

Spurgeon on 1 Peter

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C H SPURGEON ON 1 PETER

1 Peter 1 Exposition by C H Spurgeon

It must have been very pleasant to his heart to write those words, — not “Peter, who denied his Master, “not” Peter, full of imperfections and infirmities, the impetuous and changeable one of the twelve; “but” Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,” as truly sent of God as any of the other apostles, and with as much of the Spirit of his Master resting upon him: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,” —

1 Peter 1:1, 2. To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect accordingly to the foreknowledge of God the Father,-

You might go for fifty years to some places of worship, and never hear the word “elect” even mentioned. Modern ministers seem to be ashamed of the grand old doctrine of election; but it was not so with the apostles and the early Christians, they were accustomed to speak of one another as the elect of God. The doctrine of election was most precious to their hearts, and therefore Peter writes: “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,” —

So may it be to all of you who are gathered here; grace first, and peace next; but may both grace and peace be multiplied unto you! Much grace, and much peace, may you have, brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus!

How sweetly the apostle is obeying his Master’s command, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” This is the same Peter who once began to sink beneath the waves, yet now he is helping others to stand. This is the very Peter who denied his plaster, but he begins his Epistle by owning himself to be “an apostle of Jesus Christ.” What wonders the Lord Jesus had wrought for Peter by his grace! It is no marvel, therefore, that he should say to others, “Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

1 Peter 1:1, 2. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

The first Christians were not so afraid of the doctrine of election as some are now-a-days. Peter was not

ashamed to address the saints as the elect of God, for so, indeed, they are, if they be saints at all. It is he that chose them, not because they were sanctified, but that they might be sanctified — chose them to eternal life through sanctification. Oh! happy are they who by grace have made their calling and election sure, and now ascribe all the glory of their salvation to the sovereign choice of God. “Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.”

1 Peter 1:2. Through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

We not only need grace, but we need much grace, and also peace, and we need a greatly increased measure of both those blessings. Do not be satisfied, dear brethren and sisters in Christ, with the grace that you already have. Be thankful for it, but ask for the divine multiplication of it; regard the grace which you have already received as being like the boy's loaves and fishes, and expect that Christ will continue to multiply it for you and for thousands of others round about you: “Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

1 Peter 1:3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,—

And, truly, this is a blessing, beyond all comparison or imagination, that we have been begotten again by the Divine Esther unto a “living” hope, for that is a better rendering than “lively.” Our first birth brought us into sin and sorrow, but our second birth brings us into purity and joy. We were born to die; now are we born never to die, “begotten again” unto a life that shall remain in us for evermore, a life which shall even penetrate these mortal bodies, and make them immortal, “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

1 Peter 1:3-5. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

What a vast mass of meaning is packed away in these words! Men's books, even when they are good, are like gold-leaf; a little precious metal is very thinly hammered out so as to cover a wide surface, but almost every word in the Bible seems to contain a whole mine of heavenly wealth.

Note, beloved, what Peter says concerning your new birth; you are begotten by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. At your first birth, you were born in sin; but now you have been born again, through grace, by the almighty power of God. Notice, also, unto what you are born, — unto a hope that is full of life, a lively hope, a hope of immortality a hope whose root is in the grave of Christ, the empty grave from which he has risen, and which is the assurance that because he has risen, you also shall rise. See, further, to what you have been born: “to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” See, also, how that inheritance is entailed upon you, for it is “reserved in heaven for you;” and see, too, how you are kept for it, for you “are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

How full of grace every sentence is. He blesses God because God has so freely blest us; and he abounds in thanksgiving because he sees that abundant mercy, by which believers have been begotten again — born again — made, therefore, children after a new sort, and so made heirs of an inheritance very different from that upon which we enter by nature “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” Brethren and sisters, if you have, indeed, been born by divine grace, to what estates are you born — to what high dignities and saved privileges! Rejoice and bless the Lord. But, perhaps, the dark fear crossed your mind that, perhaps, after all, you may perish and miss the inheritance. Now, notice the double consolation of a double keeping. The inheritance is kept. It is reserved in heaven for you, and you are kept, too. It is kept for you, and you are kept for it, “For you, who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.”

Oh, what a blessed hope this is, — that, though we fall asleep, we shall surely wake again; and when we awaken, it will be in the likeness of the great Head of the family, and we ourselves shall be heirs of an inheritance in which there will be no sin and no corruption. That inheritance is kept for us, and we are kept for it; so the double keeping makes it doubly sure. Happy are the people to whom these verses apply.

1 Peter 1:4, 5. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that faith not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Joy, my brethren, in the glorious inheritance which is prepared for you, unstained, uncorrupted, perfectly pure, and therefore to last for ever, because the elements which produce decay are not in it. It is without sin, and

therefore it shall be without end. What a mercy it is to be “kept by the power of God”! See, heaven is kept for us, and we are kept for heaven; heaven is prepared for us, and we are prepared for heaven. There is a double action of God’s grace thus working in us, sad working for us, unto bliss eternal.

1 Peter 1:6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

What! can there be rejoicing and heaviness in the same heart at the same time? Oh, yes! our experience has taught us that we can be at the same moment, in heaviness of heart and yet rejoicing in the Lord.

Or, “trials.” Some people cannot comprehend how a man can greatly rejoice, and yet be in heaviness at the same time; but there are many things, in a Christian’s experience, that cannot be understood except by those who experience them; and even they God many a mystery which can only be expressed by a paradox. There are some who think that God’s people should never be heavy in spirit; but the apostle says, “Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness.” He does not say, “If need be, ye are in manifold trials;” but, “If need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold trials,” for the “needs be” is as much for the depressed spirit as for the trials themselves.

It is possible, in Christian experience, for a man to rejoice greatly and yet to be in heaviness. No man can explain this paradox to his fellow, yet he understands it himself. “In heaviness through manifold trials,” yet greatly rejoicing in the full conviction that they will soon be over, and that then we shall enter into unutterable joy. Be of good courage, then, you who are now depressed, you who are in heaviness; “lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.” The fiery furnace is very hot; but the Son of man is in it with you; and, by his grace, you shall come out of the furnace before long.

This is your life. This is like a rainbow made up of the drops of earth’s sorrow in the beams of heaven’s love a happy combination, after all.

1 Peter 1:7. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Gilt looks very much like gold but it will not stand the fire. It curls and disappears. Oh! to be solid gold through and through. If so, you need not mind the trials of to-day, since they will only prepare you for the glories eternal at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:7, 8. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and Honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of glory:

And does not the joy agree well with the object of it? Paul said, “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift;” and Peter, speaking of the same Savior, says, “In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

Ah! love can embrace him whom the eyes cannot see, and the hands cannot hold.

1 Peter 1:8-10. In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

I have heard of some divines who will never read, and never study, because they have such an abundant measure of the Spirit of God that they can talk any quantity of nonsense extemporaneously! But it was not so with the prophets. They had very much of the Spirit of God; yet, for all that, they were most diligent students. They “enquired and searched diligently,” — even those prophets “who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.” I have a very grave suspicion of that so-called “inspiration” which enables a man to preach without study. If there were such a thing, it would be a premium upon laziness; and I feel sure that the Spirit of God would never countenance such a thing as that.

1 Peter 1:8-10 Whom having not seen, ye love in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.

Prophets knew about you. They did not taste of the grace you know, but through the vista of the future they foresaw it, and they almost envied you in this gospel dispensation that you should live in so clear a light, and should be fed upon such rare mercies. Oh! what prophets and kings longed for, do not let us despise, and we

shall despise these mercies if we do not make the most of them by entering into the fullness of the joy which they are meant to bring to us. These prophets searched diligently.

1Peter 1:7-9. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

You have that already if you have believed in Jesus, you have received; a present, immediate salvation. There are some who do not understand or realize this, they miss the whole joy of our holy religion. They are always hoping to be saved by-and-by; but those who are in Christ Jesus by a living personal faith receive here and now the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.

1Peter 1:9-11. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

Do you wonder if, sometimes, you find in the Bible a truth which you cannot quite comprehend? You ought not to marvel, for even the prophets, who prophesied of the grace which has come to us, did not always fully understand their own messages. I am sure that their inspiration was verbal, because the inspired men frequently did not themselves know the meaning of what they were moved to write.

1 Peter 1:11, 12. Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was- in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;

The prophets lived for us; they were inspired for us; and the benefits of their holy lives and gracious words are for us upon whom the ends of the earth have come.

1 Peter 1:11-12. Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

See you not your privilege, then? You have what prophets had not. You enjoy what angels desire to see. They cannot enjoy what you do. Rightly does our hymn put it: —

**“Never did angels taste above
Redeeming grace and dying love.”
And you have, this very day.**

1 Peter 1:12. Which things the angels desire to look into.

They, as well as the prophets, are deep students of the unsearchable mysteries of Christ.

See the kind of preaching that we should all desire to hear, and that all God's ministers should aim at: “them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.” Nothing but a gospel full of the energy of the Holy Ghost, and set on fire by him, can effect the eternal purposes of God; but this is the kind of preaching that will live, and that will also make men live. God send it to every church and congregation throughout the world! Amen.

1Peter 1:10-12. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what or what manner of the time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

Observe, dear brethren, that the prophets did not speak without due consideration, but they “enquired and searched diligently” into the meaning of that salvation of which they “testified beforehand.” Holy Scripture must not be read by us carelessly. We ought to peer, and pry, and search into it to get at its hidden meaning, and the prophecies as well as the rest of the Word are to be searched into by us upon whom the ends of the earth

have come.

Observe, also, that this divine revelation is of great interest to the holy angels before the throne of God; they stand gazing down as if they were trying to understand the wondrous mystery of redemption, and the great and glorious gospel of the grace of God.

1 Peter 1:13-16. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy.

This is Peter's practical application of the great truths of which he had been writing. "Look ahead, and expect great things. Live in the future. Project your thoughts beyond the centuries that are passing away into the ages which will never die."

Pull yourself together; be not mentally and spiritually in dishabille; but, be girt ready for holy running or snored wrestling: "Gird up the loins of your mind,"

Be not only moral, upright, truthful, and so forth; but "be ye holy." That is a very high attainment: "Be ye holy;" and observe the reason for obedience to the command: "for I am holy." Children should be like their fathers, there are many children who bear, in their very faces, evidence, of their sonship; you know who their fathers were by the image that the children bear. Oh, that it were always so with all the children of God: "Be ye holy; for I am holy."

1 Peter 1:13. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind,

Be ready to depart to your inheritance. Do not let your garments flow carelessly and loosely, as though you had no journey before you, but "gird up the loins of your mind."

1 Peter 1:13. Be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

That is a very blessed subject. There is a grace that was brought to you when Christ first came. There is another grace and a higher grace that is to be brought to you when Christ shall come the second time. Until that second coming of Christ, the church on earth and in heaven cannot be perfected. The bodies of the saints wait in the grave till he comes to give them resurrection.

