

The Church's One Foundation

Samuel J. Stone, 1866

AURELIA
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Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 1864

1. The church - 's one foun - da - tion is Je - sus Christ, her Lord;
 2. E - lect from eve - ry na - tion, yet one o'er all the earth,
 3. Though with a scorn - ful won - der, men see her sore op - pressed,
 4. The church shall nev - er per - ish! Her dear Lord to de - fend,
 5. 'Mid toil and trib - u - la - tion, and tu - mult of her war,
 6. Yet she on earth hath un - ion with God the Three in One,

she is His new cre - a - tion, by wa - ter and the word.
 her char - ter of sal - va - tion: one Lord, one faith, one birth.
 by schis - ms rent a - sun - der, by her - e - sies dis - tressed,
 to guide, sus - tain, and cher - ish, is with her to the end;
 she waits the con - sum - ma - tion of peace for - ev - er - more;
 and mys - tic sweet com - mun - ion with those whose rest is won;

From heav'n He came and sought her to be His ho - ly bride;
 One ho - ly name she bless - es, par - takes one ho - ly food,
 yet saints their watch are keep - ing, their cry goes up, "How long?"
 though there be those that hate her, and false sons in her pale,
 till with the vi - sion glo - rious her long - ing eyes are blest,
 O hap - py ones and ho - ly! Lord give us grace that we,

with His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died.
 and to one hope she press - es, with eve - ry grace en - dued.
 and soon the night of weep - ing shall be the morn of song!
 a - gainst the foe or trait - or she ev - er shall pre - vail.
 and the great church vic - to - rious shall be the church at rest.
 like them, the meek and low - ly, on high may dwell with Thee.

The Church's One Foundation was written by pastor Samuel Stone with a specific purpose in mind. He grew up with educational privilege as the son of a Hebrew scholar and had great academic success, but as he started off into ministry, he found himself serving a small, urban, underprivileged church in a London suburb. At the same time, many of his fellow pastors and theologians were drifting away from God's word and abandoning sound doctrine. Suddenly, he realized all the academic training in the world couldn't protect the hearts of his people. Nor could he expect tired, poor, uneducated congregants to attain knowledge he'd spent years and great wealth to attain. What could he do?

During that time, another English pastor had published a book of scholarly hymns on the Apostle's Creed called *Lyra Anglicana* – Songs for Anglicans. The next year, with his own church heavy on mind and heart, Stone decided to write his own: *Lyra Fidelium* – Songs for the Faithful. Where *Anglicana* boasts page after page of flowery, erudite lyricism, *Fidelium* holds twelve rich, solid, accessible hymns that connect to each of the twelve main categorical truths of the Creed. In addition, each hymn includes a brief explanation of the theology within and most importantly, a lengthy list of Scriptural quotations for every line. The title page quotes 1 Corinthians 14:15 – "I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with understand also." Intentionally, the book is dedicated not to a scholarly father, but "to my mother," who undoubtedly was faithful to teach him these truths as a boy in the home.

Even acknowledging all of this wonderful intentionality, Stone writes of himself (in the third person) in *Fidelium's* preface: "though...he is painfully sensible that he has not reached the point either of fulness or simplicity at which he aimed, he humbly trusts that God will make [these hymns] nevertheless of some use in His Church." As we continue to sing this hymn more than 150 years later, we can be thankful that God has been faithful to multiple Stone's simple trust and loving care to edify Christ's One Church.

Scripture to consider:

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|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Matthew 16:13-28 | Ephesians 4:1-16 | 1 Peter 1:3-2:11 |
| John 15:18-16:15 | 1 Timothy 3:14-16 | Revelation 7 |
| Ephesians 2:11-22 | Hebrews 12:12-29 | |

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