

December 27

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. 1 John 5:21

WE are not to put our trust in leaders, but in the Lord. This does not signify that we are not to trust leaders, and not to acknowledge leaders, for all the history of

R4003 "How many have been hindered, turned aside from the right path, by a misplaced faith! How many today are worshipping the creeds and theories of men and neglecting the Word of the Lord! How necessary to us that, while recognizing the fact that God has always used mouthpieces and leaders amongst his people, we should also recognize the fact that Satan has many mouthpieces and provides many leaders, and that our method of discrimination as between the true and the false prophets must be by their faithfulness to the Word of God, as it is written--"If they speak not according to this Word it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. 8:20'.) Let us then not only resolve to cultivate faith, but that we make sure that it will have foundation in the Word of the Lord. And to thus make sure will imply such a love for truth, such an appreciation of the divine Word, as will lead us to spend time and energy, money, everything, that we may know the truth and be made free by it."

R4926 "True, there shall arise false teachers, perverting the Word of the Lord, and seeking by cunning sophistries to subvert your souls; but if in simplicity of heart the Lord's children require a "Thus saith the Lord" for every element of their faith, and carefully prove all things by the Word, they will be able readily to distinguish the true from the false. And having done so, the Apostle Paul (Heb. 10:35') counsels us to have confidence. The Lord, our Shepherd, will care for the true sheep."

R5351 "When we remember that Jordan represents consecration, and that those who crossed Jordan typically represented those Christians who have entered into a Covenant with God and who have been begotten of the Spirit; and when we remember that the conquests of Canaan represented the spiritual battles of the consecrated and the subjugation and possession of the citadel of the heart, the sin of Achan has a new force and meaning. It corresponded closely to the sin of Ananias and Sapphira. They had devoted, or consecrated, their property to the Lord's service, and then attempted to take back a portion of the devoted wealth. They would rob God..."

The Apostle declares that "Covetousness is idolatry." It puts first and most prominently the thing which is coveted; and when this coveted thing is contrary to the Divine will, it signifies that the coveted thing is esteemed more than God--is desired more than the Divine favor. From this

the Lord's dealings with His people, the typical as well as the antitypical, shows us that He is pleased to use human agencies as His representatives in the teaching and leading of His people from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge. The lesson to be learned is that the Lord is thoroughly com-

viewpoint the whole world is full of idolatry today. The idols most worshiped are wealth and pleasure. These occupy the time and the attention of nearly everybody. Time and strength, honor and manhood and womanhood, are poured out lavishly for these "idols."...

What is the result?... The possession of wealth brings not the joy and peace which they had hoped and believed. It has brought care, perplexity and still greater hunger, which they know not how to satisfy.

So it is with the worship and pursuit of pleasure. It is an ever-continuing chase and seeking for pleasure. The grasping of it seems to bring, not joy, but discontent and heart-hunger. As a result the worshippers of mammon and pleasure are unhappy. The world is discontented, and apparently growing more so as the days pass by.

Man is so constituted by nature that his finest and noblest sentiments, which bring him the most satisfaction, joy and peace, rest and happiness, are the exercise of his mind and talents God-ward."

R5298 "We are not meaning to suggest that any Christian would be liable to make a golden image literally. We do mean to say, however, that this matter of making images, and of allowing them to divert and absorb our worship of God is one of the greatest trials and tests which comes to Spiritual Israelites. The golden calf which some set up to worship is business. They give themselves wholly to it, sacrificing their time and energy. They treat it as a god. The love of money and of the things which money can procure leads into idolatry, and thereby breaks their covenant with the Lord.

Others idolize the opposite sex, and give all that they possess for its favor and fellowship. They worship the creature more than the Creator, as the Apostle explains. They are making a great mistake. Jesus declared this, saying, He that loves father, or mother, or children, or self or any other creature more than Me is not worthy of Me."

