

the cooling breeze of evening strengthens into the wild tornado; and the smooth rivulet, now swelled by streams from the mountains, sweeps over the plains a resistless torrent. The sandy foundation is washed away by the current. The pillars of the house are shaken by the whirlwind. The whole presently becomes a heap of ruins, and either leaves the builder exposed to the fury of the tempest, now when a shelter is most wanted, or overwhelms him beneath its ruins.

The other, prudent and thoughtful, looks forward into futurity. He remembers that summer does not remain for ever, nor the sun appear always in cloudless splendor. He remembers that winter approaches, bearing storms and tempests on its wings. Accordingly he chooses a situation where he can not only find a pleasant residence under the clear and cloudless sky of summer, but also where he may hope to be sheltered, while the storms of winter in all their fury are raging around. "He built his house upon a rock." And mark the wisdom of his choice. He experienced the same change of seasons that the other man did. Summer departed from him also. The sky was overspread with dark-rolling clouds. The winds of heaven arose. The rains descended in torrents, and the hills poured down their foaming cataracts; but the house, firm as the stable basis on which it was erected, bade defiance to the violence of the tempests, and stood unmoved amidst the swelling of the waters, affording its occupant a safe shelter from the impetuosity of the warring elements.

The houses here spoken of are the hopes of eternal happiness which men entertain; and the foundations, on which these houses are built, represent the different grounds on which men built their expectations of heaven. The ruin, the floods, the winds, which come upon these houses, are figurative of that great and awful trial, which we must all undergo before the tribunal of Jehovah. The wise man is the representative of those, who have been seeking salvation in the way which is pointed out in the Gospel; of those, whose hopes will stand the scrutiny of eternal justice; of those who have heard the sayings of Christ, have believed and obeyed them. The foolish man is the representative of those whose conduct will not bear the scrutiny of divine justice; of those who have rested satisfied with a dead faith, a mere profession of Christianity; of those, who, though they have heard the sayings of Christ, have not done them.

The design of the parable, then, is evident. It is intended to point out the great importance of fixing our hopes of heaven on a sure foundation, and the awful and irremediable disappointment, which those, who have built on an insecure basis shall experience, when the trial comes, which shall sweep away every refuge of lies.

How awful must be the condition of a person who should find himself in the situation

of the foolish man described in the parable. What would be his feelings when he saw the deluge spreading around him, when he beheld the waves rising higher and higher upon his house, when he perceived the foundation giving way, and felt by the shaking of its pillar that it would not long be able to withstand the impetuosity of the tempest. When he perceived the inevitable fate which awaited him how would he bewail his carelessness which had led him to fix on so insecure a foundation!

But how much more tremendous is the state of that man who lays a false foundation for eternity! Oh! how awful must his disappointment be, who, when counting upon an eternal habitation in heaven, finds, but too late, that he has been mistaken, and that he must now make his bed in hell. Perhaps he had walked on earth with the people of God, he had heard the words of eternal life, and professed attachment to the Saviour; he was, perhaps, a kind-hearted inoffensive man,—a man unstained by gross crimes, and one who thought himself sure of heaven: but now, when the books of judgment are opened, and the secrets of all hearts revealed, it is found that his conduct, however blameless in the opinions of men, or however praiseworthy in his own estimation, has been uninfluenced by faith on Jesus, and therefore, when weighed in the scales of eternal justice, it is found wanting.

What would be the sensations of such a man upon his death-bed, were his eyes opened to the awfulness of his situation! What have been the feelings of thousands, who have felt themselves in this condition! How many, even before they left this world, have felt the bitter remorse of conscience, accusing them of having neglected the one thing needful! And oh! with what anguish have they lamented the precious hours which they have spent in vanity; with what deep regret have they acknowledged that they had given their hearts to the world instead of God; that they had sought a portion here, instead of one in heaven; that they had built their house upon the sand, instead of founding it upon the Rock of Ages. Who, in contemplating such a prospect, does not almost involuntarily exclaim, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Who does not envy the condition of the man, whose house, founded on a rock, is unshaken by the tempests; whose faith resting on the Rock of Ages, and whose hope entering within the veil, can afford him a solid stay, when earthly things are disappearing from his view? Who would not wish to be able, when time is no more, to look without dread on the awful scenes of the judgment day, and, amidst the flames which encircle the throne of judgment, to behold the approving smile of a Saviour?

But they who would enjoy such a privilege, must be careful to build on a sure foundation. What then is that Rock on which we must