**"O long expected day, begin!
Dawn on these realms of woe and sin."
For we wait for thy appearing, O Christ.**

1 Peter 1:14, 15. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

Remember that you can never be really whole till you are holy, for holiness is spiritual sanity; it is the caring of the mind and heart from the disease which sin brought upon them.

1 Peter 1:16. Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Children of God, be like your Father; prove that you are his true children by manifesting his character. Let his lineaments be seen in your countenance: "Be ye holy; for I am holy." The Revised Version is, "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy."

1 Peter 1:14-16. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, as be ye holy in all manner of conversation: Because it is written. Be ye holy; for I am holy.

See your model. See the copy to which you are to write. You are far short of it. Try again. May the power of Jesus rest upon you, and may he that hath wrought us to the self-same thing to which we have attained continue to work in us till we are like our Lord himself!

1 Peter 1:17. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

Be not presumptuous. Ever remember that, as there is a God who is to judge every man, you are to be judged; and oh, that you might, through his grace, be in such a condition of heart that you shall stand the last test, and be found to be full weight when you are put into the balances of the sanctuary which God shall hold with

steadfast hand!

In holy fear; — not in servile, slavish fear, but in a blessed state of sacred timidity and awe lest you should offend your God and Savior.

You are only here for a while, you are sojourners, foreigners, pilgrims passing through a country where you have no abiding place; be therefore careful and even fearful lest you should become like the people among whom you dwell, have a holy dread of the contaminations of sin: "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:" —

1 Peter 1:17. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

Not in unbelieving fear, but in that holy carefulness which watches against sin of every kind lest in any way you should spoil your holy work for God.

1 Peter 1:18, 19. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

You have seen the character of your Father who is in heaven; this should urge and help you to be like him, holy. Now you see the character of your Redeemer, "a lamb without blemish and without spot." Let this influence you to be holy, too.

1 Peter 1:18, 19. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ

As your redemption cost so much, prize it highly, and do not go back to the sin from which you have been so dearly redeemed. Fear lest you should do so. Remember that heredity has a great power over you; the traditions of your fathers will imperceptibly draw you back unless you watch against them. But you have been so gloriously redeemed with the very blood of Christ's heart that you must not draw back.

1 Peter 1:18-21. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Jesus Christ, from the dead, and this is our joy to-day. This is one of the facts, which are proved beyond all question, that Jesus Christ, who died upon the cross, and was buried in Joseph's tomb, did actually rise again. This is the corner-stone of the Christian faith; one of the great facts upon which we found our confidence as to salvation by Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:18-25. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

1 Peter 1:20, 21. Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

It is no use to place them anywhere else. All other vessels are too frail to bear such a heavy burden; but, if your faith and hope are in God, then you have a security which none can destroy.

1 Peter 1:22. 23. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of

incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

God's Word never dies, God's Word never changes. There are some who think we ought to get a new gospel every few years or even every few weeks, but that was not Peter's notion. He wrote, and he was divinely inspired to write, concerning "the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

1 Peter 1:22, 23. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again

See how this love of the brethren is linked on to regeneration. The first time we are born, we are born in sin, and that tends to hate, but when we are born again, born unto God, our life tends to love. "Being born again,"-

1 Peter 1:23. Not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Peter reminds us, in the 18th verse, that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with incorruptible; and he here reminds us that we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible." Everything about a Christian means his deliverance from corruption, and the bringing of him into a state of immortality and incorruption.

1 Peter 1:22-25. Seeing ye have periled your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which, liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Blessed be God for an everlasting gospel, founded on the everlasting covenant, which bringeth with it everlasting life to all those who believe in Christ Jesus the Lord.

1 Peter 1:24, 25. For all flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the lord endureth for ever.

Everything earthly is corruptible; that which is merely natural has its season of decay, but the children of God have the Word of the Lord abiding in them, and that never dies; it has no autumn or winter.

1 Peter 2 Exposition by C H Spurgeon

1 Peter 2:1-3. Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

When the apostle describes us under the character of "newborn babes," he would have us lay aside all that is inconsistent with that character. Newborn children have no malice; they have no guile or craftiness; they have no hypocrisies, nor envies, nor evil speakings. They are clear from all these evils; would God we were as clear as they are! It would be better to be infants, not speaking at all, than to be among those who speak evil. It would be better to begin life over again than to live long enough to have gained a treasure of malice, and a hoard of cunning, and to have learned the tricks of hypocrisy. Let us be as simple as little children, as guileless, as harmless, as free from anything like unkindness as newborn babes are. And inasmuch as we are to fellow them in what they have not, let us also imitate them in what they have. Let us desire ardently, as for our very life, the unadulterated milk of the Word. Let us cultivate that combination of hunger and thirst which is found in a little child, that we may hunger and thirst thus after God's Word. We have done more than taste the Word; we have tasted that the Lord himself is gracious. Let us long to feast more and more upon this divine food, that we may grow thereby.

1 Peter 2:1-3. Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

If you have once had that sweet taste in your mouths, you will wish to have it always there, and you may do so if you continue to drink the unadulterated milk of the Word, and do not sour that good milk through tempests of malice, and envy, and evil speaking.

1 Peter 2:1. Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies and envies, and all evil speakings,

Putting these evil things right away from you, having nothing further to do with any of them. Notice the repetition of the word "all." "All malice, and all guile," — everything in the shape of deceit, — "and all evil speakings." All these are to be put away by all believers, as rags are put away in the rag-bucket, or refuse on the dunghill.

1 Peter 2:1. Wherefore laying aside all malice,

This is one of the old corruptible things, so put it away from you

1 Peter 2:1. And all guile,

All crafty tricks, all falsehood, exaggeration, double meanings to your words, and the like,-

1 Peter 2:1. And hypocrisies, and envies,

All hatred of those who are either better or better off than you are,-

1 Peter 2:1. And all evil speaking,

Thus the tongue expresses what the heart feels. Laying all these evil things aside, you will prove that you have been born again, born of the incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever.

1 Peter 2:1. Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,-

This is what we are to lay aside, to put away from us, to banish altogether. These are the old garments of the flesh which we are to give up to the moths that they may devour them, and leave not a fragment of the old rags for us to wear. "Laying aside all malice." Has anybody injured you? Are you angry with him because of what he has done to you? Thou freely forgive the injury, and wholly forget it. "and all guile." That is, everything that is of the nature of craftiness and deception. Be honest, simple, straightforward, transparent; this is a trait of character which well becomes all Christians. "And hypocrisies" of all sorts. Let us not profess to be what we are not, nor pretend to know what we do not know, or talk of experiences which we have never felt; in fact, let us never be hypocrites in any respect whatsoever. The God of truth loves his children to be the embodiments of truth. Hypocrisy he hates with a perfect hatred. "And envies." We must lay them all aside, all envies of men because they are richer, or more gifted, or more highly esteemed than we are. Let us not envy anybody, for envy eats a man's own heart out and slays him, as Eliphaz said to Job "Envy slayeth the silly one." "And all evil speakings." We are not to be the repeaters of stories to the discredit of others, or to make up or to exaggerate any evil reports concerning anything in their lives. Let us have nothing to do with "evil speakings" of any kind. Lay all these rags aside. Is any one of them still clinging to you? Let it be laid aside this very hour.

1 Peter 2:2. As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Be glad to get simple truth, the "milk of the Word." Even if you can digest the strong meat of the Word, never grow weary of the milk, for it is always good diet even for a full-grown man in Christ. Do not crave milk and water, but "desire the unadulterated milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby." It is not enough for you to be spiritually alive, you must grow; and especially while you are babes in grace, your great desire should be that you may grow.

1 Peter 2:2. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

The unadulterated "milk of the Word" is the best food for those who are, spiritually, "newborn babes." Desire this unadulterated milk of the Word not out of an idle curiosity,-but that you may grow thereby, that you may grow wiser, holier, more earnest, more like your Savior,-that you may grow up into the likeness of Him whose you are, and whom you serve.

1 Peter 2:2. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

You are in the family of God, but you are only babes in it yet; you have to grow to the stature of men in Christ Jesus, so "desire the sincere (unadulterated) milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." There is no other way of growing.

1 Peter 2:3. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

You begin with tasting that the Lord is gracious, you go on to desire the unadulterated milk of the Word, and so you grow in grace more and more.

1 Peter 2:3. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

If you have spiritually tasted this great truth, you have the flavour of it upon your palate, so that it makes you long for more of it.

1 Peter 2:3, 4. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone,-

So that "the Lord" here meant is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is truly "a living stone,"-

1 Peter 2:4. Disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,-

When men disallow Christ, it is a matter of small account to us, as for what they have to say, it is less than nothing and vanity. Like the wild bluster of the winds, let it bluster until it has blown itself out. Christ is "disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,"-

1 Peter 2:4. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious.

No one figure is sufficient to set forth Christ as he really is. A stone is a Scriptural simile and symbol of Christ, but we have to make the metaphor somewhat incongruous by comparing him to "a living stone."

1 Peter 2:4. To whom coming,-

That is, unto the Lord; and that name Peter evidently gives to Jesus Christ, and therefore we worship him, and call him, each one for himself or herself, even as Thomas did, "My Lord and my God." "To whom coming," —

1 Peter 2:4. To whom coming,-

We should be always coming to Christ; we have come to him, and we are coming to him, and we will keep on coming to him: "To whom coming,"-

1 Peter 2:4. As unto a living stone,-

Sinking down, settling, resting on that stone,-always pressing closely upon Christ: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone,"-

1 Peter 2:4. Disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

Christ always was disallowed of men, and he always will be, until the great consummation of all things. Some disown him in one way, some in another. Some boldly blaspheme him with something like honesty; others pretend to be his ministers, yet all the while are undermining the gospel which he lived and died to preach. It matters little that Christ is "disallowed indeed of men," for he is "chosen of God, and precious."

1 Peter 2:4, 5. Disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

All of you, who are in Christ Jesus, are the living stones in this spiritual temple; and you are also priests, who offer up spiritual sacrifices. You need no material temple, for you are yourselves the temple. You need no other priest save the great High Priest who has gone into the heavenly, for you are yourselves priests unto the Most High God.

1 Peter 2:5. As unto a living stone, disallowed instead of men, but chosen of God, and precious,-

"Chosen of God." The whole spiritual building is the result of the election, the choice of God. Jesus Christ, the great foundation and the chief corner stone, is chosen of God, and all the living stones that are built upon him are also chosen of God. The whole fabric is like the foundation upon which it is laid: "Chosen of God, and precious," — precious to God and precious to us.

