

# THE SOWER.

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“THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SEEK AND  
TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST.”

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MARK I, 40.

Had I not been a leper, one unclean  
And forced to live alone,  
Despised or pitied by the sons of men ;  
Cared for and blessed by none—

I had not felt the touch of Him, who ne'er  
Defiled by sin had been,  
I had not heard those blessed words divine,  
“I will,” and “be thou clean.”

MARK X, 46.

Had I not once been blind, I had not felt  
The power of *His* hands,  
Nor gazed with gratitude upon *His* face  
Who Heaven's praise commands.

MATT. XI, 28.

Had I not been so weary, that earth's peace  
Restlessness seemed at best,  
I had not listened to His voice who said  
“Come unto *me* and rest.”

Had I not been a sinner, dead in sins,  
Guilty, undone and lost,  
I had not known that Jesus came to save,  
Nor had I known the cost.

“SAVE YOURSELVES FROM THIS  
UNTOWARD GENERATION.”

THESE words were uttered at a moment when mingled fear and wonder filled the hearts of all in Jerusalem, save, perhaps, the little company of disciples who had continued together in prayer and supplication during the ten days previous, as they waited for “the promise of the Father.” (Acts i. 4). From *their* hearts, fear had taken its departure, and boldness had taken its place, being now filled and energized by the Holy Ghost.

Wonderful things had been taking place in Israel. God had visited His people in a way He had never done before. The eternal Word had become flesh, and had dwelt among them “full of grace and truth.” It was not a law-giver He had sent, nor a prophet merely, but He had come Himself in the person of His own Son—had come to seek, to heal, to bless. But they did not know Him. And for love He found hatred. Jesus had to say: “But now have they both *seen* and *hated* both Me and my Father,” (Jno. xv. 24). They chose Barabbas, and rejected Jesus. The language of their hearts was: Set free the destroyer of life, and kill the Prince of life. In their blindness and hardness of heart they killed their own King, and despised their own mercies. But God raised Him up again from the dead. When man had done his worst, God was above all the evil, making the wrath of man to praise Him, overruling all their

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wickedness to fulfil His own purposes of mercy and blessing. In man's own worst act of hatred and wickedness, at the cross God furnished the Sacrifice that was to meet man's deepest need, the Lamb whose precious blood could wash out the foulest stain of sin, even though it were the sin that spit in His face, or that drove the nails into His hands and feet, or the spear into His side. The resurrection of Jesus was at once the proof of man's awful guilt, and of God's grace to man. Man murdered Him, and thus sealed his guilt, and God raised Him from the dead, but raised Him and exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour.

Risen from the dead, Jesus tarried on earth forty days, showing Himself to His disciples on occasions, who were to be witnesses of Him, "Both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth;" speaking to them also "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," instructing them also to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high. Ten days later, on the fiftieth day, or day of Pentecost. as they were all together in one place, suddenly there was heard a sound from heaven. It was like a rushing mighty wind, and filled all the house. Cloven tongues also, like as of fire, appeared and sat on each of them. What did it all mean? "The promise of the Father" was being fulfilled; the endueing with power from on high had taken place; "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit

gave them utterance.

The news of this wonderful manifestation soon spread through the city, and the multitude came together. There were "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes," all assembled in Jerusalem to attend this yearly feast of Pentecost. What a moment was this for the Holy Ghost to come down from heaven to tell them that Jesus was there—Jesus whom the Jews had rejected and slain—, giving to these simple, unlettered Galileans the power to declare to every man in his own tongue "the wonderful works of God!" It was a testimony confirmed by power from on high, and delivered to men, whether friends or enemies, who would spread the news through all the earth. But what a testimony was this for the poor Jews who had spit in His face, and heaped upon His blessed Person every insult and every indignity, putting Him to death between two malefactors! The Holy Ghost was saying to them, as it were, you have killed your King, the Prince of life; you have murdered the Son of God, and God has raised Him up from the dead, exalting Him to His right hand, and making Him both Lord and Christ. How this testimony came home to their poor hearts! what would they do now? what could they expect from the murdered One, now alive and in the place of power? what but judgment? Pricked to the heart, their question is,

