

THE SOWER

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A SERMON

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

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“Behold, a sower went forth to sow.”

Matthew 13:3.

THIS was a very important event. I do not say that it was important if you took the individual case, alone—but if you took the multitudes of cases in which it was also true, it was overwhelmingly important in the aggregate—“A sower went forth to sow.” Yes, Christ thinks it worthwhile to mention that a single sower went forth to sow, that a Christian man went out to address a meeting on a village green, or to conduct a Bible class, or to speak anywhere for the Lord! But when you think of the hundreds of preachers of the Gospel who go out to sow every Lord’s-Day and the myriads of teachers who go to instruct the children in our Sunday schools, it is, surely, in the aggregate, the most important event under Heaven! You may omit, O recording angel, the fact that a warrior went forth to fight—it is far more important that you should record that “a sower went forth to sow.” You may even forget that a man of science went into his laboratory and made a discovery, for no discovery can equal in importance the usual processes of farming. Do you hear the song of the harvest home? Do you see the loaded wagons follow one another in a long line to the farmer’s barn? If so, remember that there would be no harvest home if the sower went not forth to sow! As the flail is falling upon the wheat, or the threshing machine is making the grain to leap from among the chaff and the miller’s wheels are grinding merrily, and the women are kneading the dough, and the bread is set upon the table and parents and children are fed to the full, do not forget that all this could never happen unless “a sower went forth to sow.” On this action hinges the very life of man! Bread, which is the staff of his life, would be broken and taken from him—and his life could not continue did not a sower still go forth to sow! This seems to me to prove that the event recorded in our text is of prime importance and deserves to be chronicled there.

And, dear Friends, the *spiritual* sowing stands in the same relation to the spiritual world that the natural sowing occupies in the natural world! It is a most important thing that we should continually go forth to preach the Gospel. It may seem to some people a small matter that I should occupy this pulpit and I shall not lay any undue importance upon that fact—yet eternity may not exhaust all that shall result from the preaching of the Gospel here—there may be souls, plucked like brands from the burning, saved with an everlasting salvation, lamps lit by the Holy Spirit that shall shine like stars in the firmament of God forever and ever! Who knows, O Teacher, when you labor even among the infants, what the result of your teaching may be? Good corn may grow in very small fields. God may bless your simple words to the babes that listen to them. How know you, O my unlettered Brother, when you stand up in the cottage meeting to talk to a few poor folk about Christ, what may follow from that effort of yours? Life or death, Heaven or Hell, may depend upon the sowing of the Good Seed of the Gospel! It is, it *must* be the most important event that can ever happen, if the Lord goes forth with you when you go forth as the sower went forth to sow!

Listen to the songs of the angels! See the overflowing brightness and excessive glory of your Heavenly Father’s face! He rejoices because souls are born to Christ—but how could there be this joy, in the ordinary course, and speaking after the manner of men—without the preaching of the Word? For it still pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe! I shall not, therefore, make any apology for again preaching upon an event which is so important, even though it is recorded in such simple words! “A sower went forth to sow.”

I am going to try to answer three questions concerning this answer. First, *who was he?* Secondly, *what did he do?* And, thirdly, *what was his objective?*

I. First, WHO WAS HE?

We do not know anything at all about him except that he was a sower. His individuality seems to be swallowed up in his office. We do not know who his father was, or his mother, or his sister, or his brother. All we know is that he was a sower and I do like to see a man who is so much a minister that he is nothing else but a minister! It does not matter who he is, or what he has, or what else he can do if he does this one thing. He has lost his identity in his service, though he has also gained it over again in another way. He has lost his selfhood and has become, once and for all, a sower and nothing but a sower!

