SERMON.

Preached before the N. S. Eastern Association September, 1893, by Rev. H. B. Smith. Text, Matt. 7: 24—"Therefore whoosever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." Subject—The wise builder.

These verses close Christ's instructive and practical sermon. The word "therefore" is the bolt that goes down through the whole framework of that sermon, riveting all its parts securely. In completing His sermon, and in order to impress the truths He was teaching, Christ used a plain and familiar illustration of the two builders. The foolish builder is he who hears the truth and does not do it; but the wise builder is he who hears and performs the sayings of Christ.

We all resemble each other in some respects. We are alike in that we are destined to be builders, and that we are building for eternity. We are all alike in that we are sowers and reapers. The Christian and sinner are unlike in that the former builds wisely and well, while the latter builds to his own destruction. One sows the seeds of righteousness and will reap an eternal harvest of divine pleasure, while the other sows the seeds of a depraved heart and will reap an eternal harvest of remorse.

The ultimatum of truth is not only to be preached and listened to, but to be *practiced* by the hearer. It is one thing to hear, but it is altogether a different thing to do. It was the Lord's mission to give us the truth; it is our business to obey it; for Christ meant that His truth should formulate itself into practice. External obedience to the truth is an evidence of the power it has had upon the heart.

The grand object Christ had in persuading men to be "doers of the word" was to secure their eternal salvation. All desire to be safe; no one would care to remain day after day in a state of unsafety. Every one shuns dangers. Spiritually there is a desire on the part of all to be secure. But all do not possess the same idea as to what security is. Some may think it consists in morality, others in good works; but these, while good in themselves, are not sufficient to secure one soul. Christ meant to make it clear to all who hear and read that the eternal security of the soul consists in continued faith in and practice of His truth.

I. *The wise builder secures a good foundation.*

(*a*) *He secures a good foundation in order to resist adverse influences.*

This good foundation is the reception of truth into a good, honest heart; it is allowing the truth to predominate and control; it is to possess truth as the basis of action; in short, it is to be *born again*. The seed in the parable that fell on stony ground had no chance to root itself, and thus there was no foundation for growth or development, and consequently it succumbed to the rays of the sun. But the seed that fell on good ground, rooted itself well, had a basis for development, withstood opposing influences, and brought forth abundance of fruit. So in order for a man to resist and overcome, he must have, as an indispensible fundamental of his spiritual life, an unswerving grasp of the truth.

Paul represents the spiritual life as a warfare, for every Christian must meet with opposing influences. As the house that was built upon the rock was tried by rains and winds beating upon it vehemently, so every man is tried; if his foundation be of hay, wood or stubble, it will be consumed by fiery influences; if it be of sand it will be washed away by the floods of temptations. If life be a warfare, and we are assailed by evil influences, what constitutes the power of resistence? It is evident, if we ever overcome, that the power of resistence must be greater than the combined power of all opposing influences. Such was the case of the house upon the rock. The power of resistence was greater than the combined power of the winds, rains and floods. Spiritually the resisting power is in Christ. He is the impenetrable shield that wards off the fiery darts of the evil one; He is the mountain, the hedge, the wall of fire over which adverse influences have no effect. He is the strength of our life, our sustainer, and the conqueror of every foe. Human strength alone cannot resist. Yielding has ever been a mark of human weakness. It is as impossible to resist and endure without Christ as it was for the house to stand without the rock. He who puts on the Lord Jesus, hides behind the cross, and stands upon the infallible truth, will feel that he possesses the only power of resistence.

(*b*) *The wise builder secures a good foundation in order to be immovable.*

To be immovable is necessary to the accomplishment of one's aim, in life and the *true aim of life* is necessary in order to make one immovable. As helmless ships drift everywhere and get nowhere in particular, so aimless souls are as movable as a wave of the sea, and accomplish nothing. The unstable, like Reuben, cannot excel. Immovableness consists in laying hold of that which is immovable. The house was secure because it rested on a secure foundation. Man is naturally inclined to be governed by circumstances; hence hope as an anchor to his soul to keep him safe. Christ is the immovable rock, and our minds must be stayed on Him if we desire to enjoy perfect peace.