(Mat 6:21 KJV) "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

R874 "The heart's treasure is that for which we would and do make the greatest sacrifices of time, strength, convenience etc... What you sacrifice most for, becomes your treasure. That which costs us most and which we give most for, we love most, and thus it is proved to be our treasure."

petent to manage His own work, and that while we may look for His leading through human agencies our trust is not in them, their wisdom, their strength, but in the Lord's wisdom and strength, guiding them and us through them. Z. '02-284R3078:5

R874 "In proportion as we are faithful to our consecration in rendering our sacrifices, denying self and following the Master's steps, we come to realize the heavenly treasure more and more clearly, and our hearts are set more and more upon it. On the contrary the more we handle and spend time and attention upon earthly things, the more they get to fill our hearts and so would crowd out the heavenly."

R3386 "On every hand policy suggests the setting up of idols -- that we love or respect or serve some one or some thing or some system in an improper spirit or degree, and allowing such to take the place in our hearts which properly belongs to the Lord only. Some have their chief temptation from one quarter and others from another quarter. Some are disposed to idolize husband or wife or child, and really, in their affection and interest and devotion, give these a place superior to that accorded to the Lord. Others are inclined to idolize wealth and to devote themselves to it, continually serving it, seeking it as though it were the most important thing in the world. Others are disposed to worship fame, desiring to be thought some great one either in the Church or in the world, to attain a position, a pre-eminence; they hunger and thirst more after the pre-eminence than after righteousness--they worship it, it becomes their idol; in their hearts and time and affections it takes to a considerable extent the place belonging to God, whose will and service is correspondingly neglected. Others set up selfishness pure and simple as their idol; they serve self, minister to self, comfort self, please self, etc., instead of God. In many respects this idol of self is the most horrible one of all--the meanest looking. Others, disdain personal ambition and selfish consolations, take on in some respects a nobler thought, yet are deceived by the Adversary in worshipping a sect, a party, a faction. To it they will sacrifice, to it they will yield their lives, for it they would yield their reputations, and the while--like the Apostle, before his name was changed from Saul to Paul -- they would verily think that they did God service. Let us, dear brethren and sisters, keep ourselves from all idols, and, as the Apostle exhorts, sanctify the Lord God in our hearts. "The Lord your God will prove you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.--Deut. 13:3."

R3077 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)
"SO MOSES THE SERVANT OF GOD DIED"
--DEUT. 34:1-12.--SEPTEMBER 21.--

OUR LORD ALONE EXCEPTED, no character of history stands out before us so grandly and majestically as that of Moses, the great Apostle Paul, even, being overshadowed by him. If we think of him as a man, we see a sublime grandeur and nobility of character, combining strength with humility, wisdom with love and

gentleness. If we consider him as the leader and deliverer of Israel, we find that he accomplished a greater work than any of the kind before or since. If we consider him as the lawgiver, we find in his code of laws justice, wisdom, mercy and an appreciation of human nature far superior to anything of his day, and the basis upon which

the laws of Christendom in this twentieth century are built. If we consider him as a statesman, we find him wise, prudent, careful, yet broad. We see how he brought order out of confusion, and changed a disorganized rabble of over a million into a thoroughly organized and well ordered nation. But it is when we come to consider him as the servant of God that his character shines out most brilliantly. His faithfulness to God; his faithfulness to the trust committed to him as the Mediator for his people; his self-sacrificing spirit in connection with the entire work, indicating that he served not the god of fame or of ambition or of self-love, but the Lord of hosts.

The greatness of Moses would be incomprehensible to us from any other standpoint than that which the Scriptures set forth; viz., that he was under special divine direction as God's servant, and that, therefore, being naturally an able, efficient, humble, good man, had these manifold qualities of his character intensified by reason of the Lord's power working in him and through him for the effecting of the divine purposes.

