

FOUNDATION AND FUTURE

The answer to anxiety

By

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Modern man has cut the ties between life and destiny with the result that life seems to fly off in all directions leaving man in a state of despair and anxiety.

Through education our generation has been cut off from the past; not the immediate past such as the American Revolution or World War II, but the stem has been cut closer to the root: back at the creation. Having accepted the theory of evolution as a fact, man has cut the cord that gave him purpose: creation in God's image. In fact he has cut the cord that gave him knowledge of what he is: "And God formed man of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). If man is not a soul, with life inbreathed by God, then who knows what he is?

It is this **not knowing** that gives rise to all kinds of speculations and these in turn open up new and terrible tunnels which lead to fear and frustration farther and farther into the labyrinth of spiritual darkness.

There can be no right reason which is not based upon right foundation. To try to establish security and confidence where there is nothing but deep questions and wild guesses is like trying to build a house on quicksand.

Reason which leads to peace of mind is reasoning that there IS a foundation, and that such a foundation is everlasting. Certainly that foundation cannot be mere material wealth nor can it be the "pursuit of happiness", nor can it be faith in people, nor even in a good and happy home, as important as all these may be. The fact is, they are all temporal and can be taken from us against our wills, by circumstances beyond our control. The true and lasting foundation is that which Christ laid. "For other foundation can no man lay than which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11). This foundation encompasses the purpose and the ultimate goal of life: to be conformed to God's image as an immortal person.

Thus all true faith in Christ is anchored in this foundation, that Christ will bring one ultimately to the image of God and immortality. Whatever be the present problems, many of which are absolutely insurmountable to us mortals, there is the ultimate goal to which we journey, and every problem, every difficulty, every harrowing and bitter experience, takes us one more step along the way. Obviously, the steps will not continue indefinitely. History has a beginning and an end. There was a creation, and there will be a day of judgment with a new creation. Jesus died — a historic fact, and rose again — a solid historic fact. Our faith is based upon these facts plus the fact that we are under the same power that raised Him and He will raise us up to completion.

This is the foundation which cannot be shaken. Christ is both the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. What is in between — that is, the present — is in a state of flux and obviously is shakable. The present earth has already been convulsed once in the flood, and will be convulsed again in the fire. This much we know and expect. Consequently the convulsions of government and economy are also expected. That is part of the known quantity. We simply expect these things to happen in this world of

temporary-ness, change, and sin. But our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20); that is, we are anchored to Christ who changes not. We are pilgrims and sojourners here on the earth (Heb. 11:13), but our permanent home is that spoken of by Peter, a “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness” (II Pet. 3:13). This is that better and heavenly country to which Abraham aspired and is as sure as the resurrection of Christ is history (Heb. 11:16).

Therefore there can be no insecurity nor anxiety over this overall plan. Only the day-to-day changes and obstacles and questions can cause us head-scratching frustrations and tearful sorrows. These are real and intense. It is no good to pretend that they do not bother us, that we do not weep over them, that we do not wonder how to cope with them. Almost everyone is suffering from a multiplicity of problems: domestic problems, financial problems, and physical disorders. It is senseless to tell a person, who is facing great problems, “Don’t worry about it.” Many people are told that if they had true faith they would not worry. The result is that they go seeking everywhere for a “religion” that would keep them from worrying. Because the Scripture says “In nothing be anxious”, many have the feeling that to be deeply concerned to the point of worry is a sin, yet the apostle Paul who penned those words also wrote of his own tears and concern over the churches and of his distress over false doctrines in some of them. While he spoke of being troubled, perplexed, persecuted, and cast down he was never confused and never despaired, because he understood God’s purpose. He had a foundation and a future and therefore all that was in between made sense.

All of God’s people of great faith have lived under tension. Job said, “Even today is my complaint bitter; my stroke is heavier than my groaning” (Job 23:2). Moses, David and Jesus all lived under great tension. Christ wept on various occasions and was called a man of sorrows. If a person had no potential for anxiety he would not be worth a dime. Atheists often uphold, as example, primitive people in some uncivilized country, showing that in their simple life they do not worry over the future, that their children are not punished and hence grow up uninhibited, so that from generation to generation they live without “anxiety”. But their lives are miserable. Having no concern for the future, either of their own or that of the family, they are never prepared for the moment. Indeed, they are free from worry over the future and other events but they are also free from peace, joy, and happiness which comes in achievement, and are certainly free from any hope.