Immovableness is essential to development, and development tends to make one more immovable. The immovableness of a tree is absolutely essential to its growth; and likewise the growth of the tree, sending its roots more firmly into the ground, tends to make it more immoveable. Spiritually we cannot fail to recognize this truth. It is he who daily cleaves unto that which is good who daily grows to abhor that which is evil. It is he who is steadfast in searching the Scriptures who grows in the knowledge of God. It is he who exemplifies steadfast devotion to Christ whose faith becomes as a shining light that shineth *more and more* unto the perfect day.

Every Christian should aim to glorify God; and in order to do this his aim must be to obey Divine truth. Glorifying God does not consist in our good opinion of God, but rather in God's good opinion of us. "Herein is our Father glorified when we bear much fruit." The branch bears "much fruit" because it is immoveable in the vine, and if it were otherwise life could not be sustained or fruit produced. Likewise immoveableness in Christ is necessary to the glorifying of God; any other position separates one from the source of life, and leads to the dishonoring of God. Said Christ: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me."

(*c*) *The wise builder secures a good foundation in order to endure.*

A man's work is always a proof of what he is. The work of one builder was a positive declaration of his *foolishness*, for he built a mansion upon the sand. The other builder's work was an evidence of his *wisdom*, for he built his house upon a rock. The man who builds his hopes and aspirations upon Christ will endure, and his endurance will be proof that he built wisely. Christian endurance now is essential to reigning with Christ by-and-bye; for it is he who continues unto the end that shall be saved. An infallible foundation is essential to endurance. The chaff has no foundation, and is driven with the winds. He who would endure must dig deep and lay the foundation sure, for the day will come when the Lord will try "the hearts and reins" of men.

Endurance is a desirable virtue, and every virtue produces good fruit. The fruit of endurance is the subjugation of evil. Divine strength is the basis of endurance. In the great battle of life the Christian endures and conquers because of the strength he receives from Him who is stronger than the strong man armed. But to an inquiring mind the question naturally arises: "How is strength obtained?" To answered that question we are led to the solid rock. Christ is the source of every virtue; and they that wait upon the Lord *shall renew their strength*. In receiving strength two principles must be observed, viz.: *reception* and *retention*. Without these strength is impossible. As we look about us in nature we see these principles observed. The plant daily *receives* from the air and soil such materials as it needs, and after it has received them it *retains* them and assimilates them into its roots, trunks and branches, and by so doing gains strength to bear up against winds and rain. So the individual Christian must act upon the same principle, not only to receive light, truth and grace, but to *retain* them and assimilate them into his Christian life. If these principles be observed growth, and radiation of Christian influences will take place, and endurance will follow as a natural result.

II. *The wise builder takes heed how he builds.*

(*a*) *He builds according to the specifications.*

This, of course, means obedience in every particular. In the work of Christian building we are not to be guided by our own opinions, but wholly by the *infallible word;* and he who is thus guided will not build in vain. Disobedience is condemnation. The mechanic who builds a house in defiance of the specifications will have it condemned. So God must have His Word and commands reverenced, and he who builds upon some other foundation in defiance of His word will likewise be condemned. It is he who hears and does the sayings of Christ that meets with Divine approval. Internal submission of heart and will to God should always precede external obedience, for external obedience without internal conformity to Christ still leaves one in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity. Some lay great stress upon the externals of religion, placing more value upon the husk than upon the kernel. But the strictest adherence to ritualism, the regular observance of the Lord's Supper, and prompt submission to the ordinance of baptism, apart from the regeneration of the soul avail nothing. The observance of either of these, or all, cannot possibly save a soul. But the Bible affirms that the ordinances should only be observed after regeneration has taken place; for on the day of Pentecost, before the three thousand observed the ordinances, they were first "pricked in their hearts" and repented of their sins. That was the right way to build. The Word distinctly specifies to all that unless they repent they shall likewise perish. Then he who observes the externals of religion to the exclusion of the internal requirements imperils his own salvation. "Dig deep," said our Lord, "and lay the foundation sure." Don't begin at the ridge pole and build down, but commence on the Solid Rock and build up.

