

The Sure Foundation

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"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3)

"Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18).

It goes without saying that we are living in days of swift change and uncertainty – days when the foundations of long existing faiths are crumbling.

Governments are toppling and tottering. Whole nations are giving up conventional customs and forms of government overnight. Traditional orders that have stood the test of time are giving way to new and untried methods. Heritages that have cost the life's blood of unnumbered generations are being sacrificed on the wayside altars of experiment, self-will, personal gain, and materialism. Not since reconstruction days following the Civil War has this nation known such critical conditions.

I think of those priceless monuments of culture in England, France, and Belgium which were so ruthlessly ravaged by the terrible bombings in World War II, the great churches and shrines made sacred by contributions of the noble souls of men of bygone generations, those beautiful works of art and sculpture given to posterity by great mental giants of past ages. Many of these, priceless in value, which could never be replaced were destroyed by the air raids in that war.

We have a counterpart in this our day. Men with no sense of true value and appreciation for the sacrifice of our fathers are ruthlessly squandering the heritage that cost the blood and tears of the godliest men who have ever lived.

These are extreme words voiced by David in Psalm 11. They anticipate a critical situation. The psalmist is expressing tremendous alarm at what appears to him to be the disintegration of not only the framework of the great superstructure of human society, but the very foundation itself.

David is saying that the thing the righteous people and holy people have trusted in for all the past years and the thing that all men of faith in the ages to come will trust in is being threatened. His statement here shows that this tragedy is within the realm of possibility. He is not only expressing fear for himself, but for all the righteous people of all time who have trusted in this same foundation.

The Bible is the complete message of truth to man from God. The Bible doesn't

merely contain truth; it is truth, all truth. The Bible is the verbal revelation of God's will for man. It is the complete revelation of the creation, fall, and redemption – God's work, plans and final disposition of all things.

The Bible was given to us by plenary inspiration and there has been no document since the giving of the Holy Scriptures that can claim the same inspiration. In that one superb, complete document, God gave all that was necessary and there has been no need for additional revelation.

The central theme of the whole Bible is a man – the Son of Man, the Son of God; perfect Man and very God – a man crucified who couldn't stay dead.

Standing as the watershed of the ages is Calvary's cross. Around this central figure the hopes and faith of all men have ebbed and flowed for the past 6000 years. All spiritual aspirations, all noble desires, every holy experience has stemmed from the Cross.

Standing tall and serene with its headpiece pointed up towards heaven, the foot piece pressing down towards hell, its crosspiece casts a shadow to all the world like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The cross has been the foundation of all faith and the fountainhead of all life.

The shadow of the cross has been cast far out across time from the beginning to the ending of human history:

It fell across that little company in Eden as God slew the lambs to clothe our first parents. It fell across Abel's altar. It was seen as Noah hammered on the ark. Abraham bowing by his altar saw the dark shadow of Calvary above him; he saw and believed. (Editor's note: an apparent quote, source unknown)

Every righteous man from Abel to the apostle Paul trusted in that shadow as a sure foundation. They all had a grasp of something that was to them eternal, unchanging, immovable. The understanding of some was dim, but to all it was a sure foundation.

It was said of Abraham that he staggered not at the promises of God, but he believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness.

Listen to Job, crying out in the dark night of despair: "I know that my Redeemer liveth" (Job 19:25).

Old silver-tongued Baalam stood up to say: "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (Numbers 24: 17).

Hear the words of Isaiah: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are

healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:5, 6).

From out of the dim past, those sons of the twilight saw a flickering flame in the darkness. They fastened their anchor to the bedrock of truth. Not having received the promise, yet they accepted it and embraced it.

Through misery and pain, Job lifted up his voice in a burst of inspiration: "Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another" (Job 19: 26, 27).

There is a lot of truth in the world, but there is one central truth around which all other truth has ebbed and flowed; around which error has beat and fought, but it still stands. This truth is at the heart of the universe. Without it there can be nothing on which to fasten the hope of mankind. This underlying truth is that Christ, the Son of God, was a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

In the light of this, some of us might have to revamp our theology: Calvary was not a fire escape. Calvary was not an afterthought. Calvary was not an improvised scheme created to fill an emergency.

From the foundation of the world, Calvary has been a fact. Before the mountains were brought forth, before the Morning Stars sang together, before the sons of God shouted for joy, Calvary was there. Christ was as a Lamb slain.

More than that, God had chosen us to be His holy people. From the foundation of the world, we were in His plan, chosen to a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, a holy nation.

Beginning with Abel, throughout the unnumbered years, men offered a sacrifice. Abraham, Noah, Jacob, David, Elijah, Moses, and a million Israelites offered their sacrifices; lambs died, cattle were sacrificed. But in every sacrifice, in every offering, they were by their actions proclaiming their faith in the Lamb whose blood would one day be shed for the remission of their sins.

Through their offerings, they were saying, "We see Jesus." With every drop of shed blood they were saying, "We see Jesus." In the dying lamb, in the golden altar, in the blood of the victim, in the smoke, in the incense, in all parts of the sacrifice they were saying, "We see Jesus."

