

BISHOP DEVERIDGE.

Among the many great blessings which this kingdom enjoys above most others, there is none greater than that the pure word of God is so constantly read and preached in it, and that by officers authorised and appointed by Christ himself, and therefore assisted by his Holy Spirit in the doing of it, vol. 10, p. 253.

The greatest part are "as proud, as factious, as intemperate, as lascivious, as unjust, as uncharitable every way, as vicious in their lives and actions as if they had never heard one tittle of God's word in all their lives, p. 254.

There was not one sort of seed sown in bad ground and other in good, but the same in both; and therefore the reason why it grew better in one place than another, could not be from the seed itself.

Secondly. We may observe that as the seed was the same so was the sower. Behold saith Christ, a sower went forth to sow. One sower. The seed was all sown by the same hand, with the same art and care. And therefore the fault could not be in the sower, no more than in the seed, why any of it perished.

"First therefore, Behold saith our Lord, a sower, &c.

Now let us hear our Saviour's explication of it, &c.

By the sower is meant Christ, as he himself saith in another parable in this chapter. He that soweth the good seed is the son of man. It is he by whom the word of God hath been spoken and dispersed all along and still is; we are only his ambassadors, preaching only his word, and that too only in his name and in his stead, and therefore as the Thessalonians did, so should all men receive it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God.

By the way-side, is meant such as hear the word, but do not understand it, or as the word signifies do not regard or mind it, no more than seed that is sown upon an hard pathway. Though they hear it sounding in their ears, they take but little notice of it. Their thoughts are generally taken up with other things, one is thinking of his goods, another of his houses or lands, a third of his chapmen, a fourth of his debtors or creditors, a sixth of something he did yesterday, and a seventh of something he is to do tomorrow or next day.

There are many such hearers of God's words as these, I wish there be not many here at this time. But to all such, the word of God, is like seed sown in the way side, ready to be caught up and devoured by the fowls of the air. By the fowls of the air, is meant the wicked one, that is Satan or the Devil, who is called the Prince of the power of the air.

MR. NORRIS.

Of the many great advantages and blessings which God's peculiar people enjoy, there is none greater, than that the pure word of God is read and preached amongst them by persons set apart, authorised and appointed by Christ himself, and therefore sanctified and taught by the Holy Spirit, p. 3.

—"As proud, as intemperate, as unjust, as uncharitable every way, as vicious in their lives and actions, as if no machinery for the overthrow of sin, and the use of the sinner had been formed by heaven," p. 3.

One sort of seed was not sown in the bad ground, and another in the good, but the same seed in both, and therefore the cause of success in one place, and failure in another, could not arise from defect in the seed.

Again, as the seed was the same, so was the sower. Behold saith Christ, a sower went forth to sow; that one sower, namely Christ himself. This seed sown by the same hand, with the same skill and the same care, without favor or partiality displayed in any portion of the field, points again to the fact, that the reason of unequal fruitfulness, must be sought elsewhere than in the sower or the seed.

First therefore, Behold saith our Lord, a sower, &c.

Hear our Saviour's explication of it, &c.

I repeat that by the sower is meant Christ, as he himself saith in another parable, He that soweth the good seed is the son of man. It is he by whom the word of God has been preached from the beginning and still is—we are only his ambassadors and representatives, preaching only his word, and only in his name and in his place; and therefore as by the Thessalonians, so should it be received by all men, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God.

By the way side, is meant such as hear the word, but do not regard it, any more than seed sown on a hard pathway, they hear it in their ears, but their thoughts are far away; one is thinking of his goods, another of his lands, another of his friends, another of something he did yesterday, another of something he has to do to morrow, and so on.

I grieve to say there are too many such hearers. May God grant there be not many here at this time; but to all such the word of God is like seed sown in the way side, ready to be trodden down or devoured by the fowls of the air, by which is meant the wicked one or Satan, who is called the Prince of the power of the air.