

Hymn Study: *How Firm a Foundation*

Stanza #1

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

Doctrinal Perspective

The excellence of the Word of God places it beyond comparison in all literature, and it alone qualifies as a firm foundation for faith and as a guide for one's faith-walk – for living in the 'here-and-now' and with a confident hope regarding the age to come.

"For Thou hast magnified Thy word according to all Thy name." *Ps. 138:2*

"O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth, who have set Your glory above the heavens." *Ps. 8:1*

"Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled (stands firm) in heaven." "The sum of Thy word is truth, and every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting." *Ps. 119:89, 160*

"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, ... the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction (training, discipline) in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." *II Tim. 3:14-16*

Stanza #2

Fear not, I am with thee; Oh be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

Doctrinal Perspective

The nearness of God in His all-good, all-righteous and all-powerful presence is a continually-sufficient resource to sustain and strengthen every saint in his or her faith-pilgrimage.

"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

For I am the LORD your God, who upholds your right hand, who says to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you.'" *Isa. 41:10, 13*

Stanza #3

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

Doctrinal Perspective

The providence of God is completely enveloped with holy purposes and is rich in intended blessings – the principal design being our sanctification, a truly rich blessing indeed.

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. *Isa. 43:1-2*

"Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you." *Deut. 31:6*

Stanza #4

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply.
The flames shall not hurt thee, I only design,
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

Doctrinal Perspective

The pathways God ordains in His sovereign providence are bounded on both sides with protective and sustaining grace, and they have a decidedly purposeful design – to glorify Himself and to enrich every saint's personal delight in Him.

"When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor will the flame scorch you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior." *Isa. 43:2-3*

"Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing were happening to you." *1 Pet. 4:12*

"My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness." *1 Cor. 12:9*

Stanza #5

Even down to old age, all my people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And when ivory hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.

Doctrinal Perspective

The tender and faithful care of the Good Shepherd is a grace-gift bestowed in every saint's life. Definite and varied proofs of His grace become particularly evident during times of quiet, meditative reflection on the confluence of His providence and our life choices in the course of our faith-pilgrimage.

"The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, he will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the LORD, They will flourish in the courts of God. They will still yield fruit (i.e., thrive) in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green, to declare that the LORD is upright." *Ps. 92:12-15*

"Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, in His arm He will gather the lambs, and carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes." *Isa. 40:11*

Stanza #6

That soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes.
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

Doctrinal Perspective

The immutable excellence of God's nature and the absolute surety of His Word is a firm foundation on which to walk by faith.

- His loyal love never ceases.
- His compassionate concern never fails.
- His faithfulness never diminishes.

"And the LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear, or be dismayed." *Deut. 31:8*

"He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.'" *Heb. 13:5*

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." *Jude 24-25*