

The Foundation of Faith

If you are to become established as a believer, your relationship to the Bible must be as strong as your relationship to Christ.

Once

we have laid in our own lives the foundation of a personal encounter

with Christ, how can we continue to build upon this foundation? The

answer to this question is found in the well-known parable about the

wise man and the foolish man, each of whom built a house.

“‘Therefore

whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to

a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the

floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not

fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these

sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who

built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came,

and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was

its fall'” (Matt. 7:24-27, NKJV).

Each

man's house had to endure the storm—the wind, the rain, the floods. But

the wise man built upon a foundation of rock, the foolish man

upon a
foundation of sand. The wise man built in such a way that his
house
survived the storm unmoved and secure; the foolish man built
in such a
way that his house could not weather the storm.

Just what are
we to understand by this metaphor of building upon a rock?
What does it
mean for each of us as Christians? Christ Himself makes this
very clear.

“‘Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will
liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock’”
(Matt. 7:24).

It is God’s Word alone—as we hear it and do it, as we study it
and apply
it—that is able to build up within us a strong, secure edifice
of
faith, laid upon the foundation of Christ Himself (see Acts
20:32).

This
brings us to a subject of supreme importance in the Christian
faith:
the relationship between Christ and the Bible, and, hence, the
relationship of each Christian to the Bible.

CHRIST, THE BIBLE AND THE BELIEVER

Throughout
its pages the Bible declares itself to be the Word of God. On
the other
hand, in a number of passages this same title is given to
Jesus Christ
Himself. For example: “In the beginning was the the Word was
God” (John 1:1).

The Bible is the Word of God, and Christ is the Word of God. Each alike is a divine, authoritative, perfect revelation of God. Each agrees perfectly with the other. The Bible perfectly reveals Christ. Christ perfectly fulfills the Bible. The Bible is the written Word of God; Christ is the personal Word of God.

Before His incarnation Christ was the eternal Word with the Father. In His incarnation Christ is the Word made flesh. The same Holy Spirit who reveals God through His written Word also reveals God in the Word made flesh, Jesus of Nazareth. If Christ is perfectly one with the Bible, then it follows that the relationship of the believer to the Bible must be the same as his or her relationship to Christ.

Your attitude toward God's Word is your attitude toward God Himself. You do not love God more than You love His Word. You do not obey God more than you obey His Word.

You do not honor God more than you honor His Word. You do not have more room in your heart and life for God than you have for His Word. God means as much to you as His Word means to you—just that much, and no more.

THE STANDARD OF TRUTH

We

are living in a time when it is increasingly necessary to emphasize the supremacy of the Scripture over every other source of revelation or doctrine. The Scripture warns us that, side by side with the increased activity and manifestation of the Holy Spirit, there will be a parallel increase in the activity of demonic forces, which always seek to oppose God's people and God's purposes in the earth.

Speaking about this same period of time, Christ Himself warned us: "'Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand'" (Matt. 24:23-25).

In the same way, the apostle Paul wrote: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

I believe God speaks to His believing people through prophecies, visions, dreams

and other
forms of supernatural revelation. Nevertheless, I hold most
firmly that
the Scriptures are the supreme, authoritative means by which
God speaks
to His people, reveals Himself to them and guides and directs
them. All
other forms of revelation must be carefully proved by
reference to the
Scriptures and accepted only insofar as they accord with the
doctrines,
precepts, practices and examples set forth therein.

It is wrong
to quench any genuine manifestation of the Holy Spirit. It is
wrong to
despise any prophecy given through Him (see 1 Thess. 5:19-21).

But
it is vitally necessary to test any manifestation or any
prophecy, by
reference to the Scriptures. No doctrine, no practice, no
prophecy, no
revelation is to be accepted if it is not in full accord with
the Word
of God.

UNITY OF WORD AND SPIRIT

It is not
God's plan that the Word should ever work apart from the
Spirit or the
Spirit apart from the Word. By this divine standard of truth
we are
enabled to detect all forms of satanic error and deception.

The
Scriptures say, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were
made, and all

the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Ps. 33:6).

The word

here translated "breath" is actually the normal Hebrew word for

"spirit." However, the use of the word "breath" suggests a beautiful

picture of the working of God's Spirit.

As God's Word goes out of

His mouth, so His Spirit—which is His breath—goes with it. In this way

God's Word and God's Spirit are always together, perfectly united in one

single divine operation.

To seek the manifestations of the

Spirit apart from the Word will always end in foolishness, fanaticism

and error. To profess the Word without the quickening of the Spirit

results only in dead, powerless orthodoxy and religious formalism.

God's

Word and God's Spirit united in our lives contain all the creative

authority and power of God Himself. Through them God will supply every

need and will work out His perfect will and plan for us.