Moses was now 120 years old; 40 years of his life had been spent as an Egyptian prince, in the court of Egypt, educated, trained, and in the public service as a general and a ruler. The second forty years of his life he was a shepherd in the wilderness, because of his love for the Lord, his appreciation of the divine promise, and his preference to share these with his brethren, the Israelites, rather than to continue in the favor of the Egyptians, their enemies and oppressors. We have already seen how this wilderness experience was probably valuable to him, enabling him to transform and transmute the knowledge and experiences already gained into a broad and deep philosophy, the foundation of which was faith in God and respect for his promises. Thus does God sometimes work by natural means to prepare the instruments for his service. The closing forty years of his life were devoted to the exercise of all the knowledge, experience and mental philosophy and faith previously gained, to the service of Israel as their leader, lawgiver, statesman--prophet, priest and king. And now his work was finished--the work which the Lord intended him to do. Another, Joshua, was to take up the work of leader, and he had already, by the Lord's direction, been formally and publicly ordained to this office, and Moses was ready to die.

In considering the fact that Moses was not permitted to go into the promised land, we are to bear in mind that he, as well as the nation of Israel, was being used of the Lord in a typical manner. We are not to go to the extreme of higher criticism, and to think of the deliverance from Egypt as an allegory. It was all true; the history of a series of facts; but truths and facts, under the Lord's guidance, may be so arranged as to be types of still higher facts, illustrations of still higher principles. One of the reasons mentioned why Moses was not permitted to lead Israel into the land of promise was the second smiting of the rock. The smiting the first time (Exod. 17:1-7) was by the Lord's direction, and the waters gushed forth, but the second time (Num. 20:2-12) the Lord said to Moses, "Speak unto the rock," but instead he smote the rock a second time.

In this he spoiled a type, while he made another type. Christ Jesus, the true Rock, was to be smitten but once for our sins, and as a result of that one smiting at Calvary the water of life would be obtained for all true Israelites to all time; and if for a season the flow was stopped it was only necessary that the Rock should be invoked in the name of the Lord, that the waters might again flow forth. Christ dieth no more; death has no dominion over him; therefore in the type the Rock should not have been smitten a second time. But the second smiting, nevertheless, made a new type, because as the Apostle explains, there are some now who crucify Christ afresh, and put him to an open shame--some of his professed followers denying or ignoring the value of the original sacrifice, denying the blood that bought them, are counted as committing the sin unto death--Second Death--and of these Moses became a type, and as a type of a class which would have to do with the antitype of the rock, he was debarred from Canaan.--Heb. 6:4-6.

But even aside from the making of this type, Moses would not have gone into the land of Canaan; because, from another point of view, he was the type of the Law Covenant, which must end before the people can enter into their rest. As Moses was the representative of the Law Covenant, so Joshua became the representative or type of the New Covenant and of its mediator, Jesus, the Deliverer. "The

Law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The Law was a pedagogue or guide to prepare and bring the Israelites along to the borders of Canaan, but the Law could never give them rest, could never take them into the land of promise. Christ, the antitype of Joshua, must do that. We are to remember, too, that Moses' error in smiting the Rock, did not involve him in the Second Death, nor will it work any injury to him as respects the future. It was comparatively a trivial matter, and taught him a valuable lesson which he evidently learned to the Lord's pleasure, and his failure to go into the land of promise, therefore, should not indicate a continuance of divine indignation against him, but merely a continuance of the divine purpose in making of him a type of a class who would have to do with the antitypical Rock, the antitypical water, and the antitypical smiting.

We might remark here, too, that those who smote the Lord the first time, at Calvary, have the promise of full forgiveness. They shall look upon him whom they pierced, and shall mourn for him, and the Lord will pour out upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication, and they shall have full opportunity of recompense and reconciliation. (Zech. 12:10.) It is those who, with greater knowledge, and after they have become partakers of the holy spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the age to come, sin wilfully and count the blood of the covenant a common thing--these are they who commit the real sin unto death, and for whom the Scriptures suggest no hope, or further opportunity, because they have sinned wilfully.

MOUNT PISGAH VIEWS

At this time the Israelites were in the land of Moab, at the northern end of the Dead Sea, opposite Jericho, and nearly in line with the city of Jerusalem. They awaited the Lord's direction, by the pillar of cloud, before crossing Jordan to take possession of Canaan. Here, Moses' work being accomplished, the Lord led him up to Mount Pisgah's top, a lofty peak 3,586 feet above the sea-level. From this point an extended panoramic view was possible--is possible today. Here Moses saw much with his natural eyes, but much more with the eye of faith, seeing the promises which God had made to the tribes of Israel, through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and by his own mouth. He saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied. We hear not a murmur respecting the transfer of leadership and the cessation of his own labors. If God had used him in his service to the extent that he was pleased to do, the servant was thankful and satisfied.