1 Peter 2:5. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

We hear of certain persons being "ordained" first deacons and then priests, but all who are truly in Christ, whether they are men, or women, or children, are priests. We are "a holy priesthood" if we are in Christ.

All the sacrifices that can now be offered are spiritual sacrifices, which are to be offered, not by a few special persons set apart for that work, but by the whole company of God's chosen people, and so they are "acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

1 Peter 2:5. Ye also, as living stones, —

It is not “lively” stones, it is the same word, in the original, in both cases, — “a living stone” and “living stones.” The translators of our Authorized Version have often rendered the same Hebrew or Greek word in a different way, which is a pity, as it is in this instance: “Ye also, as living stones,” —

1 Peter 2:5. We built up a spiritual house, —

A house that is a living structure from the foundation to the topstone.

1 Peter 2:5. An holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

He is a living stone, and you, as living stones, are built upon him, and he and you together make up a living spiritual house, and in order that the house may have suitable tenants, and be properly furnished, you also become priests, and, as priests, you “offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

1 Peter 2:5. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priest-hood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

See what Jesus Christ has made of you who believe in him; by the incorruptible blood and the incorruptible seed, he has brought you into a heavenly priesthood, and you are to-day to stand at the spiritual altar, and “to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” Will you not pray, will you not praise, will you not love? These are sacrifices with which God is well pleased.

1 Peter 2:6. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Thus the apostle quotes from the prophet Isaiah the ancient prophecy concerning Christ.

1 Peter 2:6. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. See Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, No. 1,429, “Faith’s Sure Foundation.”

Those who believe on him are built upon him; they rest upon him, they are cemented to him; and being living stones they grow into him, and he grows into them; they participate in his life, and so the living temple becomes one, the chosen men and women who are the spiritual temple in which God dwells upon earth. We need not wonder if, like the chief corner stone, we are disallowed of men, but we may rejoice that, like our Lord and Savior, we are “chosen of God, and precious.”

1 Peter 2:6. Are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ,

You mind have noticed, in reading the New Testament, that you never find the officers of a church called priests. Whenever that term is used by way of illustration, it is applied to all the people of God. They are all priests but, under the Christian dispensation, there is no set of men who have any right to take that title above their fellow-believers. All those who believe in Jesus Christ are priests, every one of them as much as all the others; and the assumption of priesthood under the Christian dispensation is most truly the repetition of the sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abirain, though the men who commit it usually try to lay the guilt of that sin at the doors of other people. We ministers are no more priests than all of you who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are; we shake our skirts at the very thought of such wickedness; and cry, “God for bid that we should, with unhallowed hands, try to steal away from God’s people what is the right and prerogative of them all!” “Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

1 Peter 2:6. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Put all your trust in Jesus, for you will never have cause to regret doing so. The text, in the Old Testament, from which Peter quoted, says, “He that believeth shall not make haste;” he shall not need to be in a hurry, he shall enjoy the holy leisure which springs from a quiet confidence where confidence ought to be placed. O beloved, stay yourselves on Christ! Rest your whole weight on him, for then, “you shall not be confounded.”

1 Peter 2:6, 7. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.

Is he not? Then, enjoy his preciousness all of you who truly believe in him. Precious Christ, precious to all his people, precious to me!

1 Peter 2:6-8. Wherefore also is it contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient whereunto also they were appointed.

God grant that we may not be found among that unholy company, who, rejecting Christ as a foundation, stumble over him, and, in consequence, find themselves broken to pieces.

1 Peter 2:7. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

Here Peter quotes from Psalm 118:22. What reverence these inspired men had for the inspired Book! The Spirit of God could have spoken fresh words if he had pleased, but, as if he meant to honor above everything else the Book which he had himself inspired, he "moved" Peter to quote the ancient prophet and psalmist in confirmation of what he was writing.

1 Peter 2:7. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious:

He is preciousness, he is an honor, he is everything that is glorious to you. You can never think highly enough of him, or speak well enough concerning him. All the world beside may disallow him, but unto you he is precious.

1 Peter 2:7. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious

"He is an honor,-he is your honor, your glory, your boast." It is an honorable thing to be a believer in a Lord so glorious as he is, in a gospel so reasonable as his gospel is, in promises so certain of fulfillment as his promises are, in an atonement so effectual as his atonement is, and in a Master so omnipotent as he is: "Unto you therefore which believe he is an honor:"

1 Peter 2:7, 8. But unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

This is the distinguishing mark between God's chosen people and the rest of mankind. His elect receive Christ, and rejoice in him; but as for the ungodly, they willfully reject the Savior, and so he becomes to them "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." Christ is the great touchstone of humanity; by contact with him, the precious are discovered, and the vile are discerned,

1 Peter 2:7, 8. But unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient whereunto also they were appointed.

The ungodly reject him, and regard him as of no account; but God has made him "the head of the corner." And he has done more than that, he has made him "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense" to them, "even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed." That is a terrible truth upon which I am not going to speak just now, but I want you specially to note what an awful thing it is for men to "stumble at the Word," — to givest themselves upon Christ's cross, — to turn the heavenly medicine into poison,-to make Christ himself, who is to others "the saviour of life unto life," to be to them "the saviour of death unto death."

"Being disobedient." The fault lies with themselves, they willfully disobey the command to believe on Christ. "Whereunto also they were appointed." So the divine purpose is accomplished, although the guilt and punishment of their disobedience rest upon themselves alone.

1 Peter 2:7, 8. But unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

When Peter wrote these verses, he must have thought of his own name. He was called a stone or a rock; and once he was to his Master "a rock of offense" when he stumbled at Christ's word, and began even to rebuke his Lord, but he was forgiven and saved, so now he gives a warning to others lest they should still more

grievously sin by making Christ himself to be to them “a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.”

1 Peter 2:8. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

These are terrible words, but they are true. I cannot fully explain them. As Archbishop Leighton says, “It is easier to get into a depth over this awful truth than it is to get out again.” O God; grant that none of us may stumble at Christ! If we do, Christ will not move because we kick at him, or fall over him.

1 Peter 2:9. That ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;

These are wonderful epithets that are here heaped upon believers. May we have the grace to be able to appropriate them, and to expound them in our lives!

1 Peter 2:9. That ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

See where you once were, and see also to what you have been called by God’s grace: “out of darkness into light.” That is not all: into His light. Even that is not all: “into his marvellous light.” The light of the gospel is full of wonders. As common light is made up of many colors, so the light of God’s grace is made up of many marvellous colors, — the colors of all the attributes of God.

1 Peter 2:9. But ye are a chosen generation,-

There is the contrast between the disobedient and all true believer. “Ye” have the chosen Savior to be the chief corner-stone, upon whom “ye” who are living stones are to be built up into “a spiritual house,” which is to be the abiding place of the Most High God.

1 Peter 2:9. A royal priesthood,-

“Ye” are to be like Melchisedec, in whom the two offices of priest and king were combined in one person. More than that, “ye” are to be like your Lord, in respect to his royal priesthood. That he should have “loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and his Father,” seems to be an honor which is far too high for us. It appears to bring us almost too near our Lord, yet it is not so, for Peter wrote, under divine inspiration, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood,” —

1 Peter 2:9. An holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

God’s grace has been bestowed upon you in order that you may show forth his praises, or, as the marginal reading puts it, his “virtues.” Note what the Lord has done for you he has called you “out of darkness” into light, into his light, “into this marvelous light.” There are three thoughts there that are beautifully blended into one. What marvelous light that is into which God calls us! Try to measure it by the darkness in which you were; try to measure it by the deeper darkness into which you were going; try to measure it by the eternal darkness which would have fallen upon you if you had died in the dark. God has graciously brought you into his marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:9. But ye are a chosen generation,-

Hear this, ye believers, drink in this precious truth. See God’s election, making you to be a people born of the Holy Ghost: “a chosen generation,”-

1 Peter 2:9. A royal priesthood,-

This is a wonderful combination, kings and priests at the same time; all honors meet on you through divine grace: “a royal priesthood,”-

1 Peter 2:9. An holy nation, a peculiar people;-

You have national privileges. God reckons you not as a mob or a herd of men, but as a nation, and a nation with this peculiar hall-mark upon you, that you are “a holy nation.” This is the true token of your nationality that you are “holiness unto the Lord,” “a peculiar people” belonging to God alone, marked off from the rest of mankind as peculiarly his. You are not, and you are not to be as other men are, you are “a peculiar people.” Your road is not the broad one where the many go, it is the narrow one which the few find, your happiness is not worldly pleasure, but pleasures at the right hand of God which are for evermore, You are “a peculiar people”;-

1 Peter 2:9. That ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:-

You are to be advertisers of the praises or virtues of Christ, not only to know them, and to be glad to know them, but to make them known to others. Beloved, how far are you doing this? I put the question personally to each one of you, for you were chosen by God on purpose that you "should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light".

1 Peter 2:9. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

Oh, the dignity which Christ has put upon the meanest believer! What a high office, and, consequently, what a solemn responsibility is ours!

1 Peter 2:9, 10. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priest flood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: which in time past were not a people,

Who were you, and what were your ancestors when the apostle wrote these words Our forefathers were, in Peter's day, uncivilized and barbarous tribes at the utmost end of Rome's dominions. We "were not a people,"-

1 Peter 2:10. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, b 't now have obtained mercy.

Look back to what you were before your conversion. Whenever you are tempted to be proud of your present standing, remember the horrible it and the miry clay out of which sovereign grace alone has plucked you. When you are on the throne, recollect the dungeon from which the grace of God uplifted you. When you are in full possession of your spiritual faculties, and are rejoicing in the Lord, do not forget the time when you lay sick, even unto death, until the Great Physician passed that way, and healed you.

1 Peter 2:10. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

What a great change conversion is! And how great a change conversion Works! HOW wonderful is the effect of regeneration! We had not obtained mercy, but now we have obtained mercy; we were not a people, but now we are the people of God.

1 Peter 2:10. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

How the apostle delights to set forth these contrasts between the past and the present of the Lord's chosen people! By remembering what we were, we are made to appreciate and enjoy more what we now are. We may well praise him who has wrought this wondrous change in us. We were not his people, we were sinners of the Gentiles, not the chosen Hebrew race. In times past, we were not worthy to be called a people, but we are now the people of God. We had not obtained mercy, we had not even asked for it; some of us were so blinded by our self-righteousness that we did not know what we needed God's mercy, or did not want it; but now we have obtained mercy.

1 Peter 2:10. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God:-

In time long past, who ever heard of the Britons, or of the Anglo-Saxons?

We were not a people, but we "are now the people of God":-

1 Peter 2:10. Which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

We may well leap for joy, we who once had not obtained mercy. We sinned against the Lord, but he was long-suffering, and now we have obtained mercy.