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"What shall we do?" Weighty question at such a moment! But the Holy Ghost was there not only to demonstrate man's guilt and wickedness, but to tell out the wondrous grace that was in the heart of the exalted Christ toward these poor guilty people. The door of mercy was immediately opened to them. Did they but turn to God and in truth own their folly and wickedness in having rejected Jesus, and now confess Him as Lord and Saviour they should receive remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. God wants truth in the inward parts. Let them own their guilt; let them repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and God would receive them, and own them as His, bestowing upon them the gift of the Holy Ghost. They had said "His blood be on us, and on our children," but the testimony from heaven was, "the *promise* is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts ii. 39). Wondrous Grace! Now the truth was before them; the awful guilt of the nation with which they were identified, and the door of salvation to all who owned their own and the nation's guilt, and confessed Jesus as Lord. It was an "untoward generation," but they might save themselves from it, and from its judgment, by owning Jesus. And this, three thousand souls did that same day. Great as their guilt had been, it was now gone. The blood shed by wicked hands had made atonement. Confessing now the One whom they had crucified, they had remission of sins, and were sealed by the

Holy Ghost. Such was the grace of God toward these once despisers of His Son.

Reader, the same door of mercy stands open for you, if you have not already entered in. You are either *for* Christ or *against* Him. If you have not repented, you stand with Pilate and the Jews, who condemned and crucified the Lord Jesus, the Son of God. How long will you stand in such a position? Will you not save yourself from such a generation? Oh! do not trifle with this question; do not be like those who mocked and said "these men are full of new wine." These are no drunkard's babblings. They are the testimony of the Holy Ghost, the eternal verities of the living God, who will have His Son honored, but who now magnifies His own grace in the salvation of all who confess Jesus as Lord. May His grace be magnified in your salvation for His name's sake.

What is the hope of those who believe in the Lord Jesus? It is that He will come, they cannot tell how soon, and take them up beyond the clouds to be forever with Himself. But what about those who are left behind? Ah! it will be a terrible time for them, the Anti-Christ ruling over the earth, an image set up for people to worship, and all those who will not bow down to it—will not have it's mark in their foreheads or their hands—put to death for their refusal. But what is death in its worst form, compared to the terrible judgments that God will send on those who are marked with this mark; judgments which only end in everlasting destruction from His presence.

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## THE EXPRESS ROBBER.

AS I passed a house in a quiet street in Toronto some years ago I heard a man within coughing violently, and on enquiring of one I met at the moment, I was told that the consumptive was James McD—— who had recently been released from the penitentiary on account of his state of health, and that the house in which he then was, was the home of his brother-in-law, William M—— a noted burglar, where the police the day before had found a set of burglar's tools. I furthermore learned that James McD—— was one of a gang which had two years before committed a bold and desperate robbery of a large sum of money in charge of the express company's messenger on one of the incoming trains. He was tried, convicted, and sentenced to seven years hard labor, but one night shortly after his imprisonment the window of his cell was left open in cold weather and he caught a cold from which he never recovered. The whole night, he told me afterwards, was passed in cursing and swearing; an unceasing stream of awful blasphemy. My interest was aroused by what I heard, and I felt a great desire to tell him of a Saviour who had once taken a dying thief straight to Paradise, and that the same mercy, the same power, and the same Saviour, availed for him. The following day therefore, in the afternoon, being the Lord's day, I went to the house, asked to see McD——, and was shown into

a room where about a dozen men were assembled, all no doubt of the same class as the one I had come to see. I would have chosen other surroundings but I felt that the object of my visit ought not to be defeated, and so I told him plainly in the hearing of all why I had come, and how much I wished to speak to him about his soul's salvation. He listened to what I had to say, indeed all were attentive, and as he came to the door with me asked me to call again, although apparently untouched by what I had said. A few days afterwards I met him as he was out walking, and again spoke to him of his lost condition, but he assured me there were many very much worse than him. I was somewhat discouraged after this meeting, but continued to visit him at his house where he soon had to keep his bed. I constantly pressed his lost condition upon him, reading much from scripture until at length it began to dawn upon his dark soul that he was a sinner, and that either he must have a Saviour or perish utterly. His brother-in-law about this time was again implicated in another burglary and was sentenced to a term of imprisonment, leaving his wife with five little children and her sick brother to care for: but in the midst of many trying and distracting circumstances the Lord was leading poor McD— out of nature's darkness into His marvellous light, and O, what a triumph of His grace it was that such a desperately wicked man should be brought as a little child to a confession to God of his great sins, and to an acceptance of mercy at the hands of the One whose holy name he had constantly blasphemed, and

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against whom he had been in open rebellion.