(*b*) *The wise builder builds carefully.*

In every structure there are certain constituents which are absolutely necessary in order to assure strength and stability; there are other things which, if substituted, would go to weaken and deteriorate. We readily see how this principle would apply to our bodies. Wholesome food strengthens, while impure food weakens and debilitates. This is decidedly true in relation to our spiritual growth. There must not only be the necessary foundation, but the necessary spiritual constituents in order to develop one's Christian life after Christ's likeness. To accomplish this Christ says, "My grace is sufficient." Then we are enjoined to "come boldly to a throne of grace, to obtain mercy and find grace to help us." Christ is the true bread, and he who eats of Him will possess a divine influence which will exemplify itself in Christian character."

On the other hand there are worldly things which are detrimental to spiritual growth. They are parasites which rob of virtue and weaken. Seeing the disastrous effects of such material in the Christian's life, Paul gave the Corinthians wise and timely counsel: "Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing"; "evil communications corrupt good manners." Then the Christian should be particular not to allow anything but the Word and the Spirit to enter his heart that he may maintain his integrity.

(*a*) *The wise builder builds patiently.* Patience is a desirable virtue, and there can be but little virtue without patience. Impetuosity is a natural characteristic of man. He generally wants things done *when* and *how* he desires; and the cultivation of such a tendency terminates in undesirable effects. The children of Israel became impetuous because of Moses' protracted stay in the Mount, and their impetuosity developed into idolatry. Patience is the secret of doing things well, and to do things well is permanent gain. The Bible does not urge us to build hurriedly. However, no man is to hesitate in beginning to build, for we are told what we have to do, to do quickly; redeem the time for it is short. We are also impressed with the thought to put as much as possible into the *little while* that remains. The gospel is opposed to procrastination, but at the same time we are to build patiently and deliberately. "Dig deep and lay the foundation sure"; "make your calling and election sure"; "sit down and count the cost," are truths which teach us to build patiently and understandingly. In building we must recognize the law of development, for this law has as much to do in the building up of individual character as it has to do in the extension of God's kingdom. The Bible standard of Christian attainments is not reached at a bound, for there is first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.

III. *The expectations of the wise builder will be verified.*

(*a*) *He expects comfort.* Comfort is the effect of the cause; and if a man has wisely chosen the ordained cause, the desired effects are sure. In the case of the man who built upon a rock, it was the secure foundation and the consciousness of victory over the tempest that brought not a "sad countenance" but comfort to his mind. The unwise builder lacked a foundation, and, therefore, lost comfort and was sad. Spiritually, the basis of comfort is Christ, for Paul says that God is the father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. Christ came to bring comfort, and He has promised not to leave us comfortless. But joy comes through believing in Christ. What comfort to know that death does not reign in our souls, but eternal life through faith? What comfort for the broken and contrite heart to know that all its sins, though multitudinous, are forgiven? What comfort to feel that we are not our own, but children of a King? What joy steals over the Christian's soul to realize that he is not resting upon an arm of flesh, but upon the "everlasting arms." The wise builder will realize the comfort he expects, but the unwise builder can expect nothing but sadness and loss.

