us of that word: I Thess. v, 6th verse, "*Let us not sleep as do others.*" They had sailed over to the fishing grounds off Long Point the evening before, and having cast anchor (which was secured by only a slight cord) they pitched a tent upon the deck of the yacht, and went to sleep intending to be up early next morning and enjoy the fine fishing there.

During the night a very severe storm arose, and in the morning the keeper of the light house at Long Point saw that the wind which was blowing off shore had broken the cord by which they had been anchored, and that they were drifting out into the open lake, which at the distance of a few miles from shore was lashed into fury by the severity of the storm. As he looked at the yacht with the tent still standing upon its deck, drifting out to what was sure death to the men on board, he wondered that they could sleep as long as they did, but after they had drifted out several miles he saw them through his glass, at last take down the tent, and hoist sail making every effort possible to reach the shore, but alas! it was too late, and although they made several tacks in the endeavour to reach land it became evident they could not



make headway against the storm, but were being driven further and further out to sea. Having at last given up hope of reaching the shore, they were seen to turn the yacht before the wind hoping no doubt to ride out the storm, but no boat of that size could live in such a sea, and shortly after turning they were struck by a great wave, and disappeared.

The yacht like most boats of its kind had been loaded with stone as ballast until its buoyancy was overcome, and when the wave filled it with water it went to the bottom and the two men with it.

Dear unsaved reader there are several points in this little incident which illustrates your position. The first is they made a mistake in their anchor. It was not secure, and trusting to it they were lost. What is your anchor? Is it your good works? "All our righteousnesses (not to speak of our wickedness) are as filthy rags." Christ is *our* righteousness.

Are you saying like so many that you never did anything very bad? listen to the word which says "cursed is *every one* that *continueth* not in *all* things which are written in the book of the law to do them." You have not *continued* in all things, and are therefore under God's curse. Christ became a curse in order to deliver them who were under the curse. Whatever your anchor may be if it is not Christ and Him alone, you too will be lost. Turn to Heb. vi, 19. "which hope (hope in Christ) we have as an anchor of the soul, both *sure* and *steadfast*."

The next mistake was they were asleep during the time when they had an opportunity to be saved, and every moment was *so precious*, which they by being asleep were allowing to pass for ever. Read the fifth chapter of 1st Thess. and the third chapter of 2nd Peter, and the Revelation from the sixth to the end of the twentieth chapter. And I trust you may be awakened, and led to cry "what must I do to be saved."

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And now dear reader, how is it with your own soul? Have you trusted Christ? Have you the assurance that your sins are taken away? That you are saved from the law of sin and death? The sure word of the Lord says; All that believe are justified from all things, (Acts xiii, 39), and he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. (I John v, 10). Thus we see every true believer is saved and knows it, as we read; The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (Romans viii, 16). And if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. (Rom. viii, 9). If you are still unsaved there is no need that you should spend so much time in trying to gain salvation by your works and prayers. God says that you cannot do anything to please him, (Rom. viii, 8; Heb. xi, 6). Your heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. xvii, 9). Every imagination of it is only evil continually. (Gen. vi, 5). But the moment a poor lost, guilty, undone sinner, believes in Him, that moment he is saved, as we read; He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. (John iii, 36).

## "WHEN WE WERE ENEMIES."

WHAT a thought! Not merely powerless, godless, sinful; but actually hostile—in a state of positive enmity against God.

Nothing can possibly exceed this. To be the enemy of God gives the most appalling idea we can possibly have of a sinner's state. And yet such is the actual condition of the unconverted reader of these lines. An enemy of God. Amiable, it may be, polite, attractive, refined, cultivated, educated, moral, and even outwardly religious. May occupy the very-highest platform of religious profession—be a church member—a regular communicant—a worker in the vineyard—a Sunday school teacher—a preacher—a minister, and all the while an enemy of God.

How awful the thought! Oh! dear reader, do pause and consider, I beseech thee. Give this solemn question your undivided attention, just now. Do not put it aside. We appeal to thee, with all earnestness, as in the presence of the Almighty God, of His Son Jesus Christ, and of the Eternal Spirit. We adjure thee, by the value of thy immortal soul, by the dread reality of the judgment seat of Christ, by all the horrors of that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, by the worm that never dies, by the awful fact of eternity—an eternity in the gloomy shades of hell, by the unutterable agony of being separated for ever from God, from Christ, and from all that is pure and lovely, by the combined force of all these arguments, I do earnestly and affectionately beseech thee to flee, this moment, to the Saviour who stands with open arms and loving heart to receive thee. Come to Jesus! come, now! come, just as thou art! only trust Him and thou art safe—safe for ever—safe as He.

“SAW HIS GLORY, AND SPAKE OF HIM.”

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“**L**ORD, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

If any one speaks to you about your soul, or takes an interest in you in that way, is your pride hurt? Do you think within yourself, if you do not express it. “That person thinks I’m a heathen. I know we are all sinners, but I am just as good as he is, with all his sanctimoniousness.” But do you know, that God uses poor men like ourselves to carry messages for Him? He delights to do it. And have you considered that He who spake as never man spake (John vii. 46) was rejected because He was seen on earth in human form.