The progress from darkness to light was slow, often uncertain, but when through grace he had seen his lost condition and believed on the One who has been set forth as the propitiation for sins, he not only spoke of Christ to those who came to visit him, but also wrote to his former associates in prison, urging upon them the need of salvation. The dear fellow lived several months after his conversion testifying as opportunity offered to the One who had redeemed him, but at length the end came and I was sent for by a message that he was dying. I went at once to him and although I was met at the door of his room by one who made an effort to prevent my entrance because it was not my parish, the Lord removed the obstacle and gave me and my dying brother our last happy fellowship on earth in the things of the Lord, and then he was taken away to await on the other side while I await here the coming of our adorable and precious Saviour; for him He will bring with Him, and me, if still living, He will change to His own image in the twinkling of an eye.

And now I have written this account of grace abounding in order that some poor sinner reading it may be led thereby to the same Saviour who took up for an eternity of blessing two sinners like James McD—— and the writer.

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This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

## WORDS FOR THE ANXIOUS.

NUMBERS XXI, 5-9; JOHN III, 14, 15.

THE bitten Israelite lay dying in the dust; his flesh swollen; his skin turned black; his tongue parched with thirst; life fast ebbing from him. Suddenly the cry is heard, "Look and live." "Where?" he asks "Where?" They point him to the brazen serpent as it glitters in the sunlight, and say, "There!" In an instant his failing sight is turned toward it, and with a rush the warm healthy life-blood mantles to his cheek, the poison vanishes, he knows not where, and to his feet he springs, rescued from the very jaws of death. So it is with the lost soul who looks to Christ—salvation comes to him in the look. The bitten Israelite could not possibly help himself; every moment the poison spread further, and death came nearer. The physician could not heal him; no medicine, no burning, no amputation could arrest its terrible progress, or keep back the approach of death. God only could help him; and God *did* help him, and by this typical serpent save him. I suppose you, dear reader, to be one who has not yet been saved. You need the pardon of your sins—eternal life; in fact everything. Like the dying Israelite, you are utterly unable to save yourself; and therefore, just because of this utter helplessness, this extremity of misery and woe, God points you to Christ on the cross as His eternal

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satisfaction for sin ; and knowing all you need, He says, "Behold the Lamb of God ! LOOK UNTO HIM AND LIVE. Complete healing came to the Israelite from looking to the serpent ; infinite *salvation* will come to you from looking to Christ. The Scripture says, "Without shedding of blood is *no remission.*" (Heb. ix, 22) ; and the blood which alone remits is the *blood of Christ*. Here then, on the cross, Christ bare to the full all the sins of those who had believed, or should in after ages believe on Him. Here too, on this same cross, for their healing was He wounded. Isaiah sums it all up in two sublime verses : "all we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath *laid on Him* the iniquity of us all." It was therefore, God who laid our sins on Christ, and burdened Him with the weight of our iniquities. In verse five we have given us the reason of Christ's death on the cross : "He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for *our* iniquities: the chastisement of *our* peace was upon Him; and with *His stripes we are healed.*" (Is. liii, 5, 6). It is not therefore faith *in yourself*, faith in your resolutions of amendment, faith in any effort you may make, but faith in Christ, in His work, in His word. God will not save you for what you are, but for what *Christ* is ; and therefore the Holy Spirit asks you to look with faith to Christ, and with the whole heart believe that on the cross Christ tasted death *for you*. And when, dear reader, you do so look, you will be eternally saved.

I sometimes wonder how people can entertain

doubts as to the ability of Christ to save them. It is like a man coming to a dead halt before London Bridge. Hundreds of heavy waggons, laden with merchandise, besides carriages and foot passengers, are hurrying over, as they have for years gone by, and yet he stands afraid to trust himself upon the bridge. The policeman asks him to "move on," but he still hesitates, and tells him he fears the bridge will not bear him. "The man is mad," mutters the policeman, and leaves him to himself. And can *you* doubt the power of Christ's death to save *you*? Has not that blood saved Paul, the chiefest of sinners? Has it not washed away the sins of all God's people? Has it not obtained peace for all God's believing people? And have not all their sins been fully borne by Him? And are *you* afraid to cast your weary heart, laden though it be with sins, upon Him, and believe that *now* His mighty sacrifice avails for your instantaneous salvation? Have you discovered faults in Him whom God has pronounced faultless? or does not that satisfy *you* which satisfied God? No, dear reader, hesitate not—do not look into the *future*, and sadly hope that in some as yet unreached time God will make with you a treaty of peace, but standing before the sacrifice of the death of Christ, believe that *here* thy soul finds life; that here Christ, by His death has *for ever put away thy sins*.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as *white as snow*; though they be *red like crimson*, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah i, 18).