Observe, dear Friends, that *there are many personal matters which are quite unimportant*. It is not mentioned here whether he was a refined sower, or a rustic sower—and it does not matter which he was. So is it with the workers for Christ—God blesses all sorts of men. William Huntington, the coal-heaver, brought many souls to Christ. Some have doubted this, but, in my early Christian days, I knew some of the excellent of the earth who were the spiritual children of the coal-heaver. Chalmers stood at the very opposite pole—a master of cultured gracious speech, a learned, well-trained man—and what multitude Chalmers brought to Christ! So, whether it was Huntington or Chalmers, does not matter. “A sower went forth to sow.” One preacher talks like Rowland Hill, in very plain Saxon with a touch of humor. Another, like Robert Hall, uses a grand style of speech, full of brilliant rhetoric and scarcely ever condescending to men of low degree, yet God blessed both of them! What did it matter whether the speech was of the colloquial or of the oratorical order so long as God blessed it? The man preached the Gospel—exactly how he preached it need not be declared. He was a sower, he went forth to sow—and there came a glorious harvest from his sowing!

Now, my dear Brother, you have begun earnestly to speak for Christ, but you are troubled because you cannot speak like Mr. So-and-So. Do not try to speak like Mr. So-and-So! You say, “I heard a man preach, the other night, and when he had done, I thought I could never preach again.” Well, it was very naughty on your part to think that. You ought rather to have said, “I will try to preach all the better, now that I have heard one who preaches so much better than I can.” Just feel that you have to sow the Good Seed of the Kingdom and if you have not so big a hand as some sowers have, and cannot sow quite so much at a time, go and sow with your smaller hands, only mind that you sow the same Seed, for so God will accept what you do! You are grieved that you do not know so much as some do and that you have not the same amount of learning that they have. You regret that you have not the poetical faculty of some, or the holy ingenuity of others. Why do you speak about all these things? Our Lord Jesus Christ does not do so—He simply says, “A sower went forth to sow.” He does not tell us how he was dressed. He mentions nothing about whether he was a black man, or a white man, or what kind of man he was. He tells us nothing about him except that he was a sower. Will you, my dear Friend, try to be nothing but a soul-winner? Never mind about “idiosyncrasies,” or whatever people call them! Go ahead and sow the Good Seed and God bless you in doing so!

Next, notice that as the various personal matters relating to the man are too unimportant to be recorded, *his name and his fame are not written in this Book*. Do you want to have your name put to everything that you do? Mind that God does not let you have your desire and then say to you, “There, you have done that unto yourself, so you can reward yourself for it.” As far as ever you can, keep your own name out of all the work you do for the Lord! I used to notice, in Paris, that there was not a bridge, or a public building, without the letter, “N,” somewhere on it. Now, go through all the city and find an, “N,” if you can. Napoleon hoped his fame would live in imperishable marble, but he had written his name in sand, after all, and if any of us shall, in our ministry, think it the all-important matter to make our own name prominent, we are on the wrong tack altogether! When George Whitefield was asked to start a new sect, he said, “I do not condemn my Brother Wesley for what he has done, but I cannot do the same—let my name perish, but let Christ’s name endure forever and ever!” Do not be anxious for your name to go down to posterity, but be more concerned to be only remembered by what you have done, as this man is only remembered by Christ’s testimony that he was a sower.

What he did, in his sowing, is some of it recorded, but only that which refers to his special work. Where his seed fell, how it grew or did not grow and what came of it or did not come of it, that is all there—but nothing else about his life, or history is there at all. I pray you, do not be anxious for anything that shall embalm your reputation. Embalming is for the dead—so the living may be content to let their name and fame be blown away by the same wind that blows it to

them. What does our reputation matter, after all? It is nothing but the opinion or the breath of men and that is of little or no value to the child of God. Serve God faithfully and then leave your name and fame in His keeping. There is a day coming when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father!

We have no record of the name and the fame of this man, yet *we do know something about him*. We know that he must have been, first of all, an eater, or he never would have been a sower. The Gospel is Seed for the sower and Bread for the eater. And every man who really goes out to sow for God, must first have been an eater. There is not a man on the face of the earth who treads the furrows of the field and sows the seed, but must first have been an eater of bread—and there is not a true servant of God, beneath the cape of Heaven, but has first fed on the Gospel before he has preached it! If there are any who pretend to sow, but who have never, themselves, eaten, God have mercy upon them! What a desecration of the pulpit it is for a man to attempt to preach what he does not, himself, know! What a desecration it is of even a Sunday school class—for an unconverted young man, or young woman to be a teacher of others! I do not think such a thing ought to be allowed. Wherever it has been permitted, I charge any who have been trying to teach what they do not, themselves, know, to cry to God to teach them that they may not go and pretend to speak in the name of the Lord, to the children, till, first of all, Christ has spoken peace and pardon to their own hearts and He has been formed in them the hope of Glory! May every worker here put to himself the question, “Have I fed upon and enjoyed that good Word which I am professing to teach to others?”