Let us turn to Isaiah vi. We see there, God and a sinful man, face to face. Is Isaiah taken up with his neighbors, comparing himself with them? He speaks of them indeed, but how differently from the usual way. He found himself in the presence of God. “Woe is me!” he says, “for I am undone!” He felt like the leper, and could only cry, unclean, unclean! (Lev. xiii. 45). No help nor protection in himself—“I am a man of unclean lips.”—and if he looked around, no help was there. “I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” And, he adds, “mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”

How quick is grace. One of the seraphims flies immediately to Isaiah and touches his unclean lips with a live coal from the altar. "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." And thus it is that poor sinners are made God's messengers. Isaiah could go and tell of what he had seen, and that there was grace to be found in His presence for contrite sinners. "These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him." (John xii. 41). His glory brought Isaiah down, but what lifted Isaiah up? The live coal of the altar, which pictures that of which Isaiah speaks in the Ch. liii, where He tells of the humiliation of Him whose glory is spoken of in Ch. vi. For the live coal tells of the sacrifice of Christ. All blessing in all ages was founded on this perfect work, (see Rom. iii. 25, 26), the sins of the past ages and of the present time met and put away there. Does a sinner feel how contrary he is to God's holiness? His need is fully met by the perfect sacrifice of One who fully did God's will, (Hebrews x), and this is the view given in Isaiah vi namely, the live coal from the altar of burnt offering. And the same perfect One has been in the outside place, outside the camp, as the sin-offering. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah liii. 6).

"We have turned every one to his own way." And what is our own way? Going away from God. Hear what the Lord Jesus said. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on *Him that sent me*, hath everlasting life." (John v. 24). Do you trace the

message to its source? do you trace the messenger from whence He came? "Him that sent me," ah, blessed thought! And is your heart moved? If not, well may *you* say, woe is me! "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." How wonderfully He walked this earth! Sorrow, sickness and death were abashed by His presence; His hands scattered blessing. We beheld His glory . . . full of grace and truth. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." (II Cor. v). God has come so near. And did their hearts relent, did love towards God spring up in them, no! They put Him on the cross. They rejected Him, they chose another prince—Satan. (John xii. 31 and Ch. xiv. 30). Well, dear reader, it will be a blessed thing for you, if you find yourself in the presence of God now. If you trace the message to its source, and hear the voice of God Himself addressing you, it will then be joy to your heart and rest to your conscience to know that He is the God, who sent His only begotten Son, that you should not perish, but have everlasting life.

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Fierce was the wild billow, dark was the night,  
 Oars labored heavily, foam glimmered white,  
 Mariners trembled, peril was nigh,  
 Then said the God of might, "Peace it is I!"

Ridge of the mountain wave, lower thy crest,  
 Wail of Euroclydon, be thou at rest,  
 Peril cannot be, sorrow must fly,  
 Where saith the Light of light, "Peace it is I?"

## THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

THE times portend great things; the dark and heavy clouds are gathering in the air, and hanging over a guilty world, which shall be soon discharged in tremendous judgment; the day of God's long suffering will soon be over: now, "now is the accepted time." If you reader have resisted the voice of truth, the voice of the Holy Ghost till now, resist it no longer. Judgments are coming, more terrible than to them to whom it was said, "ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." I say not, you do—but do you resist His power? I say not it is the case, but is it the case? Is it not very possible that you are still rejecting the counsel of God against yourself? If you say, you are not, let me ask, have you received and understood the word of the Gospel? with what are you seeking to please God? Honour? God does not want honour. Or Wisdom? God does not want your wisdom, nor learning, nor outward profession, nor knowledge. These you may have and be admired for the possession of; and you may have nothing that assimilates you to God. If you know not the hidden life, you know nothing; the princes and wise men of this world knew not, and so they crucified the Lord of glory.

Have you been doing this? If so, even now turn to the Lord Jesus. Look at the testimony of Him in every passage of His word, and you will see that it is one whole testimony of love. It shows the work of

the Lord Jesus undertaken and accomplished for sinners, the Spirit's witness of Him, the Father's love in sending Him. Till this is understood, the testimony of God's witnesses is spent in vain, as far as regards those who receive it not, and threatened vengeance awaits them.

May the Lord introduce and nourish this seed in your soul, give you the tastes, desires, and aims of His people, and fill you with unspeakable, everlasting blessing hereafter.

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**I**F distressed and anxious souls could only lose sight of that troublesome, good-for-nothing, guilty, hell-deserving "I" and rest in Christ and His full salvation, distress and anxiety would disappear—Look to Christ simply—He has settled the entire question—you will never get aught by looking at yourself, and reasoning upon what you find there.

People are always sure to be full of doubt when they are occupied with "I." It must be so, for how could "I" furnish a ground of peace? Until you learn to look out of yourself, and rest simply upon the finished work of Christ, you will never know what solid peace really is.

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Reader, have you rested where God rests? What does God think about Christ? Does your soul say, that is sufficient? God rests in Him as having made peace through the blood of the cross. Is that peace consciously yours!

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The presence of God without a veil, and of sinners without sins, proves the efficacy of Christ's sufferings.