

The Sower

A GOSPEL MAGAZINE



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VOL. VII.



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.



Toronto :
BIBLE AND TRACT DEPOT,

YONGE STREET ARCADE.

1897.

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INDEX.

	Page.
A Saviour	12
All the Events.....	32
A Finished Work	70
A Call to Christ— <i>Poetry</i>	81
A Happy Meeting.....	82
A Full and Free Salvation	90
Are You Tampering?	110
At Another Time.....	130
Another Testimony to the Cleansing Blood	135
A Gospel Hymn— <i>Poetry</i>	161
A Bed Too Short and a Covering Too Narrow.....	17
Calling To-Day— <i>Poetry</i>	65
Do You Know Jesus?.....	9
Do You Know Him?	25
Do You Feel Your Sins Forgiven?	106
Dear Unsaved One.....	137
Dear Friend	143
Everlasting Love— <i>Poetry</i>	33
Eternally Saved in Christ Jesus	78
Emily B—, or Sins Forgiven	98
Free Agent	142
Funerals.....	144
God is Love..	192
He is Coming.....	105
Hell.....	187
It Won't Sink	114
In Hell He Lifted up His Eyes	152
In the Dark Ages.....	159
John iii	63
Jesus Says I am the Way.....	160
Lost or Saved; Which?.....	66

INDEX.

	Page.
My Lot is Fixed.....	19
Marguerite	38
Man has no Righteousness	57
Moral Reformation	123
Man's State of Ruin in This World.....	169
Not all the Gold— <i>Poetry</i>	122
One Knows.....	16
Redemption	95
Reach and Take— <i>Poetry</i>	145
Rest.....	162
She has Chosen the World— <i>Poetry</i>	49
Sudden Death.....	75
Shall not the Judge— <i>Poetry</i>	97
The Chase— <i>Poetry</i>	1
The Wrath to Come.....	13
The Last Knock— <i>Poetry</i>	17
The Glad Tidings.....	28
The Young Doctor	51
To One Dying	73
The Lord Jesus Christ	89
The End of Man	94
The Cross	96
The Converted Pagan.....	109
The Living Water	111
The Rebels Surrender to Grace— <i>Poetry</i>	113
There is None Like unto Thee — <i>Poetry</i>	129
The Bread of Life	131
To the Moral and Virtuous.....	138
The Murderer and the Momier.....	146
This Night.....	153
The Man in the Glory	177
That Word was Eternity	179
The Heavenly Jerusalem	183
The Master's Letter	191
When Man	24
Your Soul	128

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THE CHASE

Is. xii. 17.

O LORD, the most fair, the most tender,
My heart is adrift and alone ;
My heart is aweary and thirsty—
Athirst for a joy unknown.
From a child I have followed it—chased it,
By wilderness, wold, and hill—
I never have reached it or seen it,
Yet must I follow it still.

In those olden years did I seek it
In the sweet fair things around,
But the more I sought and I thirsted,
The less, O my Lord, I found.
When nearest it seemed to my grasping,
It fled like a wandering thought ;
I never have known what it is, Lord—
Too well know I what it is not.

“It is I, it is I, the Eternal,
Who chose thee mine own to be—
Who chose thee before the ages—
Who chose thee eternally.
I stood in the way before thee,
In the ways thou wouldest have gone ;
For this is the mark of my chosen,
That they shall be mine alone.”

"DO YOU KNOW JESUS?"

JOHN BROOKS was by trade a compositor, and worked in London. For long hours both by day and by night he stood before his "case"—the framework where the various types are arranged—picking up, one by one, with ready fingers the little lead letters, and so placing them together in words, created, line by line, pages for the eager eye of the public.

Not being a strong man, the late hours and laborious work of the compositor's trade, together with the indifferent air of the heated workroom, told severely upon him, and assisted the growth of that fatal disease, the seeds of which were in him.

While he was yet young, the unfailing hand of consumption smote him, and he began to languish. Every one saw that he was sinking, every one heard his cough, every one observed him shrink across the shoulders, and wear away—every one but himself; for he alone was deluded into fancying that he was getting better, and that he should soon be the man again.

But on, on moved the slow disease. Each day gained some fresh victory over its victim, sapping his strength, and pushing on to the very citadel of his life. "It is only a question of time," persons would say of him; and "it is only a question of time" may be said of us all.

