

BUILDING ON A FOUNDATION

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On approaching graduation every thoughtful student is aware of the responsibilities before him and the dangers confronting him. He must know the friend from the foe and the faithful from the fraud. Where is there something that can guide him aright? Where is a right starting point? Where is a foundation on which to build.

In the world around us all is chaos and lust; greed and madness reign. We have recently emerged from the greatest of all wars and find ourselves in a world with peace that has yet to be peaceful. It is well nigh impossible to find anything that is permanent and lasting. Men are hungry; cities are devastated; countries are ruined; and nations are tottering. Where then is a foundation upon which we can unerringly depend? Maybe there is none, but I BELIEVE THERE IS.

And today were I to ask you the same question that has come to me oh so often, that is, where is such a foundation, what would your answer be? Where would you turn. Where would you look? I feel certain that as we studied this question one of our ventures would be into the fast-rising, ever-developing field of modern science.

Today we stand on the brink, the brink of the greatest scientific age man has ever known. Recently he has developed atomic energy, radar, jet propulsion and many other amazing things. The power of the split atom apparently is unlimited and referring to its use in war, Dr. Edward Condon, consultant on the bomb project, recently said, "There are men living today who know how to make a single bomb as destructive as a million blockbusters! "One such bomb dropped on Washington D.C. or any other major city may be expected to destroy its buildings utterly and to wipe out its population! Such devastation is incomprehensible but this is not all for many other marvelous strides have been taken such as jet propulsion about which I read recently that it is quite within the realm of possibility for a plane once it gets out of the atmosphere to go 100,000 miles per hour or to New York and back in five minutes. In the light of these amazing facts could we not take science as our dependable foundation. Lets think for a moment; science has learned to control everything but man, that is, man has learned to control everything but himself. Then, on the basis of this, we could

re-could not take science but what about education. The miracle of modern education is apparent to all and it has undoubtedly been the main factor in placing the United States in the position it now holds as the most important nation in the world. To it also should be credited the wonderful advancements made in science, radio, medicine and in numerous other fields. Yes, education is great and yet as I recall before the war American universities extended to Japanese manhood the opportunities to study here in this country, but the knowledge they learned here was fashioned into a dagger to stab in our backs on a memorable December 7th. Then too, we have taught for years that crime doesn't pay, but yearly our delinquency rate goes up. No, although education is wonderful, education is not enough. Where then shall we look, where shall we go? I believe we have a right to go back to the BIBLE for anchorage. That upon which the very heart of our nation and our Constitution is founded. And for my proof, I would like to quote to you the exact words of what several great men have said concerning this Book of Books. Listen to the words of Abraham Lincoln when he said, "I believe the Bible is the best gift GOD has ever given to man". It was George Washington who declared, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without GOD and the Bible". Even Napoleon, that great egotistical general said, "The Bible is no mere book but a living creature with a power that conquers all who oppose it". *(Even Napoleon)----- The Bible is worth all other books that have ever been printed, declared Patrick Henry, while Ulysses S. Grant called the Bible the sheet-anchor of our liberties. In answer to a question Andrew Jackson said, "That book, sir, is the rock upon which our republic rests. Listen, oh listen, with me to the words of Daniel Webster when he said, "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury our glory in profound obscurity. "I believe that one of the main reasons why GOD has blessed America is that America in the past has blessed GOD. May we ever continue to do so. Here then we have the recognized foundation the foundation impregnable. Here we have it, let us build upon it.

Commencement speech written and given by Pete Fleming at the graduation exercises of Queen Anne High School on June 12, 1946.
*Was in the script, but was omitted when delivered.