Next, having been an eater, he must also have been a receiver. A sower cannot sow if he has not any seed. It is a mere mockery to go up and down a field and to pretend to scatter seed out of an empty hand! Is there not a great deal of so-called Christian work that is just like that? Those who engage in it have not anything to give and, therefore, they can give nothing. You cannot pump out of a man or a woman what is not there—and you cannot preach or teach, in God’s way, what is not first in your own heart! We must receive the Gospel Seed from God before we can sow it! The sower went to his master’s granary and received so many bushels of wheat. And then he went out and sowed it. I am afraid that some would-be sowers fail in this matter of being receivers. They are in a great hurry to take a class, or to preach here, or there, or somewhere else, but there is nothing in it all. What can there be in your speech but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, unless you have received the Living Word from the Living God and are sent forth by Him to proclaim it to men?

A true sower, also, is a disseminator of the Word of God. No man is a sower unless he scatters the Truth of God. If he does not preach Truth, he is not a sower in the true meaning of that term. A man may go whistling up and down the furrows and people may mistake him for a sower, but he is not really one—and if there is not, in what we preach, the real, solid Truth of God’s Word—however prettily we may put our sweet nothings, we have not been serving the Lord. We must really scatter the Living Seed or else we are not worthy of the title of sower.

We seem to know a little about this sower, now, and we further know that *he was one of noble line*. What our Lord really said was, “THE SOWER went forth to sow,” and I think I see Him coming forth out of the ivory palaces from the lone Glory of His own eternal Nature, going down to Bethlehem, becoming a Babe, waiting a while till the Seed was ready and then standing by the Jordan, by the hillside, at Capernaum and Nazareth, and everywhere scattering those great Seeds that have made the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose! See how all Christendom has sprung from the sowing of that Man! And our glorious Lord has long been reaping and is still reaping, today, the harvest of the Seed-sowing on the hillsides of Galilee. “The Sower went forth to sow.” Are you not glad to be in that noble line? Do you not feel it to be a high honor, even if you are the very least of the sowers, to be one of those who have sowed the Gospel of God?

But who are the sowers who came next? Men “of whom the world was not worthy.” Men who suffered for their Lord and Master, His Apostles, and those who received their word and who were faithful even unto death—a goodly army of all sorts of people, old and young, rich and poor, wise and unlettered. And there has always continued a band of sowers going forth to sow, men who could not help doing it, like the tinker of Bedford, to wit. They commanded him not to sow any more of the Seed and they cast him into prison because he would still do it. But, through the window of that prison he kept on sowing great handfuls of Seed which are, even now, falling upon the broad acres of our own and other lands! When they made him be quiet, he said, “If you let me out of prison today, I will preach again tomorrow, by the Grace of God.” “Oh, then!” they answered, “go back to your cell, Sir.” “Yes,” he said, “and I will lie there till the moss grows on

my eyelids before I will make you any promise that I will be silent.” He must sow—he could not help it! Well, now, today, it is imagined by some that the new theology is to put an end to our sowing of the Good Seed of the Kingdom—but will it? I believe that the sowers will still go to every lane and alley of the city and to every hamlet and village of our country, when God wills it, for the Gospel is as everlasting as the God who gave it and, therefore, it cannot die out! And when they think that they have killed the plant, it will spring up everywhere more vigorous than before.