(*b*) *The wise builder expects commendation.* God commends the right and condemns the wrong. He is favorable toward that which is in harmony with His will. God supports him who builds upon Him, while he who builds upon some other foundation shall suffer loss. No one need expect the commendation of God through his own righteousness, but through the righteousness of Christ. No one upon any grounds of his own can claim the favor of God, but he expects forgiveness and mercy through the manifestation of faith. The unjust steward did wisely in cancelling a portion of the debt of those who owed his lord, and for this he was commended. The faithful will hear the "well done," but the unfaithful will lose even that which he hath. They who continue to the end, resting upon the true "corner stone," shall be saved; but he who faints or grows weary by the way shall not reap life everlasting. Then through the promises of His word the faithful expect a reward, for "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

(*c*) *The wise builder expects an abiding habitation.* If the Scriptural conditions are fulfilled, God gives us reason to look for a better country where sighing and sorrowing are unknown. He that is born again will see the kingdom of heaven. To His disciples Christ said: "I go to prepare a place for you," and the promise is that where He is we shall be also. No man can have a brighter prospect before him than the man who builds wisely and well. May each one ask himself these questions: "Where am I building? and how am I building?"

How fitting are the words of the poet:

"On what foundation do you build, my friend?
Are your hopes for the future fair?
Do your walls reach down to the rock below,
And rest securely there?
Sad wrecks lay round you on the sand, my friend,
The floods and the storms are near;
Will the strong blast hurl to the earth thy walls,
And blanch thy cheek with fear?

"On sure foundation would you build, my friend,
Take heed to the Lord's command;
Ever fast and firm as storms go by
This Rock of Ages stands.
Alas! what folly 'tis to build, my friend,
A mansion so fair, so grand,
With its costly walls and its lofty towers,
On sin's delusive sand."

Baptists on Church and State.

It has been said, recently, that "the disturbing problem of the civilization of the centuries" is the relation of the State to the church. It is gratifying to know that there has come to be, among observing and thinking men, a conviction that there is occasion for a review of the subject; for a revision of hitherto prevalent opinion, and for such a presentation of the true principle which should govern in the case that a reformation in the practice of some countries and of some states in our own Union may be effected speedily. It has also been said that "separation of church and state is essentially republican and Christian;" from which it follows that a union of church and state is essentially un-republican and un-Christian. It would be equally true to say that the idea of an entire separation of church and state is essentially Christian and Baptistic. For it is the boast of Baptists that, from the earliest day of their history until now, they have stood for such a separation, have proclaimed it in their creeds, and have practiced it wherever they have had opportunity to do so. For generations, even for centuries, they stood wellnigh alone in defense of this principle; and to-day they are made glad when they see pedobaptists and Churchmen coming to occupy the same ground.

Probably the chief difficulties in the way of effecting the separation of what have been so long united in public regard are infant baptism, on the one hand, and a wrong conception of the church, on the other. Had the Christian world been ever jealous of the doctrine of regeneration by the Spirit of God as a preparation for, and condition of, churchmembership; had it maintained the doctrine so clearly taught by Christ and His apostles, that only they who give evidence of having been "born of God" have any place in the church, there would have been no difficulty. When Jesus stood before Pilate, He uttered a great truth which the world was unwilling to believe, and the rejection of which has caused it a vast amount of trouble. Just there, as in so many other places, the Master declared the separation between the human kingdom and the Divine, and intimated that Cæsar and God had different realms, the one temporal and material, the other spiritual and eternal. Let Cæsar wield his scepter over the men of flesh and blood, but let Jehovah have as His kingdom those who have been "born from above," and who therefore look for rulership and guidance to Him who has sat down with his father upon His throne. The kingdom of Christ is indentical with His Church. In the New Testament the two words, church and kingdom, are used interchangeably, and their boundaries are one and the same. They are in the kingdom who have yielded themselves to "the King immortal, invisible, the only wise God"; and they are in the church who have come out from the world and separated themselves, who have been made partakers of the heavenly gift, and of the powers of the world to come, who shall finally sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the marriage supper of the Lamb. But these never have been and never can be gathered into one visible body here. They are every one of them members of "the church of the firstborn which are written in heaven"; but they are positively known only to Him who has sealed them with His own signet, putting His name in their foreheads, and writing their names, as remembrancers, on the palms of His hands. Here on earth these redeemed ones are never enrolled as the church; but are separated into churches and groups, with possibly here and there one unrecognized of men, but known of God and numbered among His beloved and redeemed.

