

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE SOWER.

A Sermon

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DELIVERED BY

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“Behold, a sower went forth to sow.”—Matthew xiii. 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 worth while 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 Sabbath-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 husbandry. Do you hear the song of the harvest home? Do you see the loaded waggons 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 for ever and ever. Who knoweth, O teacher, when thou labourest even among the infants, what the result of thy teaching may be? Good corn may grow in very small fields. God may bless thy simple words to the babes that listen to them. How knowest thou, O my unlettered brother, when thou standest up in the cottage meeting to talk to a few poor folk about Christ, what may follow from that effort of thine? 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 goeth forth with thee when thou goest forth as the sower went forth to sow. Hark to the songs of the angels; see the overflowing brightness and excessive glory of thy 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 sower. First, *who was he?* Secondly, *what did he do?* And, thirdly, *what was he at?*

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 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 multitudes 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 humour; 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 mattered it 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 hand, 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 one 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 for ever 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 cope of heaven, but has first fed on the gospel before he has preached it. If there be 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 he then 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 thy speech but sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal, unless thou hast received the living Word from the living God, and art 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. 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 a 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, and by the hill-side, and 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 this day is reaping still, the harvest of the seed-sowing on the hill-sides 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 honour, 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 bade him be quiet, he said, "If you let me out of prison to-day, I will preach again to-morrow, 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, to-day, 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 honourable 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 favourable weather; but I remember that Solomon said, 'He that observeth 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 just 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 of 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 at every street-corner. Harlotry is making good men and women to blush. It is time to set about work for the Lord if I am 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 be over before I have sown a single handful of wheat."

Next, *the sower quitted 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, then 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, and 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 *quitted 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 take a class myself." Then he said to himself, on a Sabbath evening, "I have been to one service to-day, 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 brethren 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 want 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, do 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 been begun, and his host sent a boy to the room to tell him that it was time to go to 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 to our hearers.

Further, this sower *went forth into the open field*. Wherever there was a field ready for the sowing, there he came. 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 was 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 burnt 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 parlour 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, 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 AT?

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 wheat, 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 darnel 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 twenty things at once: “A sower went forth to sow.” *His object 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 act, and not ours. If you are saved by it, give God the glory; but if it proves to be a savour 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 object 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. Whosoever believeth 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; 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 wheat he has, and go and bury it. His good wife might say to him, “John, we shall want that corn 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 lip for the time, and he says that his Word shall not return unto him void, but that it shall prosper in the thing whereto he hath 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, and mind, and 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 objects, 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 river-bed.

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 to-night, "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 neighbour 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 after 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.