The sower is not only a man of an honorable line, but he is also a worker, together with God. It is God’s design that every plant should propagate and reproduce its like and especially is it His design that wheat, and other cereals so useful to men, should be continued and multiplied on the face of the earth. Who is to do it? God will see that it is done and, usually, He employs men to be His agents. There are some seeds that never can be sown by men, but only by birds. I need not go into the details, but it is a fact that no man could make the seed grow if he did sow it—it must be done by a bird. But as to wheat, man must sow that—you cannot go into any part of the world and find a field of wheat unless a man has sown the seed to produce it. You may find fields full of thistles, but wheat must be sown. It is not a wild thing, it must have a man to care for it and God, therefore, links Himself with man in the continuance of wheat on the face of the earth. And he has so arranged that while He could spread the Gospel by His Spirit, without human voices—while He could bring untold myriads to Himself without any instrumentality—yet He does not do so and, as means to the end He has in view, He intends you to speak, that He may speak through you, and that, in the speaking, the Seed may be scattered, which He shall make to bring forth an abundant harvest!

II. Now, secondly, WHAT DID THIS SOWER DO? He went forth. I am going to dwell upon that fact for a few minutes.

I think this means, first, that *he bestirred himself*. He said, “It is time that I went forth to sow. I have waited quite long enough for favorable weather, but I remember that Solomon said, ‘He that observes the wind shall not sow.’ I feel that the sowing time has come for me and I must set about it.” Can I look upon some here who have been members of the Church for years, but who have never yet done anything for the Lord? Brother or Sister, if you have been a servant of God for many years and have never yet really worked for the salvation of souls, I want you now to say to yourself, “Come now, I must really get at this work.” You will be going Home soon and when your Master says to you, “Did you do any sowing for Me?” you will have to reply, “No, Lord, I did plenty of eating. I went to the Tabernacle and I enjoyed the services.” “But did you do any sowing?” “No, Lord. I did a great deal of hoarding. I laid up a large quantity of the Good Seed.” “But did you do any sowing?” He will still ask—and that will be a terrible question for those who never went forth to sow!

You are very comfortable at home, are you not? In the long winter evenings that are coming on, it will be so pleasant to enjoy yourselves at home for an evening. There, stir the fire and draw the curtain close, and let us sit down and spend a happy time. Yes, but is it not time for you, Mr. Sower, to go forth? The millions of London are perishing! Asylums for the insane are filling, jails are filling, poverty is abounding and drunkenness is at every street corner! Harlotry is making good men and women to blush! It is time to set about work for the Lord if you are ever to do it! What are some of you doing for God? Oh, that you would begin to take stock of your capacity, or your incapacity and say, “I must get to work for the Master. I am not to spend my whole life thinking about what I am going to do—I must do the next thing and do it at once, or I may be called Home—and my day over before I have sown a single handful of wheat.”

Next, *the sower gave up his privacy*. He came out from his solitude and began to sow. This is what I mean. At first, a Christian man very wisely lives indoors. There is a lot of cleaning and scrubbing to be done there. When the bees come out of their cells, they always spend the first few days of their life in the hive cleaning and getting everything tidy. They do not go out to gather honey till they have, first of all, done the housework at home. I wish that all Christian people would get their housework done as soon as they can. It needs to be done. I mean acquaintance with experimental matters of indwelling sin and overcoming Grace. But, after that, the sower went forth to sow. He was not content with his own private experience, but he went forth to sow. There are numbers of people who are miserable because they are always at home. They have cleaned up everything there, even to the bottoms of the saucepans outside, but now they do not know what to do—so they begin blacking them over again and cleaning them once more—always at work upon the little trifles of their own kitchen. Go out, Brother! Go out, Sister! Important as your experience is, it is only important as a platform for real usefulness. Get all right within in order that you may get to work without!

The sower, when he went forth to sow, also *gave up his occupation of a learner and an enjoyer of the Truth*. He was in the Bible class for a year or two and he gained a deal of Scriptural knowledge there. He was also a regular hearer of the Word. You could see him regularly sitting in his pew and drinking in the Word. But, after a while, he said to himself, "I have no right to remain in this Bible class—I ought to be in the Sunday school and lead a class myself." Then he said to himself, on a Sabbath evening, "I have been to one service, today, and have been spiritually fed, so I think I ought to go to one of the lodging houses in the Mint and speak to the people there, or find some other holy occupation in which I can be doing some good to others." So he went forth to sow and I want to stir you all up to do this! Perhaps I do not need to say much upon this matter to my own people here, but there are also many strangers with us. I would like to do with you what Samson did with the foxes and firebrands. We have far too many professing Christians who are doing next to nothing! If I could send you among the standing corn of some of the churches, to set them on fire, it would not be a bad Thursday evening's work!

