

# **THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH**

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The foundations of faith by John Kelman

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**JOHN KELMAN**

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OF FAITH**



## The Foundations of Faith

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*delivered before Vanderbilt University*

# The Foundations of Faith

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## THE COLE LECTURES

**T**HE late Colonel E. W. Cole of Nashville, Tennessee, donated to Vanderbilt University the sum of five thousand dollars, afterwards increased by Mrs. E. W. Cole to ten thousand, the design and conditions of which gift are stated as follows :

“The object of this fund is to establish a foundation for a perpetual Lectureship in connection with the School of Religion of the University, to be restricted in its scope to a defense and advocacy of the Christian religion. The lectures shall be delivered at such intervals, from time to time, as shall be deemed best by the Board of Trust; and the particular theme and lecturer will be determined by the Theological Faculty. Said lecture shall always be reduced to writing in full, and the manuscript of the same shall be the property of the University, to be published or disposed of by the Board of Trust at its discretion, the net proceeds arising therefrom to be added to the foundation fund, or otherwise used for the benefit of the School of Religion.”



## Preface

**M**ANY volumes have been written upon the subject of these lectures, and it would be a very pleasant task and by no means a difficult one to gather together and sum up opinions old and new upon their main thesis, the relation between faith and authority. The present volume, however, does not offer this to its readers. It brings with it a few old problems under whatever new light may come from the experience of a long ministry. For thirty years the writer has been watching the play of religious truth upon the minds of men, and his reading of theological results has been revised in the light of innumerable experiences. In this way he trusts that he may be able to present formal questions at least from some new angles of vision and in some new groupings.

Above everything else, this is a book of reconciliations. In one sense controversy forwards the progress of thought, but no one who has watched the history of recent religious developments can question the extraordinary wastage and delay which have been occasioned

by unnecessary controversies. Of recent years theological discussions have hindered progress and discovery by distracting the attention of scholars and occupying the minds of the un-scholarly with many subjects which are of comparatively little importance, and which might have been settled either one way or another without affecting in the slightest degree any religious truth. One may go further and say that to a large extent it is even true that apparently opposite schools mean precisely the same thing. It is altogether amazing how much of our divergence is simply a matter of expression, and how little essential difference there is between earnest men concerning the deepest truths. These lectures are an attempt to get below the surface of controversy to the common facts of religious experience on which all Christian men may meet and hold communion.

## Contents

### LECTURE I

THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH . . . . 11

### LECTURE II

THE BASIS OF AUTHORITY . . . . 41

### LECTURE III

THE CHARACTER OF GOD . . . . 75

### LECTURE IV

THE INCARNATE LOVE . . . . 111

### LECTURE V

MEANS AND ENDS . . . . 147

### LECTURE VI

WHERE THE FAITHS OF MEN MEET . . . 175