1 Peter 2:10, 11. But are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Dearly beloved, I beseech you us strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;- If you are priests,-as you are if you are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ,-take care that you are clean before God. Let no impurity stain your body, for sin committed by the body grievously befouls the spirit, and defiles the heart: "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;"-

1 Peter 2:11. Dearly beloved, I beseech you —

Peter puts his hands together, and pleads with intense earnestness.

1 Peter 2:11. As strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

Those fleshly lusts belong to this present evil world, but you do not belong to it; you are “strangers and pilgrims” here, therefore feel an absolute alienation towards such things, an utter abhorrence of them. Do not even think of them, much less practice them. “Abstain from fleshly lusts;” for, while they injure the body, that is not the worst thing that they do, for they “war against the soul.”

1 Peter 2:11. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;-

Fleshly lusts always hurt the soul. They do serious injury to the body, for they are contrary to the laws of health; but the main point for you to consider is that they “war against the soul.” No men or women can ever commit an act of uncleanness of the body without grievously injuring the soul. It leaves a weakness, a defilement, a wound, a scar upon the soul; so may God graciously keep us from it altogether!

1 Peter 2:11. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims,-

For you belong not to the corruptible world, you are of an incorruptible race: “I beseech you as strangers and pilgrim,”-

1 Peter 2:11, 12. Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul: having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers,-

Which they are sure to do. The better you are, the more will they censure you. This is the only homage that evil can pay to good, to fall foul of it, and misrepresent it: “that whereas they speak against you as evildoers,”-

1 Peter 2:11-17. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all men.

Honor even the poorest of men. Remember that they are men. Even though they are sunken in vice or crime, honor the manhood that is in them, however much you may detest their crimes. “Honor all men.”

1 Peter 2:12. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers,-

As they are sure to do, for none are so certain to be slandered as the pure; and the more clean you are in God’s sight, the more will you excite the animosity of ungodly men, and they will show it by slandering you: “that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers,”-

1 Peter 2:12. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers,-

This they are sure to do, and the more holy your life is, the more they will probably speak against you. Even if you could live like an angel, some would call you a devil, but you are not to be judged by men’s judgment, thank God for that, and so live, “that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers,” —

1 Peter 2:12, 13. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, when they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake:

You are not to be disturbers of the peace; you Christian people are to cultivate the spirit of conciliation wherever you dwell, submitting yourselves, “for the Lord’s sake,” even to come things which you do not like.

1 Peter 2:12, 13. They may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake:” —

We are to obey kings, and governors, and magistrates, even when they may not be all that we wish them to be: “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake:” —

1 Peter 2:12-14. They may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit

yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

True Christians give no trouble in the State they are not law-breakers, but they strive to do that which is honest and upright. Where the laws are not righteous, they may cause trouble to bad law-givers and lawmakers; but when rulers ordain that which is just and righteous, they find that Christians are their best subjects.

1 Peter 2:13. Whether it be to the king, as supreme;

In Peter's day, the king was a poor creature, and something worse than that. Indeed, I might say of the bulk of the Emperors of Rome, who were the chief "kings" of that day, that they were monsters of iniquity; yet the office was to be respected even when the man who occupied it could not be much more should it be respected when the occupant is what a true "king" should be.

1 Peter 2:13-15. Whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

Ignorance, you see, is a noisy thing. An empty drum makes a loud noise when it is beaten; and empty men, like empty vessels, often make the most sound. How then are we to silence this noisy ignorance? By argument? No, for it is not amenable to argument. Ignorance is to be silenced "by well doing." Holy living is the best reply to infidel talking.

1 Peter 2:14-16. Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: all free,

Free in yourselves, free in your conscience, free in your mind and heart.

1 Peter 2:15, 16. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free,-

What a grand word that is, "as free"! Byron wrote, "He is the freeman whom the truth makes free, And all are slaves besides."

But we may alter that, and say, "He is the true freeman whom his Lord makes free." "As free,-

1 Peter 2:16. And not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the Servants of God.

You possess a freedom which others claim, but do not know. You feel that you are no man's slave, yet you do not use your liberty for evil, or to the injury of others.

1 Peter 2:16. As free,-

For there are no others under heaven so free as God's servants are: "As free," —

1 Peter 2:16. And not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

Not talking about liberty in order to stab at order; not prating about liberty with the design of enriching yourself by robbing someone else. That is not God's will, but "using your liberty... as the servants of God" should use it.

1 Peter 2:16, 17. And not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood: Fear God. honor the king.

A great deal of stress is sometimes laid upon that last precept, and I would lay just as much emphasis upon it as the Scripture does; but recollect the earlier command also: "Honor all men."

"A man's a man for a that."

Whatever his condition may he, honor the manhood that is in him. Do not despise him because he is poor, or because his coat is not so fashionably cut as yours is; for, perhaps, he may be a better man than you are: "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."

1 Peter 2:17. Honour all men.

Whoever they may be, be courteous, respectful, kind to all men, because they are men. Whatever their circumstances, they are men, therefore "honor all men."

1 Peter 2:17-19. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters

with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

There is no credit in suffering rightfully; the credit is in patiently enduring suffering, which you do not deserve.

1 Peter 2:17-19. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

Not always “sticking up for his rights,” as an ungodly man says, but feeling that the greatest right in the world is the right to do without your rights. To suffer wrongfully, will often glorify God much better than to stand up for what you have a right to be or to have.

1 Peter 2:17-20. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

This is a correction of what we often hear a slandered person say. “So-and-so has been spreading an evil report against me, and I am in bad odour. I should not have minded it if it had been true, but I cannot bear the slander as it is false.” My dear friend, you ought not to mind it if it is not true; but “when ye do well, and suffer for it,” there is then an acceptableness with God if ye take it patiently.

1 Peter 2:18–20. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

Peter is very practical in his Epistles. In the early days of the faith, Christians occupied a far more difficult and dangerous position than they do today. They were few in number, and greatly despised. All manner of crimes were falsely alleged against them; they were accused of things too vile for me to mention. The apostle, in writing to these Christians, begs them so to behave that they should commend the gospel of Christ. Very many of them were servants or slaves; so the apostle says to these lowly followers of Christ, “Here are your duties”:
—

A sense of injustice stings a man; he does not like to lose his rights, or to be buffeted when he has done no ill; but the Spirit of Christ teaches us to “endure grief, suffering wrongfully,” — to bear still, and still to bear. We are to be like the anvil; let others strike us if they will, but we shall wear out the hammers if we only know how to stand still and bear all that is put upon us.

1 Peter 2:20. For what glory is it, if, when ye are buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

It may be hard to bear, but in that very hardness lies much of the fragrance of it towards God. As spices must be bruised, so must you be pressed and crushed to bring out your sweetness. If you want to be where there is nothing to suffer, and no wrong to be endured, you are in the wrong world for that as yet; that will be in the world to come.

1 Peter 2:20-21. For what glory is it, if, when ye are buffeted for your faults, we take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, we take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called:

It is part of a true Christian’s calling to bear what is put upon him wrongfully.

Whenever you think of the glory of your risen Lord, remember what your redemption cost him, and quit all dead works, lay aside the grave-clothes of care and anxiety, and live in newness of life as those who have been redeemed by the risen Savior.

1 Peter 2:21. For even hereunto were ye called-

Called to do right, and to suffer for it! Ah me, what a call is that!

1 Peter 2:21-23. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again: when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls,

The Lord make this true of all of us, for Christ's sake! Amen.

1 Peter 2:21-23. Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not: but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

This leads Peter to make the following glorious declaration concerning the stoning sacrifice of Christ.

1 Peter 2:21–23. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

There was no reason why he should be made to suffer, for he had done no wrong. He was buffeted for no fault of his own, yet how patiently he endured it all! He did not even open his mouth to murmur or complain; but he handed the whole matter over to the Supreme Court of Appeal: "to him that judgeth righteously." It will be wise for us also to feel that we can afford to wait, knowing that our Avenger liveth, and that, in his own good time, he will rectify all wrongs, and justify his people against all their accusers. It is sweet, for the dear love of Jesus, to put up with a thousand things which, otherwise, we should resent. "But," says one, "if you tread on a worm, it will turn." Perhaps it will, but a Christian is not a worm; he is a being of a nobler order than that, and he does not go for his example to reptiles; he looks up to Christ, and follows his steps.

1 Peter 2:24. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, —

There was a transference of sin from sinners to Christ. This is no fiction. He, "his own self," bore that sin "in his own body on the tree," —

1 Peter 2:24. That we, being dead to sins, —

Because he died for us, and we died in him, —

1 Peter 2:24. Should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

By his sufferings, you were cured of sin. His death not only removed from you the penalty of sin; but what is far better, it also removed from you the dread disease itself.

1 Peter 2:24, 25. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Wherefore, since you have been brought back by the rich grace of God, continue to bear and forbear, that you may be the means of bringing others back. That is Peter's counsel to servants, or slaves, as most of them were.

1 Peter 2:25. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

God grant that this may be true concerning every one of us, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

1 Peter 3 Exposition by C H Spurgeon

1 Peter 3:1, 2. Likewise, ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

Could any men be won to Christ without the Word? Yes, it was even so in the apostle's day. When they refused to attend the little Christian meetings that were being held, and so could not hear what was there said, yet, at home, they saw the change that the gospel of Christ had wrought in their wives, and they said, "She is quite different from what she used to be. Certainly, she is a far better wife than any heathen woman is; there must be something in the religion which can make such a change as that." In this way, without the Word, many of them were won to Christ by the godly conversation of their wives.

1 Peter 3:3, 4. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

There is no ornament like that. No taste can ever conceive anything so lovely as a holy character. No expensive materials, and no ingenious fashioning of them, can ever produce such true beauty as “a meek and quiet spirit.” You must have known some godly matrons, venerable Christian women, whose gentle piety has blessed the whole household of which they formed a part. They attained supreme authority over all simply by yielding; they gained a queenly position in the house by gentleness and quietness. Nobody dared to offend them; — not because they would have been in a passion, but because they were themselves so inoffensive, so kind, so gentle.

1 Peter 3:5-7. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: even as Sara, obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

It has been one of the most beautiful results of the spread of the Christian religion that it has uplifted womanhood; so that now, instead of women being, as they were, and still are where the gospel is not received, the slaves of their husbands, Christianity has taught that honor should be given to the wife. If there are any husbands who do not so, they err from the gospel way.

1 Peter 3:8. Finally, be ye all of one mind, —

Be unanimous; do not hold church-meetings to talk about nothing, and so quarrel for the want of something to do. Be united with the resolve that you will glorify God, and that there shall be no dissension, no division among you: “Be ye all of one mind,” —

1 Peter 3:8. Having compassion one of another, —

Have true fellow-feeling towards each other.

