



THE SOWER.

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Our cut illustrates the impressive parable told by our Lord of the Sower. We see him sowing the seed with generous hand, while a short distance from him the little birds are busy eating it up. Some of the ground on which the seed is being scattered looks very hard, and we see that the seed remains on the surface and cannot therefore receive nourishment from the soil and grow. To the left of the sower the thorny ground presents a rather hopeless appearance. Unless the weeds are

uprooted they will grow much more quickly than the seed and will surely destroy or "choke" it. At some distance to the right of the sower we see that part of the ground is being carefully prepared by the strange-looking, old-fashioned plough. When the seed falls into this ground it is likely to sink into the soil, take root and grow. This parable of our Lord illustrates the difficulties met with by the sower of "the precious seed" to-day. Human hearts are just the same as they were eighteen hundred years ago. Little sins and

love of the world still come into the heart, like the birds, and soon eat up the good seed unless we are careful. There are so many different influences around us that we have to be very watchful, if we would respond only to the best and to those which will help the good seed in its growth. Some hearts are like the hard, stony ground where the seed cannot take deep root. These hearts are weak and cannot endure persecution and the good seed can only dwell in them for a time.

Other hearts are trying to grow a double crop. The good seed has been sown and allowed to remain, but the old thorns have never been uprooted. They soon spring up it. But there are some hearts already prepared who wait for the Sower to come and bring forth "some an hundred-fold, and some sixty and some thirty."
"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."