"A sower went forth to sow." Where did he come from? I do not know what house he came from, but I can tell you the place from which he last came. *He came out of the granary*. He must have been to the granary to get the seed. At least if he did not go there before he went to sow, he did not have anything that was worth sowing! O my dear Brothers and Sisters, especially my Brothers in the ministry, we must always go to the granary, must we not? Without the diligent and constant study of Scripture, of what use will our preaching be? "I went into the pulpit," said one, "and I preached straight off just what came into my mind and thought nothing of it." "Yes," said another, "and your people thought nothing of it, too." That is sure to be the case! You teachers who go to your classes quite unprepared and open your Bible and say just what comes first, should remember that God does not need your nonsense. "Oh, but," says one, "it is not by human wisdom that souls are saved." No, nor is it by human ignorance! But if you profess to teach, learn. He can never be a teacher who is not first a learner. I am sure that when the sower went forth to sow, the last place he came from was the granary—and mind that you go to the granary, too, dear worker.

I wonder whether this sower did what I recommend every Christian sower to do, namely, to come forth from *the place where he had steeped his seed*. One farmer complained that his wheat did not grow and another asked him, "Do you steep your seed?" "No," he replied, "I never heard of such a thing." The first one said, "I steep mine in prayer and God prospers me." If we always steep our heavenly Seed in prayer, God will prosper us, also. For one solitary man to stand up and preach is poor work, but for two of us to be here is grand work. You have heard the story of the Welsh preacher who had not arrived when the service ought to have begun, so his host sent a boy to the room to tell him that it was time to go preach. The boy came hurrying back, and said, "Sir, he is in his room, but I do not think he is coming. There is somebody in there with him. I heard him speaking very loudly and very earnestly, and I heard him say that if that other person did not come with him, he would not come at all! And the other one never answered him, so I do not think he will come." "Ah," said the host, who understood the case, "he will come and the other One will come with him!" Oh, it is good sowing when the sower goes forth to sow and the Other comes with him! Then we go forth with steeped Seed, Seed that is sprouting in our hands as we go forth! This does not happen naturally, but it does happen *spiritually*. It seems to grow while we are handling it, for there is Life in it—and when it is sown, there will be Life in it for our hearers!

Further, this sower *went forth into the open field*. Wherever there was a field ready for the sowing, there he went. Beloved Friends, we must always try to do good where there is the greatest likelihood of doing good. I do not think that I need to go anywhere else than here, for here are the people to whom I can preach. But if this place were not filled with people, I should feel that I had no right to stand here and preach to empty pews. If it is so in your little Chapel—if the people do not come—I do not desire that the Chapel should be burned down, but it might be a very mitigated calamity if you had to turn out into the street to preach, or if you had to go to some hall, or barn, for some people might come and hear you, there, who will never hear you now. You must go forth to sow! You cannot sit at your parlor window and sow wheat—and you cannot stand on one little plot of ground and keep on sowing there. If you have done your work in that place, go forth to sow elsewhere! Oh, that the Church of Christ would go forth into heathen lands! Oh, that there might be among Christians a general feeling that they must go forth to sow! What a vast acreage there still is upon which not a grain of God's Wheat has ever yet fallen! Oh, for a great increase of the missionary spirit! May God send it upon the entire Church until everywhere it shall be said, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow."

There is a, “behold,” in my text, which I have saved up till now. “Behold, a sower went forth to sow.” He went as far as ever he could to sow the good seed, that his master might have a great harvest from it—let us go and do likewise.