1 Peter 3:8. Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

The Christian should be the highest type of gentleman, in every respect the most gentle man, kind, self-forgetful, seeking the comfort and well-being of others to the utmost of his power.

1 Peter 3:9. Not rendering evil for evil, —

That, is beastlike; it is certainly not the rule for a Christian. Good for evil is Godlike; and ye, who are the children of God, should seek to act as he does: “not rendering evil for evil,” — .

1 Peter 3:9. Or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

Every man should give away according to what he has. He who gives curses probably gives them because he has so much cursing in him. You can always tell what a man is like by noticing what comes from him. If he curses, it is because curses abound in him. But you are to give blessing to others because you have inherited so much blessing from Christ; your whole tone, temper, spirit, language, action should be the means of blessing to others.

1 Peter 3:10. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

Not only no lies, but no guile, no deceit, no shuffling. Say to a man’s face all that you say behind his back. You will soon be in trouble if you have two tales to tell, one in his presence, and the other in his absence; but if you are free from “policy” — from “knowing how to play your cards,” as the world says, then shall it be seen that you have one of the attributes of a true Christian. If you refrain your lips, that they speak no guile, people will know where to find you, and they will want to find you, for such men are always in demand.

1 Peter 3:11, 12, Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

He “sets his face against them,” as we say that we set our face against certain company which we do not approve. But “the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous,” — that is, those who seek to do good to others, for Christ’s sake, are under the special protection of God; and they have the high privilege of being permitted to pray with the certainty that “his ears are open unto their prayers.”

1 Peter 3:13–15. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Have your doctrinal views, and all your knowledge of Christ, packed away in a handy form, so that, when people want to know what you believe, you can tell them. If they wish to know why you believe that you are saved, have your answer all ready in a few plain, simple sentences; and in the gentlest and most modest spirit make your confession of faith to the praise and glory of God. Who knows but what such good seed will bring forth an abundant harvest?

1 Peter 3:16, 17. Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer, for well doing, than for evil doing.

Who can doubt the truth of that clear declaration?

1 Peter 4

Exposition by C H Spurgeon

1 Peter 4:1. Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin: —

Brethren, we have a Savior who suffered for us. As the Head was, such must the members expect to be. Let us, then, be resolutely determined that, suffer as we may, we will never turn aside from our Lord; for, inasmuch as we suffered in him, yea, and died in him, we ought to reckon that we are henceforth dead to sin, and that we have ceased from it, and can no longer be drawn into it. “He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin:” —

1 Peter 4:2. That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

The doctrine of substitution is the strongest possible argument for holiness. You lived in sin once, but Christ died for your sin, so you must reckon that, in him, you died to sin, seeing that he died in your stead. And the argument is that, henceforth, your life is to be a life in him, a life of holiness, to the praise and glory of God.

1 Peter 4:3. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, —

Suffice? O brethren, let it do much more than that! Let it make us cry, “Would God that we had never wrought the will of the Gentiles at all!” Some young people foolishly say that they must have a little space in which they can “see life.” Ah, those of you who have been converted in after years regret that ever you saw what men call “life”, which is but the alias for corruption and death! “For the time part of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles,” —

1 Peter 4:3, 4. When we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excesses of wine, revellings banquetings, and abominable idolatries. Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

What a strange world this world is! It speaks evil of men because they will not do evil. Yet it has ever been so; the men, “of whom the world was not worthy,” have been the very people of whom worldliness have said, “Away with such fellows from the earth! It is not fit that they should live.” The world’s verdict concerning Christians is of little value.

1 Peter 4:5, 6. Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men is the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

This is a very difficult passage to expound, but I suppose the meaning is that the gospel was preached to those departed saints who had been called to die for Christ’s sake, and that it was preached to them for this very reason, that, while they were judged by wicked men, and were by them condemned to die, they still live a

far more glorious life than they lived here, because they were thus enabled, by their martyr death, to consummate their consecration to God.

1 Peter 4:7, 8. But the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

It covers them sometimes by not seeing them; for, where there is much love, we are blind to many faults which, otherwise, we might see; we do not exercise the sharpness of criticism which malice would be sure to exercise. Besides that, when love applies herself to prayer, and when, in addition to prayer, she kindly gives admonition to a beloved friend, it often happens that true Christian love does really prevent a multitude of sins. The apostle does not mean that, by loving another person, I shall cover my own sin; nor does he mean that the exercise of charity, in the common acceptation of that word, can cover my sin. But if I have much love to others, I may be the instrument, in the hand of God, for covering many of their sins in one or other of the senses I have mentioned.

1 Peter 4:9, 10. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Whatever "the gift" is, whether it be money, or talent, or grace, "even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." God gives much to you that you may give it to others; it is only meant to run through you as through a pipe. You are a steward and if a steward should receive his lord's goods, and keep them for himself he would be an unfaithful steward. Child of God, see to it that you faithfully discharge your responsibility as one of the "good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

1 Peter 4:11-13. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

If you do not share in Christ's humiliation, how can you expect to share in his exaltation? But if worldlings begin to rebuke and reproach you, take it for granted that they can discern something of Christ in you. Dogs do not usually bark at those who live in the same village with them; it is only at strangers that they bark. And when ribald tongues are lifted up against you, you have reason to hope that you are a stranger and a foreigner to the citizens of this world, for they love their own, as our Savior reminded his disciples, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you"

1 Peter 1:19 The Savior's Precious Blood

NO. 3395

A SERMON PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26TH, 1914.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"The precious blood of Christ." — 1 Peter 1:19.

We have come in our theological conversation to use that word "blood" somewhat lightly. Methinks it should scarcely ever be pronounced without a shudder. "The blood is the life thereof." When shed, it indicates suffering — suffering more intense than that of chastisement or bruising. Wounds are inflicted which make the life-blood to flow out. In the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, the term "blood" brings before us all his griefs and anguish, and where the thorn crown pierced him. Behold the man! Think, of Gethsemane, where he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground! Think of Gabbatha, the pavement, where they scourged him with rods, and with the scourge of the roman lictors; where the thorn crown pierced him. Behold the man! Think, lastly, of Golgotha! There they pierced his hands and his feet, and at length, pierced by the spear, out of his side there came blood and water. Pass not lightly, therefore, over such a word as this — blood — the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son; and when you read of its being "precious," remember that the word never had such a wealth of meaning in it before, in any of its applications. Precious metals — gold and silver; precious stones — sardonyx, and agate, and diamond — these are but gaudy toys compared with Christ's precious blood; precious, for he is God as well as man; precious, for he is Jehovah's darling the Lamb of God, without spot or blemish;

precious, when you think of God's design; precious, when you see the effects which it produces; precious, certainly, to the heart of every pardoned sinner, and precious in the song of every glorified spirit before the throne.

It is not, however, my object this evening to pursue the sacred history, so much as to set forth the saving doctrine, while I remind you of some of the uses of this precious blood; for, after all, the standard of preciousness, when we come to the very essence of it, is not scarcity, but usefulness; for there be things in this world exceedingly scarce, and, therefore, precious among the sons of men, which will be left out, and treated with contempt, when we get into the land where the true standards of value are in use. That is the most precious which is the most serviceable. So in truth the precious blood of Christ is beyond all estimation. I will conduct you step by step through the application of this blood, and its effects upon the heart and conscience; and I shall pause at each step to ask you, dear hearer, and to ask myself this question — Dost thou know the blood, the precious blood, in this respect? Hast thou felt it in this peculiar form of its efficacy? Beginning thus at the first: —

I. The Blood Of Jesus Christ Is The Blood Of The Atonement.

We read of the blood of the atonement under the old law. Christ, now, under the gospel, is the propitiation for our sins. It is through the blood that God, the infinitely just, without the violation of his character, can pass by the transgression of the guilty. It is not possible that any one attribute of God should ever shadow another. He is perfect. Infinitely merciful he is, but he will not be merciful at the expense of justice. Justice shall never triumph against mercy; mercy, on the other hand, shall never cut off the skirts of the flowing robe of justice. It is in the person of Jesus, and especially in the blood of Jesus, that the great riddle of the ages is unriddled. God can be just, and yet the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. We have sinned. God must punish sin. According to the inexorable laws which God has stamped upon the universe, the sinner cannot go unpunished. His sin is, in fact, its own punishment, and becomes the mother of unnumbered griefs. The Mediator steps in — the Son of God and the Son of Man, eternal, and yet as man, born of Mary, and slumbering in Bethlehem's manger — he comes as the substitute for the guilty. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed," and "now in Christ Jesus, we who some time were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." God can be gracious without the violation of the severity of his judgment. His moral government remains untarnished in all the majesty of its purity, and yet he puts out the right hand of reconciliation, and love to all who approach him, making mention of the blood of the atonement of his dear Son.

Art thou, then, thus reconciled to God by the death of his son, or art thou an enemy still? Hast thou ever seen the distance between thee and God bridged by the cross? Hast thou seen as once how God, the infinitely just, can commune with thee without consuming thee, because he poured his wrath upon Christ, instead of thee; and then, accepted in him and for his merits, thou livest because Jesus lives? Ah! dear hearer, if thou hast not seen this, the Lord open those blind eyes of thine, and by his eternal Spirit bring thee, with thy burden of sin upon thy back, to the foot of the Master's cross, where thou mayest look up and sing: —

**"Oh! how sweet to view the flowing
Of his sin-atonement blood;
With divine assurance knowing,
That it made my peace with God."**

The blood of Jesus Christ has another effect upon us, namely,

II. It Cleanses From Sin.

Surely we can never fail to remember that choicest of all Scriptural texts, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." There is such music in it that when the spirits before the throne desire to have a song of which they might never grow weary, they select that sentiment, and they sing before the throne that they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Their purity before God is due to the fountain filled with blood, wherein their stained garments, all soiled with sin, have been made clean. When the soul comes to Jesus Christ by faith, and relies upon him, then the sentence of the perfect pardon goeth forth from God, and the soul is purged from all the stains of accumulated years. In a single moment those who were black as hell become white as heaven, through the application of the blood of sprinkling; for all sin disappears as soon as the blood falls on the conscience. That which the blood of bulls and of goats could not do, the blood of Jesus effectually accomplishes cleansing from all sin.