"So Moses, the servant of God, died"--not from weakness and infirmity of age, for "his eye was not dimmed nor his natural force abated";--he died according to the word of the Lord. Throughout his life he had been the Lord's servant, used and blessed as such, protected and kept by the power of God through the many vicissitudes of life, and he who thus kept him, buried him in one of the many little inaccessible valleys of this Mount Pisgah. The Lord not only hid Moses in the grave, but hid the grave, so that no man knoweth its place. This also illustrates the divine wisdom; for, (1) had the place of the grave been known it no doubt would have been an object of veneration amongst the Israelites, a Mecca, to which pilgrimages would have been made, and the man Moses would have been honored, rather than the God whom this man represented, and whose servant and mouthpiece he was. (2) Doubtless, also, the hiding of the grave was typical, and represented that the Law *Covenant*, which died and passed away, was not to be revived; that the New Covenant, not only displaced, but thoroughly replaced it, so that there would never more be need for the Law Covenant in connection with the bringing of Israel to all the precious promises of God.

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime;
And departing leave behind us
Footprints in the sands of time."

This great truth, so beautifully expressed by the poet, finds a grand illustration in Moses. His life and character are a noble example, not only for the Lord's saints, but also for natural men. No one can study the life of Moses, and note its purity, its lofty ideals, its humility, its obedience to the Lord, its faithfulness to his fellows, without being bettered, ennobled, by the contemplation. And each one thus bettered himself by contemplating this noble character,

should in turn seek to leave noble and enduring footprints for others, that perchance "some forlorn or shipwrecked brother seeing may take heart again."

The Book of Deuteronomy is chiefly composed of addresses by Moses to the Israelites, setting before them the various lessons they had received from the Lord, expounding to them the divine law, their duty to God and to man. It closes with the Song of Moses, and Moses' blessing of the nation, two poems whose beauty and literary merit are acknowledged as being of the highest order. Jacob called his twelve sons when dying and pronounced over them certain blessings. So now Moses, as the father of the nation, in these poems, completes his admonitions respecting them, his warnings and encouragements; and in these prophecies, not only their trials and difficulties and failures are foretold, but also their final victories, as we believe these victories shall ultimately be attained by all the Israel of God--all who will become by faith the children of Abraham--the Jew first and also the Gentile, during the Millennial age.--Rom. 11:11,12,28-32.

This song of Moses was evidently not merely for Israel, but prophetic, and was referred to by our Lord (Rev. 15:3,4), long after that nation had been blinded and given up as respects the high calling of this Gospel age. This is the song of Moses and the Lamb, which the overcomers are to sing, those who, with Christ, shall be members of the body of the great Prophet who shall bless, not only the literal seed of Abraham, but all the true Israel of God; all who shall become Israelites according to the faith and obedience of Abraham. This song, after telling of trying experiences, ends with rejoicing, saying, "Rejoice, all ye nations with his people!" The poem of blessing, which applied most particularly to the tribes of Israel, tho doubtless also typical of the elect 144,000 ends with rejoicing, saying, "Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?"--Deut. 32 and 33.

The scribe who wrote the Book of Deuteronomy at Moses' dictation finished his account as a historian, describing the death and burial of Israel's great leader, and declaring the great honor in which he was esteemed, recounting his mighty works, and ascribing these as did Moses himself, not to Moses personally, but to the Lord, who sent him to do them.

JOSHUA THE NEW LEADER

Joshua was now eighty years of age, and was accepted by the Israelites as Moses' successor without murmur. They had, doubtless, learned some valuable lessons in their wilderness discipline. Joshua,

R5029 "A FAITH FOUNDATION NECESSARY" -- LUKE 6:39-49. -- "*Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*"--Jas. 1:22...

