

let the glory of God be the end proposed in all your actions; daily dedicate yourselves in sincerity, your souls and bodies to His service; endeavour to do all things as in His sight, and for Him; and the thorns, if not rooted out, will be checked and kept down, and the word of God will have room to grow and flourish in your hearts, bringing forth the fair fruits of holiness and peace.

But God be praised! there is yet another class. For "some seed fell on good ground, and sprang up and bare fruit a hundred-fold"; which is thus explained—"That on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." This, then, is what is required, in order to hear profitably the word of God—sincerity and singleness of purpose, and that purpose, a full intention, with God's help, to do what we hear. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways;" and he who hears and reads the word of God with a wavering spirit, shrinking from this part, or slurring over the other, has not the honest and good heart which is alone the good ground for the seed. We must resolve to accept *all* we find there, even though pride may revolt from it, or our prejudices may be shocked by it, or the carnal heart dislike it. It is the word of God, and is, therefore, essential truth. And further, our sincere purpose must be to keep the word—to do what we hear. The word of God is neither given us to make us intellectually wise, nor even chiefly to instruct us in certain doctrines; but to fit us for the service of God which is there required of us, and for the heaven which is there offered us, by furnishing us with the objects of faith, the motives of love, and the rules and requirements for obedience. To take the Word of God sincerely as our rule, and to act upon it with diligence, this is to receive the seed in good ground. Thus received it will bring forth fruit abundantly, "*some an hundred-fold,*" adds our blessed Saviour—"some sixty, some thirty." There are degrees of grace, as there are, probably, degrees in glory; but the lowest of either is worth infinitely more than all the world can offer. One step of advancement in holiness, which is at the same time a step towards the enjoyment of heaven, is in intrinsic value far beyond the highest honour man can give or take away. And this is that holiness of which an abundant harvest is promised to the faithful and practical hearer of God's word—a harvest of good works here—a harvest of immortality hereafter.

