

the mode of communicating it, and imperative as were the injunctions to observe and do, the people soon forgot their obligations, or so explained it, that a mere external, and formal conformity, was all that was supposed to be necessary, even by those among them who were eminent for their reputed piety and virtue.

This was the principle, and practice, when the Supreme Legislator appeared among men. He who afterwards "magnified the law and made it honourable" by his death, took the earliest opportunity of explaining it, and showing the latitude of its requirements.—On a mountain he delivered it—on a mountain he paid the penalty attached to its violation—on a mountain he explained it—surrounded by an admiring multitude, "he taught as one having authority," and his lessons on that occasion, challenge all that has been said since time began, by the wise and erudite so called, unaided by revelation.

Our Lord, in the inimitable discourse alluded to, having given an epitome of the whole duty of man, concludes with the comparison which stands at the head of this article. The illustration there given is easily comprehended by every one who reads it.—The first part is a simple representation of the stability of those whose hearts are purified by the influence of truth—the latter part is descriptive of him who lives in the habitual neglect of preparing for eternity, and dies unpardoned, unforgiven.

The Christian's life is frequently and properly compared to a warfare—he has conflicts—conflicts with temptation, persecution, and Satan, who "goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." For "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers." The salvation of the soul must be acquired by conflict and strife—all the elements of confusion, and tempest, in their wildest shock, will gather round the Christian—but he is secure; he is built on a foundation, even on the foundation that is laid in Zion—a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.

Contemplate the security of the house.—
 "The rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock." Think of its connection with the work of Christ—with the influence of the Spirit—with the promises of God. Behold it! it falls not, it is built on a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Behold it! The tempest may rise to fury, and dash and beat upon it—the forked lightnings may play—the hoarse thunders may roll and reverberate—the rain may descend in torrents—the hurricane may collect all its force—the earthquake may rumble below, and threaten accelerated and total ruin. Still, the house shall stand unmoved; it shall stand with not an atom shivered—it shall stand a noble monument of the Divine power and mercy—it shall stand firm as the Rock of Ages—it shall stand, an everlasting proof of that declaration, "The foundation of God standeth sure."

Turn for a moment to the other side of the picture.—"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, &c." There are those who hear, and assent to the truth, yet suffer it not to have its designed influence on them. Some there are who live in procrastinating neglect; some, in palpable indifference; some in blaspheming infidelity;—such have their house built on the sand. Others, again, are laying a sandy foundation, by allowing the riches, the pleasures, and the honours of the world to engage all their attention. Let such recollect, that however secure they may imagine themselves, the storm is gathering fast around them—they are shortly to be introduced to the presence of the Judge, and, unless saved while probationers, all the elements of retribution shall beat upon them. "He that believeth not shall be damned." The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his holy Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Montreal, October 9.