THE HOUSE ON THE ROCK

"The closing parable of this lesson is in full tune with its opening verse. In the first parable the blind who trust to the leadership of the blind fall into the ditch. In the parable now before us the picture is that of a householder. If he be wise he will not build upon the shifting sands, which either a wind storm or a rain storm may undermine, and cause a wreck, but he will seek a solid, rock foundation which will endure the storm.

This parable illustrates two classes of believers. Both hear the Great Teacher's instructions and both believe and both rear faith structures and entertain heavenly hopes. But the one is more prudent, more careful than the other. One seeks for the doctrines and principles of the Divine Word, and builds his faith structure upon that true foundation which the Divine Revelation affords. His faith cannot fail whatever storms may assail; it is surely founded on the Divine promises.

The unwise believer takes too much for granted and builds upon the traditions... He fails to appreciate the necessity for having a proper foundation for his faith and his

works. In the time of stress and storm with which this Age will end all such will find the foundation swept from under their faith structure."

R3746 "TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR." -- MATTHEW 7:15-29.-- "*Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only.*"--Jas. 1:22

OUR lesson follows the Sermon on the Mount, and was evidently intended as a parable, to impress upon the minds of the Lord's people the importance of what they had heard--the importance of obeying as well as hearing the good tidings. It sets forth the good results of careful obedience, in contrast with the unsatisfactory results to those who would fail to obey. It is evidently not evil surmising if we are on the lookout for false teachers, who our Lord declared would come amongst his sheep to mislead them. Neither can it be evil speaking to call the attention of the sheep to such false teachers. The Master and the apostles foretold and forewarned against them and so should all who are faithfully following the Master's example.

But we are to distinguish them in the manner which our Lord and the apostles clearly indicated: however smooth, polished, educated, gentle, they may be on the surface, we must get to know them better

it will be remembered, was Moses' companion when he went up into the mountain, Sinai, and there received the Law, and indeed throughout the wilderness journey he seems to have been the one above all others upon whom Moses could thoroughly rely. He and Caleb were the two spies who brought the favorable report, declaring that by the help of the Lord Israel might go up and assuredly take possession. In the change of leadership Israel learned another great lesson; viz., that their confidence and trust must not be in man; that so long as they recognized the Lord as their Leader they might feel safe and confident; because, altho others might pass away, the Lord would abide faithful and could raise them up at any time just such leaders as he saw best.

There is a lesson in this matter for spiritual Israelites as well. ⁽¹⁾We are not to put our trust in leaders, but in the Lord. This does not signify that we are not to trust leaders, and not to acknowledge leaders, for all the history of the Lord's dealings with his people, the typical as well as the antitypical, shows us that he is pleased to use human agencies as his representatives in the teaching and leading of his people from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge. The lesson to be learned is that the Lord is thoroughly competent to manage his own work, and that while we may look for his leading through human agencies our trust is not in them, their wisdom, their strength, but in the Lord's wisdom and strength, guiding them and us through them.

Another lesson here set forth is found in the words, "Israel hearkened unto him [Joshua] and did as the Lord commanded Moses." Joshua was to be followed only as the people could realize that he was following God's instructions, given through Moses-- through the Law. In the antitype the great Deliverer Jesus, will be the commander of the people, will bless the people during the Millennial age, and they must hear him and must obey him, but all that he will speak and all that he will order will be in full accord with the divine law, as represented by Moses. The Christ, during the Millennial Kingdom, will attempt nothing on behalf of mankind in violation of the laws of righteousness, the laws of God. But everything in the way of lifting mankind up, will be by magnifying the Law of God, and making it honorable, and assisting all to conform their lives thereto, but not by that Law Covenant which is forever dead.

⁽¹⁾ Dec. 27 Manna, 1 John 5:21

than by surface indications before we may dare trust them as leaders of the flock--we must become intimately acquainted with them, their motives, ambitions, private life. This our Lord intimates by telling us to beware of them if they are ravenous, greedy, selfish, even though outwardly they may have a sanctimonious air. The Apostle speaks of these, saying that "grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock": "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you": "even denying the Lord that bought them."--Acts 20:29; 2 Pet. 2:1,3.