Now, dear hearer, hast thou ever been thus cleansed? Say not thou hadst never need of cleansing, else thou knowest not thy natural condition, and thine actual transgressions. Man! thou canst never have seen thyself in the glass of the Word, else thou wouldest perceive thyself to be totally defiled and altogether as an unclean thing. Thou wouldest have bowed thyself before the Lord, and joined in the confession, "We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep; we have done those things which we ought

not to have done, and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and there is no health in us." Well, if thou hast ever thus felt thy guilt, hast thou ever realised thy pardon? If not, give thyself no sleep till thou hast. Canst thou bear to live unpardoned, or in doubt whether or not God has absolved thee? Canst thou ever take any kind of rest, much less indulge thy soul with mirth, until the word "Absolvo" has come from God himself, the eternal Spirit bearing witness with thy spirit that thou art born of God? Happy are they who have been washed; they have need to come each night (even as Peter the apostle had need) to wash their feet; but they need not except to wash their feet, for they are clean every whit. Jesus has made them clean through his blood. The third step is that: —

III. The Blood Of Jesus Christ Is The Great Price Of Our Redemption.

Redemption sometimes in Scripture is spoken of as being the same thing as pardon, and I shall not at all dogmatically attempt to-night to draw any nice distinction between the two. "We have redemption through his blood — to wit, the forgiveness of sin — according to the riches of his grace." But redemption seems rather to be in some sense the effect produced by a pardon than the actual pardon itself. Man is a slave. As long as guilt is written in God's book against us, we are in bondage. We feel for the present that we are slaves to sin, and that for the future the punishment of sin will inevitably come upon us to our eternal destruction. But the moment we are purged from the guilt of sin we are set free from the slavery of it; Jesus Christ takes us from being bond-slaves, and makes us to be children; gives us no longer "the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father!" He was slain, and he hath redeemed us unto God by his blood, and in the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free we rejoice to see that it was the blood which was the price thereof, and because he suffered, therefore our chains have dropped from off us. We are free — the Lord's free-men; free henceforth to serve him with renewed love and renewed hearts, because of the abundance of the grace which he has manifested towards us.

Now, beloved, hast thou ever been redeemed by the blood of Jesus? I am not talking to thee now about a redemption effected upon the cross, but hast thou ever felt redemption in thine own spirit from the curse of the law, from the thralldom of a guilty conscience, and from the power of sin? Let me ask thee, art thou the Lord's free-man to-night? Oh! happy art thou then, for thou canst say, "Lord, thou hast loosed my bonds, and, therefore, I am thy servant." "We are not our own, because we are bought with a price"; and inasmuch as we are no more slaves to the law from henceforth, for the love we bear his name who hath redeemed us with such a price, we reckon ourselves to be his servants, and we bear in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Ah! friends, if you were never redeemed by the precious blood, then you are slaves still — slaves to sin and Satan, slaves under the vengeance of God, and slaves to the law. But may you never be content in slavery! May you pine after freedom, and may Jesus give it to you — give it to you to-night, if it be his blessed will! In the fourth place, the blood of Jesus is spoken of in Scripture as: —

IV. Interceding.

"The blood of sprinkling speaketh better things than that of Abel." It is said to be sprinkled within the veil, so that where the high-priest could only go once a year we may now go at all times, for the blood is there, interceding for us perpetually. Well, in fact, says one of our poets: —

"The wounds of Christ for us incessantly do plead."

Even after his death, remember, his heart for us poured out its flood. After death that heart was pierced, and blood and water came. So, after his voice was silent, and he could no longer say, "Father, forgive them," the wounds were still eloquent, and even when the suffering passed they continued still to plead with God.

Now, soul, hast thou ever come to God through the intercession of the blood? Thou hast said prayers, thou hast repeated forms of devotion, thou hast gone to church or to meeting-house. This is all well enough; but hast thou gone farther? for if not, all outward forms of devotion are but frivolous puerilities that may allure, but will deceive thee. Didst thou ever come to God by the blood, and didst thou ever by faith fix thine eye upon "the High Priest who ever liveth to make intercession for us," who with our names upon his bosom, offering still the blood, stands at this moment before the Father, God pleading for us who love him and trust him? Happy they who look to the interceding Savior, and who feel that his blood speaks, not revenge, but cries at every vein, "Mercy, mercy for the chief of sinners!" This leads me to remark that the blood of Jesus: —

V. Becomes The Mode And Way Of Access To God.

We have boldness to enter into the holiest through the blood of Christ. After first cleansing the man, and making him fit to come as a priest and a king unto God, then the blood, as it were, takes away the veil and opens up the pathway to God himself for the forgiven

and redeemed soul. Never let us attempt to come to God by anything but the blood. All other ways to God, except through the blood of Jesus, are presumptuous. All other fire that we may put upon the altar, except this, is strange fire, and the Lord's anger will go forth against us. May I never plead when on my knees before God anything but the precious merits and the dear wounds of the Man of Sorrows who is now exalted at the right hand of God. How close to God we should come if we did but always bring Christ with us; but what are our prayers when we leave him behind? What are our devotions when we are met together, or when we are in secret, and we go to the mercy-seat, but forget the blood that was sprinkled on it, oblivious of the new and living way through the rent body of Immanuel? Come, brethren and sisters, let us chide ourselves for having forgotten our Lord sometimes, and henceforth be it ours never to think of drawing near to God, except by this way of access — the crimson road which the blood has paved for us. To advance farther, the blood of Jesus Christ, according to the Word, is: —

VI. Sanctifying.

Jesus sanctified his people by his own blood, and, therefore, suffered without the gate. By sanctification is usually meant in Scripture the setting apart of anything for the service of God, and so making it holy. Now, the blood separates the saints from all others. It was the blood that was the distinguishing mark of Israel in Egypt. Every Egyptian house was without the blood, but every house of the seed of Abraham had the blood mark upon the lintel and the two side-posts, and when God saw the blood he passed over them, and spared them in the night of his furious anger. The blood, then, beloved, if thou hast ever had it on thy soul, is to be the distinguishing mark between thee and the ungodly in the day of wrath, and it should distinguish thee now. Thou shouldest, by thy life and thy conversation, make thyself to appear to be as the blood has made thee really to be a separated one. We are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. We have heard the mandate — “Come ye out from among them; be ye separate; touch not the unclean thing.” We have left the world's sin, and we have left the world's religion, too. We have separated ourselves at once from the world's goodness, as well as from the world's vileness, to walk in the path of nonconformity to the world, that we may tread in the footsteps of our crucified Redeemer; and the more the blood is applied, the more the obedience of Jesus is trusted in, and the sprinkling of the blood is relied upon, the more shall we become sanctified in spirit, and soul, and body, by the power of the Holy Ghost. Let us never forget the purifying power of Jesus in the heart. Wherever he is trusted in to take away the guilt of sin, we must seek next the water which flowed with the blood to take away the power of sin, and we must ask to see him sit as a refiner to purify, yea, it must be our prayer that he would take his fan in his hand and purge our hearts as he doth his floor. Refining fire, go through my soul! Oh! sweet love of Jesus, burn up the love of the world! Oh! death of Jesus, be the death of sin. Oh! life of Christ, be the life of everything that is gracious, God-like, heavenly, eternal! So; shall it be in proportion as we partake of the power and the efficacy of that blood. The blood, furthermore, is: —

VII. Confirmatory.

We must not forget this one effect of it. It is called the blood of the covenant — the blood of the testament — the blood of the new testament. The covenant was not in force in the olden times until there had been a sacrifice to confirm it, and a will stands not until the death of the testator has been proved to make it valid. The heart's blood of Jesus is, as it were, the establishment of his last will and testament. Jesus, the great testator, has died, has made an end of sin, and his blood is the great seal of his testament, and makes it valid to us. If he had never died! Oh! dreadful “if,” only equalled in horror by that other “if” — if he had never risen again from the dead! But now is Christ risen from the dead. Now has Christ slept, and awoke as the first-fruits of them that slept. Never doubt the promise of God, for the blood confirms it. Never doubt the love of God, for he spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? If you want evidence as to the eternal goodness of God, his willingness to pardon, his power to save and to bless, look to the cross of Calvary, and see the bleeding Savior, and never doubt again.

Dear hearer, did the blood so come to thee as to confirm thy hope, or is thy hope a fancy, a delusion? Dost thou think it needs no confirmation? Hast thou ever in thy moments of questioning and anxiety gone over again to the altar where is the Great Victim? Hast thou said one more: —

“Just as I am, without one plea

But that thy blood was shed for me.

And that thou biddist me come to thee,

Oh! Lamb of God, I come!”

Hast thou, then, got thy consolation back again? Hast thou received the witness of God? Hast thou heard the voice which bears

witness both in heaven and earth, the voice of the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and hast thou been satisfied because thou wantedst no better confirmation than the witness of the blood of Jesus applied with power to thy soul? The blood of Jesus has another effect of which we ought to think more than we do — that of: —

VIII. Nourishing, Cheering, And Sustaining The Believer.

To this end the ordinance of communion with Christ in the breaking of bread, and partaking of the cup of blessing has been instituted. When we come to the Lord's table we have set before us in the broken bread whereof we eat, and in the wine whereof we drink, this present fact, that the sufferings of our Master are now at this moment for our nourishment, sustenance, consolation, and exhilaration. We have been washed in the blood; we are now to receive, after a spiritual sort, the precious blood of Jesus to nourish our faith, to comfort our hope, to excite in us the liveliest joy, and to make us sing and be merry with holy confidence in him who hath redeemed us from all iniquity, and made us unto God priests and kings to reign with Christ for ever and ever. There is no cordial for the heart like the blood of Jesus. To think of the atoning sacrifice is the readiest way to consolation. Our sorrows are not worth a thought when once compared with his. Sit down under the shadow of the cross, and you will find a cooler shade than that of a great rock in a weary land. There is no pasturage for the sheep of Christ like that which grows on Calvary. There is nowhere to be found such wine, that maketh glad the heart of God and man, as that which comes from the sacred cup of his heart, whereof believers drink by faith when they have fellowship with him, and come into near and dear communion with him. Although we do sometimes enjoy this without any emblems, without the bread, and without the wine, still these are great assistants, blessed exponents, and they graciously help our forgetfulness. We are yet in the body, and we need something that shall aid this lagging flesh to see something of the Lord.

