

10. Let's Broaden The Foundation

“Virtue”

When the Christian comes to Christ in full surrender, he accepts Christ as his Saviour from sin. His concern is primarily eternity. In Christ he now feels secure and no longer needs to worry about “making it” to heaven. Relief is blessed and reassuring. This may last for only a short time or it may be permanent. However, there will come to the earnest seeker for truth, the fact that the Christian’s life is not in a “rocking chair” but in the rugged, every day life in this world of sin. He soon learns that it is one thing to be a Christian in the company of Christians—friends who are pulling for him, praying for him, and trying to encourage him. He later learns that it is another thing to live the life in different circumstances. He even finds that his own home is not as easy a place to live the Christian life as in the church or Bible study group where he learned of Christ. He may find that his job requires decisions that are embarrassing to him now that he belongs to Christ. Opportunities come to him whereby he could benefit himself greatly with only a very small compromise in his new way of life. The natural thing to do in each case would be to turn to reason. It is so difficult for us to remember that faith is not human reasoning. It requires divine reasoning to find the right answers. Jesus said, “Come now, and let us reason together . . .” Isaiah 1:18. “You have trusted Me for your salvation. Will you trust Me to take care of your daily needs as well? Will you let Me have control of every facet of your life?” He promises that if we will do this He will supply all of our needs, plus an abundant entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

This, of course, does not mean that the “rocking chair” is the answer after all. It is a comforting thing to know, however, that I am to yield myself as fully to Christ now, in the new life of faith, as I yielded myself to iniquity before I came to Jesus. Paul says, “. . . for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto

iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.” Romans 6:19.

Jesus lived that completely yielded life, yet He was ambitious, energetic, careful to do the best work that He could do. He was never content with mediocrity. So, the born-again Christian will do his best, even if he sees no advantage to himself. His reward is of a higher nature than the world values. God can, and will, place such a person in positions of responsibility where His own glory (character) as seen through the human instrument will be a magnetic influence to draw men and women to Christ.

We have stated before that Christ works from the inside outward. He is following this plan in sanctification as outlined in Peter’s ladder. The first three steps have to do with mental attitudes. If the mind is yielded to Him there will be no problem with the flesh. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 2:5. Notice that this is a “letting”—a surrender of our own habitual thinking patterns. The new life of faith reaches into every corner of life’s experiences. It trusts Christ even if we do not understand how He can or will do His work. Real faith is never concerned with the method that He uses—only the results that He promises.

There are hindering factors to his kind of faith. Doubt is one of Satan’s most successful tools. Have you noticed that when Satan works with a non-believer he tries to turn him away entirely from Christ, the Bible and truth? However, when he works with a Christian, he works through creating doubt. He worked this plan with Eve. He was, at first, careful not to contradict God. He simply said enough to cast doubt as to why God had said what He said. After creating the doubt in Eve’s mind there came the denial of truth. She had been warned to resist the first insinuation of the enemy. She felt the impulse to flee to her husband—Adam. She then felt that if she should meet the enemy she had sufficient strength to withstand him. Now, facing him in the disguised form, she found herself arguing with him.¹ There is nothing Satan delights to do more than to entice the Christian to enter into controversy with him. “He tempts men to

distrust God's love and to doubt his wisdom. He is constantly seeking to excite a spirit of irreverent curiosity, a restless, inquisitive desire to penetrate the secrets of divine wisdom and power."²

"There is but one course for those to pursue who honestly desire to be free from doubts. Instead of questioning and caviling concerning that which they do not understand, let them give heed to the light which already shines upon them, and they will receive greater light."³

Our responsibility is to walk by faith, which requires obedience, even if we do not understand the "why."

Hebrews 11, the great faith chapter, declares that faith "is" not "has" substance and evidence. It may be hard for us to see these two characteristics of faith. Our tendency is to try to check up to see if we really have faith. Where do we check? Most of the time we check our feelings! We say, "I feel this way or that way." Our faith must rest upon something much more reliable than feelings. These constitute the devil's playground. "Faith includes not only belief but trust."⁴ "The devils also believe, and tremble." James 2:19. Their belief is obviously not faith.

Why is this understanding so important to Peter's ladder? Because, "None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin."⁵ The real question that must be answered by each of us is, are we willing for Him to do His work in us, or will we insist on doing part of the work ourselves? The inclination will be to "get in there and help." But we must be willing to let the Potter have His way entirely and be happy to lie dormant in His hands. Then, and only then, will the product formed be of any value!

Notes

- 1 See Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 53-55.
- 2 Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 54, 55.
- 3 The Great Controversy, p. 528.
- 4 Selected Messages, book 1, p. 389.
- 5 Desire of Ages, p. 38.