We are to balance the matter, however; and while vigilant to detect and resist the wolves in sheep's clothing, as well as out of it, we should remember our Lord's teachings on the other side of the question--that those who are not against us are on our part, and that we should neither reprove as wolves nor disown as brethren those whose hearts, whose characters, give evidence that they belong to the Lord, even though they follow not with us in respect to his service, the promulgation of his message, etc. In other words, we are to love all and wish God-speed to all loving the Lord and manifesting his Spirit, whether they associate with us or not. In a word, the divine rule is very broad and very narrow at the same time. It is nar-

row as respects discipleship and character: faith in the redeeming blood, consecration to the Master, and a manifestation of his Spirit are the lines of discipleship--broad within themselves, but narrow as compared to the lines of the world.

"KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUITS"

Anticipating our query respecting how we may know the true from the false our Lord says, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." He illustrates this by suggesting that grapes are not to be expected on thorn-bushes nor figs on thistles, although it is said that there is a thorn-bush in Palestine which grows a fruit somewhat resembling grapes, and a kind of thistle with heads shaped like figs. Nevertheless, no one was in danger of being deceived thereby, nor should any among the Lord's people be in doubt respecting the character and the fruitage of the life of those who are the followers of Christ.

The thought is that the Lord's true people are of such a kind that the fruit of their lives is nourishing and refreshing toward all who have fellowship with them. On the other hand there are persons who, thistle-like, are always scattering seeds that will cause trouble--false doctrines, evil surmisings and errors; and there are some who, like thorn-bushes, instead of bearing refreshing fruit, are continually reaching out to impede, to irritate, to annoy, to vex, to poison, to injure, those with whom they come in contact. The intimation clearly is that the Lord's people ought to have little difficulty in distinguishing between the false teachers who would mislead them and the under-shepherds who gladly lay down their lives in the service of the flock. The one class are continually mischief makers, underminers, destroyers. The other class are helpers, builders, strengtheners, peacemakers.

Not content with giving us a word-picture distinguishing between wolves and sheep, between injurious plants and fruitful ones, our Lord next institutes another illustration still more searching--contrasting a healthy fruit-tree with a diseased or evil one, contrasting a healthy Christian with a perverted and misguided one. He declares that a sound tree brings forth good fruit, but a corrupt or diseased tree brings forth undesirable, evil fruit. How we have all witnessed this in nature--the sound apples come from good apple trees that are in healthy condition. The knotty, wormy, unsatisfactory fruit comes from trees that are diseased, under-nourished, uncared for, unpruned, attacked by worms, etc.

In this illustration our Lord seems to refer to the fact that those who are his disciples, sound and proper enough to begin with, might become evil, might lose their spiritual strength and fruitfulness--their carefulness. Lack of nourishment in the soil would expose a tree to disease, blight. So the Christian who would add to his attainment in knowledge is liable to decline in spirituality unless he have spiritual nourishment of the right kind. As without pruning the tree would develop suckers, which would corrupt it and ultimately destroy its fruitfulness, so the Christian needs the disciplines, the prunings, that he may develop in character and the graces of the Spirit. Our heavenly Father is the great husbandman

and has promised us the proper care, yet it is not exactly with us as with the trees; for because of our higher endowment, our god-like quality of individuality, will, we are dealt with differently.

To a considerable degree it is for us to determine what nourishment we will have. The Lord supplies the good soil of Truth, the refreshing showers of grace, and the nourishment of precious promises, but it is for each of his people to use these and thereby to grow in grace, knowledge and love. We cannot, then, blame the Husbandman if we come short, and be unfruitful from lack of nourishment. None of his good promises can fail; whatever failing there may be must be in ourselves. Likewise with the pruning--the Lord will send the chastisements, trials, difficulties; but with our independent will it is possible for us to pass these by and, failing to use them, fail to correct the weaknesses, shortcomings and wrong developments of our nature. It is possible with us, notwithstanding all the development or pruning we may receive, to set our affections on houses, lands, or earthly aims, objects or individuals, which, like the suckers in the illustration, would draw away our vitality and hinder our bearing of acceptable fruit.