When did this man go forth to sow? Our farming friends begin to sow very soon after harvest. That is the time to sow for Christ. As soon as ever you have won one soul for Him, try and win another, by God’s Grace! Say to yourself what the general said to his troops when some of them came riding up and said, “Sir, we have captured a gun from the enemy.” “Then,” said he, “go and capture another!” After the reaping, let the sowing follow as speedily as possible. In season, this sower sowed. It is a great thing to observe the proper season for sowing, but it is a greater thing to sow in improper seasons, also, for out of season is sometimes the best season for God’s sowers to sow. “Be instant in season and out of season,” was Paul’s exhortation to Timothy. Oh, for Grace to be always sowing! I have known good men to go about and never to be without tracts to give away, and suitable tracts, too. They seem to have picked them out and God has given them an occasion suitable for the tracts, or if they have not given tracts, they have been ready with a good word, a choice word, a loving word, a tender word. There is a way of getting the Gospel in edgewise when you cannot get it in at the front. Wise sowers sow their seed broadcast, yet I have generally noticed that they never sow against the wind, for that would blow the dust into their eyes—and there is nothing like sowing with the wind. Whichever way the Holy Spirit seems to be moving and Providence is also moving, scatter your Seed that the wind may carry it as far as possible and that it may fall where God shall make it grow.

Thus I have told you what the man did—“A sower went forth to sow.”

III. I must answer briefly the last of the three questions I mentioned, WHAT WAS THIS SOWER’S OBJECTIVE?

On this occasion, he did not go forth *to keep the seed to himself*. He went forth to throw it to the wind—he threw it away from himself, scattered it far and wide. He did not go out to defend it, but he threw it about, and left it to take its chance. He did not go, at this time, to examine it—to see whether it was good seed, or not. No doubt he had done that before, but he just scattered it. He did not go out to winnow it, and blow away the chaff, or pick out any darter that might be in it. That was all done at home. Now he has nothing to do but to sow it—to sow it—TO SOW IT. And he sows it with all his might. He did not even come to push others out of the field who might be sowing bad seed, but he took occasion, at this particular time, to go forth to sow and to do nothing else—

*“One thing at a time, and that done well,
Is a very good rule, as many can tell”*

and it is especially so in the service of God. Do not try to do 20 things at once—“A sower went forth to sow.” *His objective was a limited one*. He did not go forth to make the seed grow. No, that was beyond his power—he went forth to sow. If we were responsible for the effect of the Gospel upon the hearts of men, we should be in a sorry plight, indeed, but we are only responsible for the sowing of the Good Seed. If you hear the Gospel, dear Friends, and reject it, that is your problem, and not ours. If you are saved by it, give God the Glory—but if it proves to be a savor of death unto death to you, yours is the sin, the shame and the sorrow. The preacher cannot save souls, so he will not take the responsibility that does not belong to him.

And he did not, at that time, go forth to reap. There are many instances in which the reaper has overtaken the sower and God has saved souls on the spot while we have been preaching. Still, what this man went forth to do was to sow. Whether there is any soul saved or not, our business is to preach the Gospel, the whole Gospel and nothing but the Gospel—and we must keep to this one point—preaching Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. That is sowing the Seed. We cannot create the harvest—that will come in God’s own time.

This man’s one objective was positively before him and we are to impart the Truth, to make known to men the whole of the Gospel. You are lost, God is gracious, Christ has come to seek and to save that which is lost. Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. On the Cross He offered the Sacrifice by which sin is put away. Believe in Him and you live by His death. This sowing, you see, is simply telling out the Truth of God and this is the main thing that we have to do, dear Friends—to keep on telling the same Truth over and over, and over and over again, till we get it into the minds and hearts of men—and they receive it through God’s blessing.

If the sower had sat down at the corner of the field and played the harp all day, he would not have done his duty. And if, instead of preaching the simple Gospel, we talk of the high or deep mysteries of God, we shall not have done *our* duty.

The sower's one business is to sow, so, stick to your sowing, Brothers and Sisters. When that is done and your Master calls you Home, He will find you other work to do for Him in Heaven, but, for the present, this is to be your occupation.

Now, to close, let me remind you that *sowing is an act of faith*. If a man had not great faith in God, he would not take the little seed he has and go and bury it. His good wife might say to him, "John, we shall need that wheat for the children, so don't you go and throw it out where the birds may eat it, or the worms destroy it." And you must preach the Gospel and you must teach the Gospel as an act of faith. You must believe that God will bless it. If not, you are not likely to get a blessing upon it. If it is done merely as a natural act, or a hopeful act, that will not be enough—it must be done as an act of confidence in the living God. He bids you speak the Word and makes you His lips for the time—and He says that His Word shall not return to Him void, but that it shall prosper in the thing where He has sent it.

