

FOUNDATIONS

P.F. JENSEN

"THE CHRISTIAN FAITH"

"My house is cracking up!" That's what a friend of mind told me the other day, and when I looked at his house, he was right.

Large cracks had appeared along the walls. Attempts to patch them had failed. His garden wall positively bulged, and above his doorway, the top storey had become separated from the walls that were meant to buttress it.

The other day his wife was making the bed when she heard a loud noise, and a new crevice appeared in the bedroom. The week before she had noticed water flooding the bathroom - a pipe had fractured when some bricks had been forced out of place.

This was all fairly alarming, as the house is reasonably new, my friend called in a structural engineer.

"The garden wall is a different problem", the engineer said, apparently defying common-sense. He then talked about having to drive piles down beside various walls, and having to strengthen the foundations with steel girders. Clearly it's going to be a very difficult job. "And", concluded the engineer, quite cheerfully, "its going to cost you a lot of money".

My friend asked whether the place was dangerous to live in. "Oh no", replied the expert, "not at the moment. But, it will be in twenty or perhaps fifty years time". Not much comfort there - and this desirable house is only about ten years old.

The whole mess bears an uncanny resemblance to the warning with which Jesus finished his Sermon on the Mount. There, he contrasted two houses, one built on solid rock, the other on shifting sand. The one built

on sand could not survive the pressures of water and storm, and ultimately collapsed; 'and great', observed Jesus grimly, 'was the fall of it'.

Now, Jesus was not giving a lesson of structural engineering. He was talking about himself and about us. Note the tremendous claim he was advancing for himself: his words will provide the proper foundation for a person's life. It is an extraordinarily bold claim - but when you read his words, say in the Sermon on the Mount, you see that he has the right to make them.

When a man has true faith, it is a matter of trusting himself to the words of Jesus, of depending on them for the foundation of life. Any individual or any church which departs from the word of Jesus or is ignorant of those words, has become faith-less, and has departed from Jesus himself.

You wouldn't buy a new house without expert opinion to help you. But people try to build their lives without reference to the Creator of life. What sort of house has your life turned out to be? Does it have appeal? Does it impress? Is it comfortable?

Unfortunately, these qualities don't count for much in the long run. They may simply cover up your dreadful lack of foundation, of real substance, of eternal strength.

You can see the result of lives built on the wrong foundation in the human wrecks who drift aimlessly around the streets of a big city. But even an impressive, luxury home may be flawed; and a skyscraper may collapse. Is your life built on Christ and his word? This is the true rock, and the only real foundation.

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