The sound tree cannot bear poor fruit, nor the corrupted or decayed tree bring forth good fruit. While each of the Lord's people is to examine himself before the mirror of God's Word, to ascertain his own character, disposition, likeness or unlikeness to divine standards, nevertheless, in this matter of deciding about fruit, whether it be good or bad, each of the Lord's people is called upon to exercise judgment in regard to others as well as to himself--what are the results, the fruitage, the token of my own life, and what is the fruitage, results, token of my brother, my neighbor. Our Lord's intimation is that these tests are specially applicable to those who would be leaders of his flock. They should all be examples, bearers of good fruit, and these good fruits should be looked for as a test of good, sound character--a character fully in harmony with the Lord. True, all are imperfect, and with the best of intentions we cannot do all that we would, but the weakest of the Lord's brethren must bear some fruits that other brethren could discern, and these fruits should be accepted by the brethren according to the divine standard, viz., not of the flesh but of the spirit, the will, the intention. So, then, every true child of God should manifest before the brethren and before the world honesty, faithfulness of intention, a consecrated heart, mind, will, which would seek in all things to do the will of the Father in heaven...

ON THE ROCK OR ON THE SAND...

Those who build upon the rock our Lord explains to be such as not only hear his message but are obedient thereto to the extent of their ability. Let us remember the words to which he refers--they are the words or message of the Sermon on the Mount, which show the things which are blessed of God in contradistinction to the things which would not have his approval. Those who do, who strive for, who to the best of their ability obey these divine teachings, the message from heaven, are laying the foundations which will be permanent,

which will guarantee them against all the storms, difficulties and trials of the present life.

Those who hear the Master's words and say, "Yea, Lord," but who do not put the Master's teachings into practice, are not built properly upon the rock of Truth, upon Christ. They are building their hope, their faith, their trust upon a foundation which will not stand. When the adversities of life come upon such their hopes will be undermined, their faith will collapse...

"THE FIRE OF THAT DAY"

In this lesson our Lord describes not only the trials and tests which come upon all Christians throughout this Gospel age, but especially the great test in the close of this age--in the "harvest" time. Here his figure is that of rain, floods, and winds beating upon the faith structure of his professed followers, overthrowing the faith of those not properly constructed in accordance with his teachings, but unable to harm those founded on the rock of Truth. A mighty downpour of Truth throughout Christendom is in progress. The great storm is already raging. The various denominations are trembling upon the shock. Their foundations on human tradition, creeds, theories, ignorance, superstition of the "dark ages," are realized to be unsatisfactory. Ere long the storms of Truth will move the quicksand foundation upon which nominal Christendom is built, and her wreck will follow. Only the true people of God will be able to stand the great storm of "that day"--already beginning.

This is the same storm and flood mentioned by the Lord through the prophet Isaiah--"The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding places...when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then shall ye be overthrown by it. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you; for morning by morning shall it pass through, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report [the message, the Truth]."--Isa. 28:17-19.

The same day of trial is pictured under another figure by the Apostle Paul when he says, "The fire of that day shall try every man's work of what sort it is." He pictures true believers built upon the rock, the true foundation, but points out to us the necessity of having a proper house, or faith, as well as a proper foundation. He pictures one faith structure built of wood, hay, stubble, combustible materials, which will shortly be destroyed in this day when the fire of divine judgment shall test every doctrine and destroy every error. He pictures also the proper building constructed of gold, silver and precious stones, the divine promises, and how these will stand every test...

"DOERS OF THE WORD"

Our golden text is well chosen--"Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only." To be honored with a knowledge of the divine will and plan is a great boon, a great blessing; but it brings a great responsibility... We must not merely have this honor but must make use of the privilege and show our appreciation by obedience to the terms of the Covenant -- presenting our bodies as living sacrifices to the divine service, in faithful obedience to righteousness, and in endeavoring to assist others in the same course."