The rough winds of trouble set in sharp upon him. He sought an entrance into the hospital, that he

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might find a bed whereon to die ; but no, its doors were shut against him ; " full " was the answer, so he had to turn again to his desolate home.

He had sown in the passing hour, to sin, to folly, in health ; and upon his dying pillow he would frequently confess to the tremendous truth, that what a man sows he shall also reap.

But we shall not pursue this dark theme further, nor add another grief and vexation of spirit to the often told tale of this world's vanity. The mercy and grace of God visited this region of darkness, and the shadow of death with the dayspring from on high.

The opportunity which God in His wondrous love had chosen to interpose upon Brooks' behalf was, as people say, man's extremity—it was the midnight of his trial. His house was destitute of the needful bread, his resources were dried up, and he knew not which way to turn. In this extremity his wife begged him to go out and try to borrow a sixpence of a friend, just to buy some food. With an effort, and as it proved for the last time, he went out into the street, and gathering his wasted strength together, managed to walk slowly towards a neighbor's house.

Shortly after he had left his home, a lady, a perfect stranger, called and inquired whether there was a sick man there, and whether he was in want, and then, unasked, put five shillings into his wife's hand, and went away. This money, so evidently sent by God, enabled his wife before he returned to spread their table, pay a small debt, and yet have a slight balance in hand.

Reaching home he found to his surprise that the need for the bread that perishes was supplied. But more than hunger was working in him. He felt the need of Jesus—he had begun to see himself a sinner. It happened that as he dragged himself along the street, coughing and aching, a young man, a Christian, saw him, and could not refrain from speaking to him. Gently tapping him upon the shoulder he said—“you look very ill.”

“Indeed I am,” was the answer.

“And you are not long for this world, I should think, my friend,” continued the stranger in a kind voice. “DO YOU KNOW JESUS?” To this plain question Brooks replied “No, I do not indeed, I know too little of Him, and I feel I am not long for this life.”

Placing a tract in Brooks' hand and requesting that he might be allowed to call upon him (which request was readily granted), the stranger went his way. The arrow had been guided by the blessed Spirit of God, and had pierced the sinner's soul. And these words—DO YOU KNOW JESUS? took fast hold of him; he could not rid himself of them, and pondering over them he returned to his home.

New thoughts and new feelings occupied his soul. He did not know Jesus! What did this mean? He was a sinner, and he needed a Saviour; Jesus is the Saviour of sinners, and of the Saviour of sinners, Brooks, a sinner, was ignorant! Terrible reality! *He did not know Jesus!* “This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ,

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whom Thou hast sent." The wrath of God abode upon him ! Without Jesus he was lost, lost for ever. Without Jesus, hell would be his endless portion, and he did not know Jesus. Death now stared him in the face, not only as that terrible strength which severs man from his fellows, separates husband from wife, and father from child, and closes the door for ever upon the world and all that is in it, but as somewhat far more awful, even that which seals the sinner's doom, and brings him into the prison of lost spirits to await the judgment ; for " it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

He took out the tract which had been placed in his hand, and began to read it. He read it, and read it again, until he could read it no longer, and then he asked his wife to read it to him. It was about the end of a miser who died with a purse of gold clutched in her withered hand, with gold, gold, gold, upon her lips. Poor Brooks saw himself also dying, with world, world, world, upon his lips. The awful realities of death, judgment, and hell stared him full in the face, and the dying man beheld himself to his terror stepping into death, awaiting the judgment, and doomed to hell-fire. The Spirit of God had made him conscious that " he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

After some time of deep anxiety about his soul, the Lord spoke peace to him. One evening at half-past eight o'clock, he said to his wife, " some one is now praying for me I am sure, I feel it." Then he

began to think of Jesus dying on the cross for sinners, and all at once it seemed just as if the Saviour hung before him, as it might be, in the corner of his room. He looked upon Him, and believed that Jesus died upon the cross for him, that His blood made atonement for his soul, and he was happy in the Lord. At the very hour that he felt some one was praying to God for him, he afterwards learned that his friend who met him was so drawn to plead with God for his soul's salvation, that he shut himself up in his room alone, and cried to God on his behalf.