Oh! feed ye, then on Christ, and do not be content unless day by day he is your daily bread. He who has given you life must sustain that life. He who has taught you how to rejoice must still supply you with power to continue in your daily rejoicing. The blood without cleanses; the blood within cheers, yea, sacredly inebriates the soul, till the sinner drinks and forgets his sorrow, and remembers his misery no more, and in the fullness of his delight becomes sweetly oblivious, whether in the body or out of the body, as he rises into almost celestial communion with his unseen, but ever-present Lord. Once again, the blood of Jesus Christ has the effect of: —

IX. Uniting Christians Together.

Paul, speaking of Jew and Gentile, says that he "has made both one through the blood of Christ," and surely there is nothing that unites different denominations of Christians together like the precious blood of Jesus. Brethren, we may dispute, I think we do well to dispute, over important ordinances and doctrines, for wherein men err we are not to wink at their errors, neither ask them to wink at ours. I have sometimes heard it said, "Spare such a brother." Yes, as a brother; but who am I that I should be spared if I err, or who is he that he should be spared? What are we, or what are our feelings compared with truth? Nay, let questions be fought out as kindly, as lovingly, as valorously, as honorably as they possibly can be. Truth fears not the shock of arms. Let the controversies go on. I believe that, after all, there is more truth in this world now with all the apparent divisions of Christians by ten times than there would have been if we had been united in a nominal union into some one great church, which might, perhaps, have rotted as thoroughly as the old Church off Rome did before the days of Luther. But when we come to the cross-foot, what union there is! If the saints in prayer appear as one, if in the praise of the infinite Jehovah they are one, much more, and much more tenderly, are they one when they behold Jesus bleeding and dying for them. My heart melts and breaks when I hear Christ preached. He who lifted up Christ would have offended me had he preached some other part of his creed. Had he talked over some doctrine which I hold to be erroneous, he and I had differed, but when it comes to this, "HE loved me and gave himself for me he is the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely — his blood is precious" — I feel inclined to cry, "Brother, keep to that; praise him louder, give him all the honor;

"Bring forth the royal diadem

And crown him Lord of all."

While we keep to that we are none of us heretics over that. There shall be no schisms and divisions over the matter. Son of God and Son of Man, Redeemer of our souls from death and misery, all thy mother's children praise thee. Every sheaf bows before thy sheaf; sun, and moon, and every star do obeisance unto Thee, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, Head over all things unto thy church, Which is thy dwelling-place, the fullness of him that filleth all in all! Since here we are one, when we get together as believers I wish we oftener struck that key — the precious blood of Christ — and in our walks and talks with those Christians who differ from us in many points let us try sometimes to turn those points aside, and say, "We do agree to speak well of that dear name which is above every name, that name which charms all our fears, and bids all our sorrows cease, that name which is the joy, of the believer on earth and the bliss of the saints in heaven. I close now when I have noticed that the blood of Jesus Christ may be looked upon by us

every day as: —

X. The Great Instructor And The Cardinal Witness Of Divine Truth.

God is to be seen in nature, and seen vividly there, but not as he is to be seen in Christ Jesus. Instruction as to the eternal power of the Godhead some find in the skies above, in the fields around, and in the sea beneath, but in the cross there is more of God than in all the world besides. I have often felt, when I have been rambling in the Alps, that nature was too small to set forth God. The mirror is not large enough to reflect the face of the Eternal. You stand in the Alps and hear the avalanche, like claps and peals of thunder resounding in the air, you gaze afar off, and there it is, and it looks to you like the falling of a few grains of snow. It is so inconsiderable that the grandeur seems to be destroyed. Though every one of those granules may be a block of ice weighing a hundred tons, at such a distance the thing grows small. The water leaps down hundreds of feet from the crags, but up in the mountains it appears to be a little trickling rill scarcely worth notice. The very Alpine summits seem to dwindle down to small heaps of stones when one grows used to the scenery. God is too great for this earth to bear him. The axles of this world's chariot would snap beneath the weight of Deity. We talk of going from nature up to nature's God, but the top of the highest Alps is far below his footstool. We do not get any conceptions of God out of nature worthy of his august majesty. But in contemplating the cross, in discerning there how God can forgive, how willing he is to save the guilty, how his justice is magnified at the same time as his grace, I am persuaded that those who have tried both forms of contemplation will tell you that this last is the better by far. You see God through the wounds of Christ as through windows of agate, and gates of carbuncle, and you cry, "My Lord, and my God!"

In winding up this poor discourse of mine, let me say to you, Beloved, be more in meditation upon Jesus. I say to myself — Preacher, preach thy Master more; preach him more after his own sort, and endeavor to be thyself more like him. Dear hearer, live nearer to the cross. With all your study of doctrine — and you do well to study it thoroughly make Jesus Christ the first. Believe in him. Let him be your greed. Speak of a body of divinity — there never was in this world but one body of divinity, and that is Jesus Christ, and he that understands Jesus Christ has got the only system of theology that is worth the knowing. Get right into him. Some of the early Fathers used to study every wound. They would write a treatise almost on every different spot where he was scourged. They had some tears to let fall and some sweet songs to sing for every step along the Via Dolorosa. Let us not treat lightly what those nearer to the light treated so solemnly, but regarding the Master, and thinking much of even the little things that concern him (for the leaves of this tree of life are for the healing of the nations), let us study to understand him, and ask to be conformed to him, even in his sufferings to be like him, and when we suffer to see him in our pangs. Let every grief be a glass through which to look into his life and love, and understand his grace.

I wish you all knew this, and more than this. Oh! that I could hope that all this assembled company did trust in my Master! Poor sinner, why not trust him? You will never be saved else. There is no other door of mercy for you than that. Come, come, come, even though you think he will cast you away. If Christ had a drawn sword in his hand yet I would bid you come. It were better to fall on the point of his sword than to live without him. Come and rest upon him. He never did reject a sinner yet, and he never can. The vilest of the vile can find mercy in him, and all he asks — and that he gives — is, that you do rely on him with all your heart, and you shall be saved. God grant that you may, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Obey the second precept as you have attained to the first. When you have believed in Christ crucified, dead, and buried for you, then be dead and buried with him in baptism. Take the outward symbol of his death, burial, and resurrection, and ask to have the inward spiritual grace, that you, being dead to the world, and dead with Christ, and buried with him, may rise again to newness of life through his quickening Spirit.

The Lord thus bless you, for Jesus' sake!

1 Peter 2:5 The Priesthood of Believers

NO. 3266

A SERMON PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH, 1911,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 28TH, 1864.

An holy priesthood -1 Peter 2:5

IN this epistle Peter is speaking of the scattered saints in all parts of the world, and, taught by the Holy Spirit, he says of them that they were "an holy priesthood." He is not talking about ministers: he is not speaking of a certain number of men who have passed through divers grades of office, and are thereby qualified to wear robes of a certain color, but he is speaking of every believer, and

he calls every saint a member of “ an holy priesthood.” Every Mary and every John, every peasant girl and every laborer that puts his hand upon the plough, every servant of God in every capacity, is a member of this “holy priesthood”: at least so Peter says, and Peter was not mistaken, for he spake as he was “ moved by the Holy Ghost. “

Let us for the ten-thousandth time state our own solemn conviction, that it is time for England to wake up, and solemnly rebuke the priestcraft that seems rising up in our midst. No man has any right to call himself, in any exclusive sense, a priest. When I take down the Book of Common Prayer and read “ Then shall the priest say,” I shut it up again with detestation. And if it were the best human book ever printed and had no other blunder and error in it, yet if it ventured to call any class of men priests, I should denounce it as being tainted with Romanism. Christ is the only priest who can offer sacrifice for the expiation of sin. He is “the Great Apostle and High Priest of our profession.” But there is another priesthood—one of offering prayers, and praises, and this belongs not to me because I am a minister, nor to any number of men who are called “Reverend,” or “Very Reverend,” or Right-Reverend,” but to you as well, and to every one else who by faith has believed in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. If truly converted be God, a man though scarce able to read his Bible, is a priest unto him, because he has a new heart and a right spirit. He may never mount a pulpit, nor preside at a church-meeting: but he may be a priest unto God.

His only pulpit may be a cobbler’s stall: his only platform for witnessing to Christ may be behind the counter or in the factory, but he is a priest for all that.

Or if the Lord call a sister to himself, she is to be silent in the church-meeting, but she belongs to the Divine priesthood, and her prayers and praises will go up with as much acceptance before God, through Jesus Christ, as if she were an eminent divine, or the most gifted of the saints. All God’s children are priests, and this is the song of all in heaven and all on earth who are truly saved. “He hath made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign for ever and ever.”

Now, it is on this theme of priesthood that I desire to speak to-night; and the way in which priests were made under the law is described for us in the 8th chapter of Leviticus. So I invite you to turn with me and look at the subject as expounded there; for surely the way in which the sons of Aaron were ordained to their earthly and temporal priesthood is richly suggestive, and intentionally typical of the manner in which God calls all his people to their holy priesthood. On turning to that chapter we find that one of the first things with regard to the ordination; of Aaron and his sons to their priesthood was that, They Were Cleansed. We read in Leviticus 8:6, and Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water.” That was one cleansing. But several times in the chapter we find that a second cleansing was theirs and that by blood! In verse 2 we find that they brought a bullock for a sin-offering, and two rams, and with the blood of one of the rams, and the blood of the sin-offering they sprinkled, that they might be clean before God. This powerfully teaches that every one of us aspiring to be a priest for God must first be cleansed, and that with a double purifying.

**“Let the water and the blood,
From his riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse us from its guilt and power.”**

If we look closer into this cleaning by blood we see that Aaron and his sons put their hands upon the ram, confessing their sins. Then the ram was slain, the blood sprinkled upon the altar, and the laver, and upon all the vessels of the sanctuary, and then upon Aaron and his sons. What deep instruction is here! If we are God’s priests we lay our hand upon Christ, accept him as our substitute, trusting in that blood shed for the remission of sins. He will have no priests in his sanctuary who have not been cleansed with the blood of Christ. All service until this is experienced is a vain oblation, which he cannot accept. Go to the altar, confess thy sin, and lay it upon the Lamb of God, and then, but not until then, canst thou be a holy priest.

Moreover, the priests were afterward also washed in water. On this first occasion they were cleansed from head to foot: but on later occasions when going into the tabernacle, they needed only to wash their hands and feet. So is it with our Christian life. By the Holy Spirit’s application of our Lord’s merits believers are completely cleansed, and there remains neither spot nor wrinkle on their acceptance with him. But though a man be perfectly clean who leaves his bath, yet his feet may be soiled as he goes to his room and he needs again to wash them. So you and I need to pray, “Forgive us our sins,” though they have all been forgiven. We are washed, but daily defiling calls for constant cleansing. Though every true Christian has been cleansed, as was Peter, he must not say, “Thou shalt never wash my feet.” When Jesus comes by his cleansing word and spirit, and girt with the towel and carrying the bason, we must be willing to let him cleanse, nay beg of him to wash our feet, that we may be clean, every whit. We do need to pray “Forgive us our sins.” It is not in the least in conflict with the doctrine of a complete sanctification, or complete justification.

The priest, every one of them, were washed, they had a clear right to go into the sanctuary; yet none the less, they must wash their hands and feet each time they entered.

So we are clean; God accepts us; we are his children and yet, day by day, we must go with the prayer to him, “Lord cleanse me

again in the Redeemer's Blood: make me pure by the washing of water by the Word!" So if defiling come, his cleansing power may be proved again and again.

