

How Firm a Foundation

From A Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors, by John Rippon, 1787; attributed variously to John Keene, Mr. Kirkham, and John Keith. Mr. Rippon's hymnal simply refers to a "K" as the author. This hymn was sung at the funerals of Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and General Robert E. Lee. I hope it to be sung at my funeral. This and 'Amazing Grace' are my two favorite hymns.

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?
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled.

In every condition, in sickness, in health,
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth;
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,
As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever
be.

Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
I, 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.

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.

When thro' fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,
My grace all sufficient shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee, I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

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

The soul that on Jesus has lean'd for repose,
I *will not*, I *will not* desert to its foes;
That soul, tho' all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll *never*, no *never*, no *never* forsake.

* 'Hoary' means white with age.

Mr. Rippon's hymnal refers to Hebrews 13:5: "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*" I would add to this Isaiah 41:10-13.