It is easy to see that the idea of a state church, to which all citizens must belong, and for the support of which all must contribute, directly or indirectly by virtue of citizenship, is a violation of the principle that the church is made up of those who exercise personal faith in Christ, walking in the Spirit; and that the only practicable thing, in this world, is the gathering of little companies of these into local assemblies, which shall be governed, in all things pertaining to religious life, by the law of Him who has called them into His service. Such assemblies, or churches, can exist only in independence of the State. The support of each must be entirely voluntary, and its government must be in the hands of those who support it and love it. Such a church can be, in the nature of the case, only local, and the Christians of any considerable district of country must be divided up into separate congregations, or churches.

When Constantine declared the State to be Christian he struck a blow against Christianity from which it has not yet fully recovered at the end of sixteen centuries. When the Baptists of Switzerland, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, declared that the State had nothing to do with the religious convictions, nor with the religious practices of it as citizens, except so far as to protect each in the free exercise of that which he had received from on high, they were calling the world back to what their Master had proclaimed and His disciples had accepted, in the days of Agustus, Cæsar and Pontius Pilate. Those Baptists did not conceive of a church co-extensive with the state. They did not ask the magistrate to act in conjunction with their church officials in the enforcement of censures. Let Cæsar look after the State and control those who have no king but Cæsar; and let the assembly of the faithful administer all affairs in which its members exclusively are interested. Had Luther, and Calvin, and Cranmer come into that light, the history of Christianity, and even the history of the world, would have been unspeakably fairer than it is to-day.

But the world moves. Just now there is a waking up to the dangers which arise from a disregard of these principles and truths. It is not a Baptist who writes that this question of Church and State has been "the disturbing problem of the civilization of the centuries." It is not a Baptist who now says, "Separation of Church and State is essentially republican and Christian." Baptists have been saying these things for centuries; and they were Baptists who petitioned and urged the people of the United States to embody in their fundamental law, their constitution, the article of amendment, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, nor deny the free exercise thereof." That is the Baptist demand to-day, whether in the nation, or in the individual state.

The recent efforts of Romanists, encouraged by the too common practice of other denominations, to get money out of the public treasury for the support of their schools, and indirectly for the support of their church, find no sympathy among Baptists. It is probable that, if the whole three-and-a-quarter millions of Baptist church members in the United States (every one of whom has professed personal faith in Christ, and has been baptized on such profession) were polled, on the proposed amendment to the constitution of the United States forbiding sectarian appropriations by the several States, they would be found entirely unanimous in its support. So they have been taught by their "fathers" and so they universally believe. Articles on this subject will be found in a large proportion of the religious papers of the country, during the present week, and in most cases they are needed; but it can not be said that they are needed among Baptists, either as they pertain to churches or denominational schools. Baptists ask for no help for their schools and they protest against help being rendered by the State to others. Not a few of them protest against the State's engaging in higher education. They believe in denominational schools; but they do not believe in that kind of affiliation which has just ended in Faribault, Minn., and which Archbishop Ireland tells us is in operation in "a hundred other places" to-day, and which, in his view, is likely to become prevalent in the United States. It is not useful to argue with Baptists on this point. They are already persuaded. All they need is to have their attention called to a violation of the principle of the entire separation of church and State, and they are unanimous in its condemnation. So may they continue to be.

— Miss Maud Carleton, Ridgetown, Ont., says, "Am using Burdock Blood Bitters right along and find it a perfect blood purifier."

Be Not Afraid.

Fear is weakness. A timid mariner sailing upon tempestuous seas cannot make the desired haven. His mind will be so preoccupied with threatened danger, so diverted from the ship's chart and compass, that correct observations will not be possible. He is fearful when he should be calm and courageous. His companions quickly catch the same spirit when he is found wanting in this, the essential quality of competent seamanship.