Some offered sacrifice for one reason, some for another. Some for custom, some for appearance, some to save face. But some looked beyond the sacrifice and saw Christ in a figure. In their vision beyond the ritual or ceremony of the sacrifice, they saw a man, a perfect man, a lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

The faith of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and all others was contingent upon the actual, literal sacrifice of that Lamb. Their salvation, their sanctification was not

complete until it was sealed by the blood of Christ dying on Calvary.

Thus Paul wrote: "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10: 14). In a word here, it means that He had confirmed His promise, put an eternal seal on all that had gone before. Here He validated every offering from Abel to Calvary.

In our text, David shows alarm. He sees people forsaking the old paths. They are forsaking his God. In this moment of fear and despondency he cries: "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

This is the foundation of truth, and this revelation of truth is God's complete Word in the Bible. It is the plan of redemption complete and there has been no need for additional revelation.

Down through the centuries there have been individuals who were not satisfied with God's revelation. They have come out with "new revelations."

Constantine saw a cross in the sky, which led him to emblazon it on his banners. The cross was his means to victory as emperor. He joined forces with the Christians and two generations later, the vast majority of the empire's population was Christian, at least in name. However, a dire consequence to the church was the subjection of the church organization to imperial control, which later resulted in the fall of the church and ultimately in the Dark Ages.

The most dangerous enemies of the Gospel in the early church, however, were not the Roman emperors, but men who called themselves Christians, who distorted the Gospel and corrupted the church doctrines. The simple Gospel was enlarged and cumbered with many rituals and rites required by the church. The seven Sacraments became necessary to the salvation of man. Men were made to do penance for their sins; indulgencies could be purchased. The pope became supreme and infallible and the only authority in everything concerning religion, church, customs, and morals.

One Pope proclaimed his discovery that the blood of Christ was not sufficient to atone for sin; but there must be one drop of the blood and one drop of the Virgin's milk. This developed into the deification of the Virgin Mary, thus bringing a new addition to the original revelation, which is included in the Bible of the Roman Catholic Church.

In more recent times Mary Baker Eddy "discovered new truth" relative to the mind in religion and wrote another Bible.

In 1823 Joseph Smith had a dream that God sent Maroni to him to give him a new revelation. That revelation supposedly originated 500 years before the birth of Christ. Maroni had buried documents or plaques and through some mystic powers Joseph Smith was directed to a location in New York State where he unearthed the documents. Thus, we have a Mormon Bible.

A few years back we had men all around us who were getting new revelations. All of a sudden they discovered that the church was wrong; all of the church fathers have been wrong; and the world had to wait until they came to get a new revelation. Some had strange quakings in their hands, nail prints in their hands, oil appearing on their hands. Some had crosses in their foreheads, some had angels appear to them and others even talked to the dead.

These are strange revelations. It may not be long until someone will come up with a new Bible including this spiritualism and heresy in it. Down through the past generations, Satan has tried every trick in an effort to pervert the truth, destroy faith, and shake the foundations.

At the close of the nineteenth century, a wave of modernism was threatening the foundations of truth when a band of people who were different came over the horizon. God had called them out from among their peers to bear a message of truth to this world in the last days.

These were peculiar people. There were certain things that set them apart from their contemporaries. They had a doctrine that stirred the world and created a commotion. These old timers feared no man. They needed no loud speakers when they preached for their voices sounded like trumpets in the night.

What giants they were! There was no sacrifice too great to make, no price too high to pay for the propagation of the gospel. They endured much suffering and privation. Persecution was a way of life. Yet they feared no man and dared any to get in their way.

Support was negligible, and many times they were forced to walk from one meeting to another. At times they were compelled to make their beds under the stars, under their tents, or on the straw under the brush arbors.

They preached when they had the favor of the people. They preached when authorities threatened to run them out of town. Nothing could stop them in their mission. They set the world on fire with the gospel of holiness and Pentecost and the common people heard them gladly.

The people of this way were different. Their dress was different, their actions were different, they quit drinking liquor, they stopped smoking, they made restitution, and they kept the Sabbath. They were a holy people. They believed, practiced and taught regeneration, sanctification, the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire with the initial evidence of speaking with other tongues; they experienced and practiced divine healing and believed in holy living.

They burned their way across the country, from county to county, from state to state, preaching in homes, in school houses, in brush arbors, in rented halls, in tents – anywhere people would accept them, they went preaching the gospel. Stemming the tide of modernism, they helped to reestablish and rebuild the foundation of truth in the hearts of

men.

But Satan never relinquishes the fight. He refuses to concede defeat. Again and again he wages his relentless attacks on the church.

The war is still on. It is a fight to the death of truth against error; of the church against the encroachments of modernism, atheism, and materialism; of the forces of true Christendom against the forces of Satan. It is time for every man to stand up and be counted. Who is on the Lord's side? Who is on the side of truth and right? Will the foundations be destroyed? A thousand times, no!

Said Jesus to Peter, "Upon this rock I'll build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it " (Matthew 16:18). We have the promise – the church will come out victorious. If we would be on the winning side, we have only to join the ranks of the righteous who through the ages have "fought a good fight and kept the faith" (II Timothy 4:7 paraphrased).