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## TEN MINUTES IN HELL.

I WAS much struck by reading the above words in a news-paper I was glancing over recently. It was at the end of an announcement of a spectacular piece of a historical character, given to illustrate some of the fearful catastrophes occurring in these days—"Ten minutes in hell!" A shipwreck, an earthquake, a great fire, and then hell! Truly thought I, the devil is making an effort to *accustom* his victims to such a future, or rather to present it to them under a less terrible aspect than God has done in His word, persuading them it will be supportable after all, or better yet that it does not in fact exist. The Roman Catholic makes hell a purgatory, from which escape may be had after a certain period of trial; modern unbelief adopts the theory of annihilation or of that of non-eternity of suffering as a means of escaping from it, and man turns it all lightly into ridicule. But what says the word of God? It presents a "fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark ix, 43, 44).

But hell is not prepared for you reader, it is "prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. xxv, 41). To sinners God offers a Saviour. (Acts v, 31). For sinners who receive Him God has prepared an abode in glory and pleasures for ever at His right hand, and He asks you to accept what His love gives both for the present and for eternity.

Only dear reader, remember that if you turn away from these things it will bring destruction upon you, not "ten minutes in hell," but an eternity in the lake of fire and brimstone. It is written "death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." . . . "and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." (Rev. xx, 14, 15; xiv, 11).



We find it very hard to be willing to come down so low as to know ourselves, and to say—"I am a sinner, and nothing but a sinner, I have a right to nothing; I have sinned against God, against the light of my conscience, against knowledge; I have nothing, and I have a right to nothing but condemnation." Nevertheless, the thing is true, and conscience tells us so even when the will will not submit to it. If you say, "I can present myself before God," go and do so; but you cannot answer Him one of a thousand, and conscience tells you so. And are you reader, prepared to be judged? Would you like all that you have ever done to be published before the whole world? Whoever you may be, you would not dare to appear before God such as you are, with all that you have ever done; and your conscience bears witness to the justice of God. You well know that you are guilty, and if your will does not tell you so, you may well try to make some excuse for yourself.

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## A CONTRAST.

A BEAUTIFUL young woman, surrounded by her husband and family was about departing to that country from which no traveller returns—Consumption had completed its work of death, and now one whose life had been wasted in the pleasures and gaieties of a fleeting world was face to face with death, the king of terrors. Raising herself on her bed as much as her little remaining strength permitted, she grasped the hand of her husband, and with an accent of despair pronounced these words:

“Oh! William, I do not know where I am going, but all is dark!”

Alas! there was no one there to speak to her of Jesus, who only is able to make the death bed a scene of joy and triumph. The husband of this poor dying one was an avowed infidel, one of those who call themselves “free-thinkers,” and he could only make an effort to dispel her fears in assuring her that there is nothing beyond, and that death is only a cessation of life, of existence.

She passed from the scene of this world with the cry: “All is dark.”

“Be not deceived, God is not mocked.” Death leads to eternity, an eternity of indescribable joy and happiness in the presence of God, or an eternity of inexpressible misery in hell.

What a contrast to the following scene!

Some years since the wife of another William—an affectionate mother and a devoted wife—apparently in good health, was occupied in preparing breakfast for the family, when suddenly seized with a violent attack of illness, she fell dying into the arms of her husband. Carried to a bed, quite conscious, and with full knowledge of her state, she said to her husband: “Oh! William, is it death?” Then after a moments silence: “All is well; Christ is mine. I am a great sinner, but He is a greater Saviour.”

After some hours of agony she departed from this world “to be with Christ which is far better.” (Phil. i, 23).

Dear reader, if like this person you were to be suddenly called without a moments delay to leave this world and pass into eternity, would you also be sustained by the blessed assurance of a present salvation? could you say calmly and in perfect peace in the presence of death: “All is well; Christ is mine?” or would it be “All is dark?”

If you are able to say; “Christ is mine,” you will also be ready to bid adieu to all the transient pleasures of this world and you will joyfully welcome an eternity of felicity which you will pass with Him who has loved you.

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And he said unto Jesus, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”

And Jesus said unto him, “Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”