It is not different with the Christian mariner. When the billows break upon him, only to produce fear and shrinking of soul, then there will be not only the inability in himself to use the means by which the surging seas may be conquered, but all who see his timidity will be, like himself, in danger of speedy shipwreak.

Peter was in peril. He partially discerned his Lord, but not clearly. He was fearful, and was about to perish. Over the deep a voice, "Be not afraid," came to him. That voice was not for him only, but for the rest of the ship's company. Rather, it was a voice to the millions of all time, struggling, sinking, perishing. "Cast away fear; be not afraid, for it is I," is the one word more than any other that has given strength to this sorrowing, tempted world to overcome the adverse winds and waves.

Who will open our eyes to see this blessed Lord, our ears to hear his assuring voice? All else is of minor importance, for any mere theory without the heart vision is valueless. Who will make our Master's presence real? His voice a veritable revelation? The Holy Spirit will do all this. His office is to make Jesus a living person, a mighty Saviour to every trusting soul, whatever may be the seas of trouble that threaten.

It is for each one to ask for the Spirit's aid. A request for the Spirit to enlighten is as pleasing to God as the answer is necessary to our sight of Christ. That request is reasonable, is according to God's plan of mercy, is honored everywhere and at all times.

How may we ride life's tempestuous billows safely? By a courageous spirit.

How may we have this courage? By seeing Jesus.

How may we see our Lord? By the indwelling Comforter.

How may we have him as our permanent guest? By earnest, sincere, believing prayer.

The Honest Man.

To the Editor of the Messenger and Visitor:

Please inform your readers that I will mail free to all sufferers the means by which I was restored to health and manly vigor after years of suffering from nervous weakness. I was robbed and swindled by the quacks until I nearly lost faith in mankind, but thanks to heaven, I am now well, vigorous and strong. I have nothing to sell and no scheme to extort money from anyone whomsoever, but being desirous to make this certain cure known to all, I will send free and confidential to anyone full particulars of just how I was cured. Address with stamps:

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P. O. Box, 143, Detroit, Mich.

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— James T. Bailey, 33 Westminister St., Boston, Mass.: "I had a more speedy and lasting relief from dyspepsia by the use of your K. D. C. than from any other remedy I have taken, and I have tried about all of them."

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To William Harington and Eliza L., his wife, and all others whom it may concern:

I MARGARET ANNE PARNTHER, of the City of Saint John, in the City and County of Saint John, widow, hereby give you notice that in default of payment of certain mortgage monies due and owing to me by virtue of the Indenture of Mortgage made by you, the said William Harington and Eliza L. Harington, bearing date the sixth day of January, A. D. 1886, I shall, on **Saturday, the Eleventh day of November** next, at twelve o'clock noon, at Chubb's Corner (so called), in Prince William Street, in the City of Saint John, in the City and County of Saint John, proceed to a sale of the lands and premises mentioned and described in said indenture, in execution of the powers thereby vested in me.

Dated the 13th day of September, A. D., 1893.

M. A. PARNTHER.

A. H. DEMILL,
Solicitor for Mortgagee.

To the Heirs, Executors, Administrators and Assigns of Thomas Appleby, late of the City of Saint John, deceased, and all others whom it may concern:

WE hereby give notice that in default of payment of certain mortgage monies owing to the trustees under the last will and testament of George W. Ritchie, deceased, by virtue of the Indenture of Mortgage made by said Thomas Appleby, deceased, and Fanny Lucy, his wife, bearing date the first day of April, A. D. 1884, we shall, on **Wednesday, the Eleventh day of October next**, at 12 o'clock, noon, at Chubb's Corner (so called), in Prince William Street, in the City of Saint John, in the City and County of Saint John, proceed to a sale of the lands and premises mentioned and described in said Indenture, in execution of the powers thereby vested in said trustees.

Dated the first day of September, A. D. 1893.

H. W. FRITH,
ELIZABETH I. RITCHIE,
Trustees of last will George W. Ritchie, deceased.

A. H. DEMILL,
Solicitor for Mortgagees.