Relating this to the writer, with tears of joy rolling down his cheeks, he said, "I cannot understand it at all; I cannot make it out. Mercy for me! What does it all mean? Mercy for me! I was living without God in the world, aye, even while I was laid up in this very room, I would read the newspaper all Sunday long, and so I went on until the day in which I met my dear friend. But I don't want the newspaper now, not I, oh no; I have never wanted it since the day the Lord met me, for I love the bible now, and my blessed Jesus too."

A person who had not heard of his conversion, who was unprepared to find him even seeking for mercy, came just at this time with a sorrowful determination to speak to him plainly as to the certain end of every man out of Christ. With a heavy heart he knocked at the door in — street. Going up-stairs he found Brooks propped up in an arm-chair by the fire-side, worn nearly to a skeleton, and panting for breath.

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Seating himself beside him he mournfully enquired, "How is it with you, Brooks?" and to his unutterable surprise was answered, "HAPPY, HAPPY, OH SO HAPPY!" and this was said with unmistakable earnestness, while he stretched out his wasted hand to grasp that of his friend. "I am so glad to see you," he went on; "I am so happy; all is changed; I HAVE FOUND JESUS." "What! are you indeed saved for all eternity?" questioned his astonished friend, "just at the last hour! and you who have lived so long without Christ! you who have lived a godless life! is it indeed so that your sins are forgiven?" So, seeking by every method to test the foundation of Brooks' joy he laid the long roll of his life's sins before him, unfolding his godless ways, his prayerlessness, his hatred for Christians, and his contempt of the name of Jesus, but to each charge poor Brooks while pleading guilty would only whisper—"He could not lie. He does say, 'Only believe;' 'I will in no wise cast out.' Yes, there is mercy for me, even for me." Reader hast thou like precious faith?

It was a remarkable instance of divine grace to this poor man, who so heartily disliked tracts, that a tract should have been used in his blessing. Oftentimes in his work at "case" he was obliged to pick up the lead types one by one which spell the name J-E-S-U-S, and thus had been forced through his unwilling fingers, letter by letter, such words as these, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

Many a tract had been "set up" by him, indeed tracts similar to the very one which he read so eagerly upon his dying bed, he had been obliged to compose, the task he thoroughly disliked, and he would fling the hated tracts across the room. But now how changed! Now how he loved to say, often and often, Jesus loves me; Jesus died for me; I who am the chief of sinners. And now he loved to read the humble tract which spoke of Jesus.

Before he was converted his home was anything but a happy spot, but it all changed when he became a child of God. His wife would say of him, "There has been no fretting, no complaining, since his friend first met him in the street, but instead he has been full of joy. Formerly it was always, 'Oh! that I could get out into the street!' or something or other; but now it is never so."

At the sound of his wife's words about the street, the corner of the room where he seemed to have seen the Lord hanging on the cross before him, came to his mind, and with heavenly joy beaming upon his face, he said, "I never look towards the street now—never; I have done with it now. Once upon a time I used to sit in this chair watching the children playing in the street, and longing to have strength myself to be there again, until I fairly cried; but now I sit in my chair, turn my back to the window, and look up in that corner of the room, and think about my blessed Jesus. No more getting out in the street now for me; no, nor do I want it, since I have Jesus." The intense way in which he uttered

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these words will certainly never be forgotten by the hearer of them, nor will that divinely—bright joy which beamed upon his face, and triumphed over its pale, wan features, death-stricken and wasting. In every sense, his back was turned upon the street, and the children playing there, for his steady gaze was fixed in faith upon Jesus in the glory, and upon the blissful home of the saints of God.

Come, you scoffers; behold the light of heaven shining into the humble room of this working man! Enquire, ye reasoners, whence it is that death is to him a longed-for hour, and find your answer in his faith; faith, not only in the blessed work of the Son of God, but faith also in Him who is in glory at the right hand of God. And come, you anxious soul, stand beside his arm-chair, look at the dying countenance, watch the sunken eye, the distended nostril, the matted hair; see the thin pale hands, with the bones piercing his skin; and hear his words,—“They tell me I am going to die; they say they must see me off, they want to watch me go; but I tell them (and this he said with triumphant smiles) *I shan't die.* Oh, no, I shan't die; *I shall just fall asleep.* There is no death for me, for I am going to Jesus.”

