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ANNIVERSARY SERMON,

*Preached by the Rev. W. S. Rainsford, B. A., on behalf of the Upper Canada Bible Society, in St. James' Cathedral, Toronto, Sunday evening, May 8th 1881.*

Luke vi. 47, 48.—“Whosoever cometh to Me and heareth My sayings and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like. He is like a man which built a house, and digged deep and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house and could not shake it, for it was founded upon a rock.”

Let me offer a few prefatory remarks upon the text—not, as I hope, inapposite to my subject. Here our Lord Himself lays down the conditions of spiritual success. If we would build for eternity—

1. We must dig deep. None of your merely surface-scratching theories, so cheap and so common among giddy souls, will do. It is a feature of our day; everybody must have a theory about everything, no matter how ignorant the person, or inscrutable the subject. We may shortly expect a reaction against this most unsatisfactory state of things. Sooner or later, men will discover that raking the surface, however neatly done, cannot take the place of a deep soul-scrutiny of truth. There lack not signs, I think, already of this healthy reaction. I see at the University of Harvard, Mass., four per cent. alone of the undergraduates return themselves as agnostics. Deep, painful questioning may lead some into what Tennyson powerfully calls “Sunless gulfs of doubt,” but a flippant unbelief should be a thing despised of all good men and pure women. The nature of man after all demands a foundation more permanent than sand—craves a rock, broad, firm, and solid—on which to rest the weight of its, at times, troubled existence. And the good God, who governs all things, is teaching, and will teach us, first by loving leadings, next, when necessary, by ruin crashing after ruin, to dig till the rock is found. Did we constantly remember this, His fixed purpose, surely we could say more trustfully—

“All is well, tho' faith and form  
 Be Sundered in the night of fear.”