



## Now I Have Found the Firm Foundation

**Text: Johann Andreas Rothe (1688-1758)**

**Tune: Johann Balthasar König (1691-1758)**

Earthly life holds many changes and chances. However, one thing remains constant, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Moreso it is His mercy that sustains us, not only His mercy to forgive our sins, but His mercy to uphold all things for our good. We laud and praise Him for this mercy, our firm foundation.

Johann Andreas Rothe was born May 12, 1688, the son of a Pastor in Lissa, near Görlitz, in Silesia. He entered the University of Leipzig in 1708 as a student of theology. He graduated with his Master's Degree and then in 1712 was licensed as a preacher in Gorlitz. In 1718 he became the tutor of a family in Leube, a city a few miles south of Gorlitz. While there, he frequently preached in neighboring churches. In 1722 Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf heard Rothe preach at Gross-Hennersdorf and was greatly pleased with him and gave him the pastorate at Berthelsdorf.

While there he took a great interest in the Moravian community, which comprised a part of his parish. However, he had theological objections to the Moravians, something which offended Zinzendorf. He became antagonistic towards Rothe, and he soon accepted a Call to Hermsdorf, near Görlitz. In 1739 he was made assistant pastor at Thommendorf by Count von Promnitz. He later became the chief pastor there, and eventually died there on July 6, 1758.

Rothe was a man of considerable gifts and high integrity. He was also a solid theologian and impressive preacher. He wrote about 40 hymns through his life, many of them having great tenderness

and speaking of the Christian experience.

Some of his best work was done while he was serving in Zinzendorf's region and was published in a hymnal which Zinzendorf produced. However, Zinzendorf was very involved in his hymnals. He often made slight changes to hymns and then ascribed them to himself. It was not until later years that real authors were listed for numerous hymns, Rothe's being many of them. In the time between the hymnal production and the discovery of the real authors, many hymns were looked upon with suspicion because of Zinzendorf's theology. His attitude is an effect of Pietism, shown by his favorite



Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf

painting, one by Domenico Feti, of Christ being led to the cross with the caption, "All this I did for you. What are you doing for Me?" Under this banner, Zinzendorf wanted to form the "Church of Christ in the Spirit," not a separate denomination, but a place where people of all denominations would come after their own services and be encouraged to moral living. This made any hymns under Zinzendorf's name suspect, even when the theology appeared sound. However, after the true authors (and texts) of many of the hymns were found, they passed into common usage throughout Europe.

"Now I Have Found the Firm Foundation" is a hymn which confesses the sacrificial death of Christ as our only hope in life and death. Throughout the hymn's ten stanzas, Rothe reflects on what the world counts as its foundations (treasures, good works, earthly pleasures) and shows how they all come to naught. Despite the temporary nature of the things of this world, Christ and His mercy will never pass away. This mercy of Christ is also never ending and extends to all, "whether we seek Him or forsake" (st. 2). In this we see the love of Christ which has been seen since the beginning, when He sought to save His fallen creation. This same love preserves us through all, and His mercy is our constant hope. These gifts Christ freely gives us until, "when face to face with Thee, I'll sing of mercy great and free" (st. 10).