This sowing was also *an act of energy*. The word, sower, is meant to describe an energetic man. He was, as we say, "all there." So, when we teach Christ, we must teach Him with all our might, throwing our very soul into our teaching. O Brothers, never let the Gospel hang on our lips like icicles! Let it rather be like burning lava from the mouth of a volcano! Let us be all on fire with the Divine Truth that is within our hearts, sowing it with all our heart, mind, soul and strength.

This sowing was also *an act of concentrated energy*. The sower "went forth TO SOW." He went forth, not with two aims or objectives, but with this one—not dividing his life into a multitude of channels, but making all run in one strong, deep current along this one riverbed.

Now I have done when I invite my Brothers and Sisters here to go forth from this Tabernacle to sow. You will go down those front steps, or you will go out at the back doors and scatter all over London. I know not how far you may be going, but let it be written of you tonight, "The sowers went forth to sow"—they went forth from the Tabernacle with one resolve that, by the power of the living Spirit of God, they who are redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus would make known His Gospel to the sons of men, sowing that Good Seed in every place wherever they have the opportunity, trusting in God to make the Seed increase and multiply! Ah, but do not forget to do it even within these walls, for there are some here whom you may never be able to get at again. So, if you can speak to your neighbor in the pew, say a good word for Christ! If you will begin to be sowers, nothing is better than to begin at once. Throw a handful before you get outside the door—who knows whether that first handful shall not be more successful than all you have sown, or shall sow, in later days?

As for you dear Souls who have never received the Living Seed, oh, that you would receive it at once! May God, the Holy Spirit, make you to be like well-prepared ground that opens a thousand mouths to take in the Seed and then encloses the Seed within itself and makes it fructify! May God bless you. May He never leave you barren or unfruitful, but may you grow a great harvest to His Glory, for Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PSALM 106.*

This is one of the "Songs of Degrees." They are supposed to have been sung as the pilgrim caravan was going up to the Temple at Jerusalem. Every time they halted and pitched their tents, they sang a Psalm. If carefully read, it will be found that these Psalms exhibit a real advance in experience. For instance, the keynote of the 125th is stability, while that of the 126th is joy, and especially joyful hope. Each one appears to advance a stage higher than the one that precedes it.

Verse 1. *When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like they that dream.* "It seemed too good to be true. We were in a delirium of joy. 'We were like they that dream.' Our slumber had been profound—we thought that God had altogether forgotten us—but when we found that He was coming to our rescue, 'we were like they that dream.'"

2. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.* "We wanted to express our joy, so laughter came, which is a natural, genuine mode of expressing delight. Our mouth was filled with laughter. We not only laughed, but we laughed again and again, even as Abraham laughed when a son was promised to him and as Sarah laughed when Isaac was born."

2. *Then said they among the heathen, The LORD has done great things for them.* It is a fine time when even the heathen begin to see the joy of Believers. They could not help hearing and seeing it and, with astonishment they said, “Jehovah has done great things for them,” to which the godly replied that it was so. They were not at all ashamed to acknowledge it. They had not any of that unhallowed modesty which is afraid to speak to the glory of God, but they said—

3. *The LORD has done great things for us; of which we are glad.* I heard a Brother at a Prayer Meeting some time ago, say, “Of which we desire to be glad.” That is not what these people said and if the Lord has done great things for you, you *are* glad, not only do you desire to be glad, but you *are* so! It is always a pity to try to improve on Holy Scripture, for it does not go to be improved upon. When the Lord does great things for His people, they are as glad as they can be, and they cannot help saying so.

4. *Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.* The riverbeds, when the Southern torrents have been dried up, seem to be nothing but a gathering of stones and dust. Then comes a copious rain, bringing a sudden flush of water and the captivity of the stream is gone. That is the meaning of the prayer, “Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south.”

5, 6. *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.* Notice that word, “doubtless.” If you have any doubt about it in your own case, may the Lord drive all your doubts away! When God says, “doubtless,” we must not be doubtful. “He shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—427, 483, 539.

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