

the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded upon a rock—R. V. “Because it had been well builded.” The mountain streams in Palestine are of a peculiar character. In summer they are perfectly dry, but in the rainy season they are swollen streams. The Rev F. W. Holland, in 1867, was encamped in the Wady Feiran, near the base of Mt. Seibal. He says: “A tremendous thunder-storm burst upon us. After a little more than an hour’s rain the water rose so rapidly in the previously dry wady (valley), that I had to run for my life, and with great difficulty succeeded in saving my tent and goods, my boots, which I had not time to pick up, being washed away. In less than two hours a dry desert wady, upwards of 300 yards broad, was turned into a foaming torrent from eight to ten feet deep, roaring and tearing down, and bearing everything before it—the tangled masses of tamarisks, hundreds of beautiful palm trees, scores of sheep and goats, camels, donkeys, and even men, women and children; for a whole encampment of Arabs was washed away a few miles above me. The storm commenced about five o’clock in the evening, and at half past nine the waters were rapidly subsiding, and it was evident that the flood had spent its force. In the morning a gently flowing stream, but a few yards broad and a few inches deep, was all that remained of it. But the whole bed of the valley was changed. Here great heaps of boulders were piled up, where hollows had been the day before; there holes had taken the place of banks covered with trees. Two miles of tamarisk wood, which was situated above the palm grove, had been completely washed away, and upwards of a thousand palm trees swept down to the sea. The change was so great that I could not have believed it possible, had I not witnessed it with my own eyes.” Matthew brings in the hurricane which usually accompanies a cloud-burst. The storm which assails the house represents the trials of life and the day of judgment (1 Cor. 3: 11-15).

49. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built a house upon the earth, against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great—The house is built upon the sand (Matt.) of superficial intellectual acceptance. (Farrar). A single lost soul is a great ruin in the eyes of God. Jesus, in closing his discourse, leaves his hearers under the impression of this solemn thought. Each of them, while listening to this last word, might think that he heard the crash of the falling edifice, and say within himself: “This disaster will be mine if I prove hypocritical or inconsistent.” (Godet). (1 Sam. 2: 30; Prov. 12: 7).

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. *We should be more careful to correct our own faults than to point out the faults of others.* The following story is told of the earnest-minded Leigh Richmond. He was once passing through Stockport, England, at a time when political strifes disturbed the country. In consequence of his lameness, he was never able to walk far without resting. He was leaning on his stick and looking about him, when a poor fellow ran up to him, and, offering his hand, inquired with considerable earnestness, “Sir, are you a radical?” “Yes, my friend,” answered Mr. Richmond, “I am a radical, a thorough radical.” “Then give me your hand,” said the man. “Stop, sir, stop,” replied Leigh Richmond, “I must explain myself: we all need a radical reformation; our hearts are full of disorders—the root and principle within is altogether corrupt. Let you and me mend matters there, and then all will be well, and we shall cease to complain of the times and governments.” (Spurgeon).
2. *Our conduct shows what we really are.* Spurgeon relates that when in Rome a priest came to one of his meetings and demanded his authority for preaching. He replied, “Two horses ran a race on your Corso. One had a grand pedigree, but he was lame in three legs and could not stand on the other. The second horse had no pedigree, but quickly ran over the course. Which should have the prize? Can you shew thieves made honest, drunkards sober? Come to my tabernacle and I can shew you hundreds. These are my certificates. The people cheered vociferously, and the priest, a notorious profligate, beat a retreat. “When our words are swords, our heart is a laughter-house; when we bear false witness, that is the mint; when we worship Mammon, that is the temple; the heart is the shop and workshop of all evil.”
3. *We should be careful not to allow evil thoughts to stay in our minds.* They soon make themselves at home and are not easily dislodged when once they have taken up their quarters. A profane sea-captain came to a mission-station on the Pacific, and the missionary talked with him on religious subjects. The captain said, “I came away from Nantucket after whales, I have sailed round Cape Horn for whales; I am now up in the Northern Pacific Ocean after whales. I think of nothing but whales. I fear your labor would be entirely lost upon me, and I ought to be honest with you. I care for nothing by day but whales and I dream of them by night. If you should open my heart, I think you would find the shape of a small sperm whale.” So the harboring of evil leads at last to moral slavery.
4. *If we really love Christ we will try to do what he wishes.* To love Christ is to have the heart go forth to him. It is to love, not an abstraction, but a great, living personality.