Jesus said, “Happy are you that mourn, for you shall be comforted” (Matt. 5:4). A Christian mourns over sin and evil conditions, but looks forward to all this being rectified in a time of judgment. Jesus said, “Happy are you that hunger and thirst for righteousness” (Matt 5:6). A Christian is one who is deeply concerned over his own life, who is anxious to live nobly before God, who directs his anxieties to this end, that he may learn God’s Word and be conformed to it. “Happy are you that are persecuted for righteousness sake” (Matt. 5:10). The happy-go-lucky person who never takes anything seriously is not likely to suffer persecution. But the millions of Christians today are persecuted because they refuse to conform to a godless society and will not condone the false “brotherhood of man” that is promoted by the religion of Babylon. This causes tension and deep concern, loneliness and sorrow, but it need not cause the anxiety which Jesus exclude. Instead, it will cause the faithful soul to direct his thoughts and his tension to God. His anxiety is directed from inward tension and worry to outward purpose, the

purpose and goal of God, which is eternally established and which must be accomplished, not by man's power, but by God's.

Destructive anxiety exists where man tries to lay his own foundation. He seeks to discover a personal foundation. When it fails he turns to new concepts and hopes that he may find the right foundation. When one foundation after another gives way, he becomes subject to a destructive anxiety. "Is there a foundation for life? Can I find it? How?" The search mounts tension upon tension, with the result that each foundation is less stable, until the mind gives way to nihilism, and hopelessness. Drugs, violence, broken homes, broken lives, and broken nations show the power of such destructive anxiety.

But the wheel does not need to be invented in each generation. Neither does the foundation need to be laid again. God has revealed it and our task is to attach ourselves to it by faith and obedience to God. Anxiety (deep and intense concern) is to be channeled toward building on this foundation. It is a constructive anxiety which causes us to examine ourselves and to stretch our minds and our faith as to carefully think out our actions in order to build the best superstructure of which we are capable.

In doing so there is calmness, peace, and joy because the foundation is laid in eternity. It cannot fail. There is a program written by the Creator and we are in it. We are in it because we belong to Him. It may bring pain, but will not poison. It may call for sacrifice, but not for loss of the real good. It may cause tears, but never terror. The life may be hard, but never hollow. It is founded upon Christ, is going where Christ is, and is being gradually conformed to the image of Christ. It has purpose, direction, a beginning, a present, and a future.

Without the concept of foundation and future, Christianity is so much hot air. The experiences, sensational feelings, tongues, healings, sharing, love — all of these are only fleeting sensations if they are part of a middle without a beginning and an end, like the emptiness between two walls after the walls are removed. Nothing.

For this reason the Gospel is based on fact: the death and resurrection of Jesus. This (these facts) is the "power of God unto salvation." This salvation is of the whole person, as God intends him to be forever.

Why is there so much hypocrisy? Why isn't today's Christianity more "real", as they say? It has plenty of the temporal qualities. Every church tries to outdo the next in sensational and exciting activities. Yet something is missing. The foundation and the future aren't always there. The members drift around with every wind of doctrine and continue to be anxious and often depressed. Were they truly grounded on the foundation and living for the goal Christ offers, they would still have problems but they would be advancing and living with purpose.

In any work of construction there may be some anxiety over difficulties and setbacks. In the growing Christian there are growing pains. But in it all there is the joy, the satisfaction, and the exciting hope of having begun on a sure foundation and being able to build toward a glorious and eternal future.

The tension in the life of Jesus mounted almost to the breaking point in the garden of Gethsemane where he sweat "as it were drops of blood". He then turned this anxiety outward to the Father, saying, "Not my will but thine be done."

The issue today is the same as it was then: the Kingdom of God. Either we follow the god of this world to receive the kingdoms of the world and all the fear, evil and the

doom that awaits them, or we submit fully to Christ and loyalty to His Kingdom which is not of this world. And you cannot have both.

Christians who are aware of antichrist conspiracy in the kingdoms of the world have a great responsibility. It is not to center attention upon worldly government, but to bear witness to the foundation God has laid, and the future which He reveals for all His own people. God executes judgment upon the nations (Psa. 2:9, 79:6). But the church of the Lord is built upon a Rock, the foundation Rock — Christ, and the gates of Hades [the grave] shall not prevail over it. Stability in this day can be found only upon this truth, and it ends guesses, speculation and destructive anxiety.

We who are grounded upon the foundation of Christ are on the way to a glorious future. This foundation and future gives meaning and purpose to the middle, the “now” in which we live.

“I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14).

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