One night Satan was permitted to trouble poor Brooks, but God dealt very tenderly with His feeble child, and restrained the malice of the evil one. It was a fearful night, but God delivered him from all his fears. In the morning he said, “I shall know another time what to do when Satan

comes to trouble me. I won't listen to him, but I will look to my blessed Jesus."

Often would he weep for joy at the grace of God in saving him from the pit. "To think that after sinning against Him all my life, He should have met me with His mercy the last time that I was able to walk out, Oh, it is wonderful! There! I cannot make it out," he exclaimed, turning his head away, overcome with emotion.

As death drew near, he looked straight over the narrow stream to the glory beyond. Often and often he would say, "So happy! oh, so happy! How I wonder that I could have lived so long without Jesus. What will it be to dwell with Him forever, and to be just like Him. The sooner I am off the better for me." "Look," said he, to a fellow-workman, who rubbed the tear from his eye as he looked on his wasted arm, "I can laugh at it, though it makes you grieve to see it; for it shows me that I am going soon to be with Jesus. It does not make me feel sad, oh no!"

We will now turn to that deeply solemn moment—the breaking of the silver cord, and the loosing of the spirit for its flight to God who gave it.

One who had watched with him through the night related how he would awake from his dozings exclaiming, "Oh, how beautiful!—how lovely!"—and other such exclamations, as if there were bright visions and sweet dreams of heaven passing before his eyes. He felt the blessing of the prayers of his brethren much. Grasping both the hands of a

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christian friend who had come to bid him farewell, he said, with a beaming face, "I know that you have been praying for me—I FEEL it." "Well, John, and how is it with you?" asked his friend. "Happy, happy in the Lord," was the cheerful reply.

Gazing upon his wife who sat near him weeping, he said first, "Look at me, dear, see how happy I am—I am all right;" and then, after a pause, "My dear, oh! that I might know before I die that you are in Christ as well as I, but I do believe I shall find it out hereafter."

There was one among his unconverted friends whom he was particularly anxious to see, and who at his request came to his bed-side. "Well, John," said his friend, "how are you getting on?"

Smiling, and taking both the strong man's hands into his wasted ones, he said, "I am so happy; I am so happy. I am going to heaven, Teddy, and you can tell my friends so. Oh, that I had known what I now know before this! Oh, that I had known Jesus earlier, and had not spent my life as, alas, I have done. What is all this world worth when compared to my present peace and joy? Ah, Ted, he continued, still grasping his hand, and still gazing fixedly upon him, "YOU WILL HAVE TO COME TO THIS! Are you ready? Are you ready?"

It was too much for his friend, and he left the room weeping. Longing for the salvation of sinners came over him, and he begged some of the Christians present to leave him and preach Christ to others. "Leave me here; I am right for heaven. Go forth

into the streets and tell others of Christ ; go brothers, tell them all of Jesus." Just then some other of his brethren in the Lord came into the room, and he asked them to join in singing a hymn of praise. They began the hymn, "I believe I shall be there." "I KNOW I shall," interrupted he ; "there is no doubt about it—none ; I know I shall for Jesus loves me and I love Him." Then asking for a hymn-book, he said with a smile, "I can sing too ;" and so he did, his voice rising above the sound of the others present.

As his last moment came, he turned his eyes toward the friend who stood by his pillow, and saying, "When we meet again we shall know each other perfectly, and be like Jesus," he fell asleep.

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"—NUMBERS xxiii, 10.

A SAVIOUR is for the lost ; not those who are going to be lost, but who are lost already. God never would have sent a Saviour if man had not been lost, for he is not a helper but a Saviour.

God sends to you, reader, a message of salvation, and you must accept it or refuse it, and remember, if you will not take God's salvation you must take God's damnation, for there is no middle ground. So do not trifle with God's salvation. Remember, there is no door out of hell though there is an awfully wide door into it.

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THE WRATH TO COME.

HOW appalling is the thought that multitudes of human beings are every day drawing nearer and nearer to "the wrath of God!"

And yet how few seem to be alive to the fact! How many go on day by day with their accustomed duties, seeking, it may be, to come up to their usual standard of moral propriety, and perhaps also of virtue and refinement, without for one moment crediting the truth, that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness!" Now God is preaching peace, and delivering souls from condemnation, in the exceeding riches of His grace; for "the gospel is *the power of God unto salvation* to every one that believeth," so that "He that believeth on the Son of God 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). It is impossible that any language can be plainer, and yet how awfully solemn the fact, that the wrath of God abides on them that believe not! Those, then, who do now receive the Son of God as their Saviour are safely sheltered from coming wrath; and are enabled to worship and rejoice before God in virtue of the peace-giving, sin-cleansing power of the blood of Jesus. It was so with those who believed the gospel at Thessalonica—"They turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus, which delivered us from *the wrath to come.*"

It is when a soul is bowed by God's love and truth to judge himself according to it, that soul-distress necessarily becomes known; for how can any one make the solemn discovery that he is going on to "the wrath to come," and contemplate its everlasting misery and woe, without his whole heart crying out, "What must I do to be saved?"

We have lately read of one who was thus bowed before God by His truth. He says, "I was out that awful night, the fifteenth of December, when the hand of God so visibly rested on the congregation, and when so many souls were given to Christ. I cannot tell you what I felt. I have been in all sorts of danger, by land and by sea, but I never found myself a coward till then. My knees smote together, and I trembled in every limb. It seemed to me as if God had written down in letters of fire all the sins I had ever committed, from my youth up, and had set them in order before my eyes. There they were in all their terrible minuteness. Circumstances which I had forgotten for years came up with all the freshness of yesterday. The mouth of hell seemed to open under the pew in which I sat; and I had no expectation of leaving the place alive. How I reached home I cannot tell, for of that I have no recollection. But this I can testify that day and night the burning thought which racked my brain was 'The wrath to come!' 'The wrath to come!' And yet amidst it all, it was not the fear of hell that frightened me; it was the thought of having so ill-treated so good a God, and

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so gracious a Saviour. Last Sunday week as I was at prayer, it seemed to me as if some one standing by addressed me by name, and said, 'you may as well give over praying, for God will never answer your prayers.' I rose and said, 'no, never! no, never! now that I have once learnt to pray, I'll never give over praying, if I die upon my knees.' Still all was dark and I could see no hope. Things went on from bad to worse, and I began to fear that my reason would give way. But at length deliverance came. Last Thursday evening as I was reading about cutting off a right hand and plucking out a right eye, it struck me that there must be something which held back my soul from God, and so I entreated him to show me what it was, and to dispose my mind to any service or any sacrifice He might require, even to the cutting off of a right hand, or the plucking out of a right eye, when all at once I had such a view of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, that the whole mountain of my guilt melted away like snow in the sunshine, and I arose from my knees with a heart large enough to lay hold of the whole world, and bring it to the feet of Christ.

Dear reader, what say you to these things? Is it not high time to be aroused to the heartfelt consideration of the safety of your own soul? Lovingly we would ask you, are you sheltered by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died to save sinners from the coming wrath? Why not? Is not God worthy to be believed, His word to be credited, the atoning work of His beloved Son to be trusted? Flee then,

at once, to the Saviour's outstretched arms; take Him at His word; think of the sin-cleansing virtue of His blood; and, while looking up to His dear face, rest in His faithful word, that "whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

ONE knows well that it is the delight and eternal purpose of God to save sinners; to this end he gave His only begotten Son: but one sees too, after all that Jesus has gone through for the glory of God—suffered, bled and died, He is under a blessed obligation to Him as well, to save all who trust in His precious blood.

What confidence this gives! what a blessed firm foundation it is! Oh what a comfort to one's heart that "grace reigns through righteousness."

The Lord tells us what hindered full blessing before the cross when he says, "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." Luke xii, 50. But now that it is accomplished, there is righteous freedom for God's heart of love to tell itself out. What a relief it must be (if one may so say) to such a God to be able to bless according to the dictates of such a heart!

Dear reader, the precious Saviour of sinners drank the bitter, bitter cup of God's wrath on the cross, without one drop of sweetness in it, that all who believe in Him might have a cup of blessing. Do *you* believe in Him? if not, instead of a cup of blessing you must drink the cup of wrath yourself.