Well, beloved, have we ever attempted to serve God without this cleansing? If so, may we repent of our imagined righteousness as much as of our sins; for even our righteousnesses are nothing but sins until we have been washed. Do we long for this perfect cleansing! The fountain is full: the blood, the water, have the same efficacy as they ever had. "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Step down into this heavenly bath. Trust Christ to save you, and being cleansed by him, you shall be for ever a member of this "holy priesthood."

Referring again to Leviticus 8., we see that the second thing in the ordaining of the priesthood was They Were Divinely Clothed. However clean they were, they must be suitably arrayed, or they cannot appear before the Lord. We have given to us, a list of the garments, and find that Aaron as High Priest was sumptuously clothed, but not so his sons. In the 13th verse we are told that they had coats, and girdles, and bonnets. Let us glance at each of these for they are packed with spiritual significance. The "Coat" is a priestly robe. Everyone who ministered at the altar put on an ephod, a coat hanging from the shoulder, generally in one piece, and woven from the top throughout, like that which the Lord Jesus wore. So every believer is to put on the imputed righteousness of Jesus, given to us at our conversion.

He officiates as High Priest before the throne clothed in white linen, and so do all the saints—"white linen which is the righteousness of the saints," says John in the Revelation. Now we have no righteousness of our own, but the voice from heaven speaks, "I counsel thee, buy of me white raiment that thou mayest be clothed." We come to Christ just as we are, and he clothes us with his righteousness, active and passive, and this is the ephod in which we minister unto God. With our Lord's righteousness clothing us, we can stand without fear before the awful searching eyes of God, now and hereafter and not fear.

"Bold shall I stand at that great day For who aught to my charge shall lay, While through thy blood absolved I am From sin's tremendous curse and shame?"

Are you, beloved, robed in the righteousness of your Savior? Then come forward, and officiate as his priest!

Next to the ephod, came the girdle. In the case of Aaron we are told it was a "curious" girdle. Ah! how curious, how matchless, how marvellous is the girdle which encircles the loins of Christ! He is girt about the waist with a golden girdle. His faithfulness, his truth, his love, his every attribute of excellency combined, make up this curious girdle comprising the ephod. But every other true priest has his girdle. You and I, if called to this holy office, are to have our loins girt about, standing always ready, instant to obey God's command, and rove in his service. Orientals wore flowing garments and when these were loose they could not hasten in their activities. So they used the girdle to brace themselves, gathering up their robes for special labor, or conflict, or flight. So every priest of Christ must wear his girdle of faithfulness. There is a wicked world always on the watch. Be careful: be vigilant. You may be tripped up by the sin that cloth so easily beset us. See to it that you are well braced, so that if the enemy came suddenly you may meet him with courage, or if a message came from your master you may run upon it with diligence.

Yet another part of the priest's clothing is called "the bonnet"; literally, the turban. This, so we are told, "was for glory and for beauty." Truly our Lord has put upon his people his own glory and beauty. We are not merely acceptable, but beloved: not passable, but admirable: not merely not to be condemned, but full of imparted loveliness. Jesus says to every saved soul, "Thou hast ravished my heart my-sister, my spouse-with one look of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck." Jesus so falls in love with his own image in each saved soul, that his heart is captured. Here is "the glory and beauty" with which he has invested us. Every believer is looked upon by God as if he, were Christ. Christ took your place, and was cursed for you; you take Christ's place, and notwithstanding all the blemishes, all the back-slidings, all the hardness you may feel within, if you are truly in Christ, you are so clothed that glory and beauty, and that Divine, is yours! The priests were not only washed but clothed. My soul, what joy is this! Ponder it, until it masters and enthral's thee!

After the cleansing and clothing, came this to the priests, They Were Anointed. This is mentioned more than once. Aaron had the holy oil poured upon his head, until it ran down to the skirt of his garment. So Jesus was anointed of the Holy Spirit without measure. The other priests were also touched with the oil-sprinkled with it.

And you and I, if we have been both washed and clothed, must yet be anointed. Child of God, cost thou distinctly and intensely recognize thy need of this anointing! If I have preached without the Holy Spirit I have preached in vain. If I have gone to my prayer-chamber, no matter how earnest I desired to be, I have prayed in vain unless the Spirit of God has been upon me. This anointing is the Christian's supreme need. Dear Joseph Irons very often used to say as he went into the pulpit, "Oh! for an unction from on high!" Sunday-school teacher, you are a priest: and this is your great want-anointing. You who preach in the streets, you who are intercessors in private for Christ, you who seek to show God in your daily life, you need the anointing. What can we not do when the Spirit is in us: What can we do if he is with, holding his presence and power? As God's priests we may, we must, have a daily unction-anointing-from the Holy One!

After this, They Were Consecrated. Here I must enlarge more than upon the last point. This setting apart to priestly function and work was very remarkable. We find that blood was taken, and that Moses touched the priests with it (according to the 24th verse) first "upon the tip of the right ear, then upon the thumbs of their right hand and then upon the great toes of their right feet; and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about." This description is very full and suggestive. Every Christian is to be consecrated to God by blood as to his ear. That is, we are to be eager to hear God's voice, whether in his, Word printed or preached. "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound!" They only recognize it because the blood is on the ear. We are to hear God's voice in providence. When there is a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees, like David, we are to bestir ourselves. We are to be willing to hear even the rod and him that hath appointed it. There are many voices that the sanctified ear detects that the carnal ear has never listened to. The godly man has monitions from the Most High when the natural man catches no whisper. To hear the "still, small voice" always, is the listening we should desire. So too, with regard to man, we should hear his misery and feel for it: hear his sin, and pray to God for its full forgiveness as Jesus did. Yet on the other hand, there are some sounds that the ear so consecrated must not hear. We are deaf to the insinuations of suspicion, the slander of calumny, aye! to many any intended insult that else might have provoked and angered us. May we ever feel that as there was blood on the priest's ear, so all our reception powers are to be consecrated to God. If so, I shall feel that there are some books I cannot read: for have blood on my ear: some songs I dare not listen to: some talk I dare not share in, for I have a consecrated ear. I am to use that for him, for I am his priest.

Next in order, was the thumb. This consecrated the hand. And as the ear stands for our receptive faculties, so the hand represents our active powers. There are some things we must not touch nor handle: some things we cannot do, in which we can have no hand, nay, cannot finger. Since our hand is sanctified by the blood, all it does must be pleasing to God. I know that a common mistake is to think that you cannot serve God unless you get into a pulpit, or attend a prayer-meeting. Nonsense! You can truly serve God behind the counter, in the work-room-serve God by digging a ditch, or clipping a hedge. I believe that God is often served by the tailor or shoemaker who is conscientious in his calling, quite as well as by bishops and archbishops, or by men of any church in the world. At any rate if you cannot serve God in all that you do, you have need to ask to be taught the secret of the Christian life: for that secret is, the consecration of everything to Jesus Christ.

You are to make your garments vestments, your meals sacraments, your every day a holy day, your every hour a consecrated season unto God. Our hand, with all its manifold activities, is to be consecrated-blood-marked-to him.

After this, came the foot. The blood was put on the great toe of the right foot, so the feet were set apart for God. Ah! these legs of ours used to carry us to theatres! We could run fast enough the downward road with them. I recollect a man who would stand in the aisle for a long time-he said he would "serve his legs out"; they had served the devil so long, that they should bear a little hardship for his new lord and master, Jesus Christ. I know some of you, who used to walk many miles to come to the house of God-six miles. I used to say to you that it was too far. It was not too far for you then, but lately it has become much too far. The road has not grown longer, but you have gone backward as to your zeal, and when the zeal declines, the miles get dolefully long. But I have marked that when men and women are in a right state of mind and soul, it does not matter how far they walk, not what they have to do for Christ, the consecrated foot can do it joyfully. If I have a consecrated foot, I must not let it take me into bad company. If anybody say to you, "Can you come with me to such and such a place?" You must answer, " No! I cannot: I have a foot that won't go, and I cannot go without; that!" And if any should say, " What is the matter with your foot?" say, "I have a foot that has blood upon it!" They will say: "Strange!" They will not understand you: but if you attempt to explain to them that the blood of your Lord Jesus Christ bought you and so, your foot, then they will understand that it cannot go anywhere except where Christ would have it go. It may mean that you will have to change your position in life-you have to move, and have a choice as to where you shall go. Make that choice on the principle of having a consecrated foot. Do not go where you cannot bear the pure Word of God. A Jew heard of a good business where there was much money but no synagogue; and of another where there was a synagogue though but little trade, and being a pious Jew, he chose the place with the synagogue. I am afraid that there are but few Jews who would do that: and quite as few Christians who think first of God's house and the hearing of the Gospel. Better to have a dinner of herbs and the Gospel with it, than a stalled ox and not to listen to the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ. In choosing your home, in fact, in everything that concerns your progress in life, act as if you had, and knew you had, a consecrated foot!

Gathering up all, it surely teaches that, a Christian is always, and everywhere, and altogether, not his own, but consecrated to Christ. Not merely to be baptized, to come once a month to the Lord's table: to take a pew, and sit and look so heavenly-minded. Any hypocrite can do that. But it is the mark of a Christian to be so honest, upright, charitable, kind, Christlike, holy, that all who see may be compelled to say, "That man differs from other men." The secret, though they may not discover it, is, that whilst other men are but common men, where father Adam left them in the fall, this man has been found, and made anew in Jesus Christ. Ear, thumb, and foot, all consecrated to Christ's service!

Hastily running through the rest of this chapter (Leviticus 8) we observe that the consecration was very thorough. There is mention made of unleavened bread. This teaches, that a Christian is not to follow religion for the sake of honor, gain, or fame. None of the leaven of hypocrisy, or mere formalism, is to be tolerated. We are to serve Christ for Christ's sake, and follow God because our

heart is right with him.

Again, the consecration is set forth though I have little time to notice it, by the different parse of the victim being offered to God. You will observe that the deepest feelings of the Christian are to be with God—that the inwards and the fat of the kidneys were to be burnt upon the altar. Thus the richest and fullest emotions of the Christian's minds and heart are to belong to God, for the fat and marrow were to be burned as well: and the Christian's greatest strength is to be the Lord's: for the right shoulder was to be offered as a wave offering, and then to be consumed with fire. We are to give God our inmost thoughts, our deeper passions, our greatest strength. "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee!" Some people can call loud enough to wake up a town when they are in their business, but when they come to pray you can scarcely hear them. But I would have a Christian never so much, or so fine a man, as when he is serving God. Give the world, if you will, the fag-ends of your mind, soul and strength: but give God your whole man, your inward and your outward life, every part and power and passion, strung to its greatest height, and all devoted to him!

But to conclude once more, the Christian's consecration is to be constant. This remarkable chapter has greatly interested me in observing that these priests were to be for one whole week associating in the tabernacle. They were not either by day or night to leave their holy work. How they found strength enough, or whether this really included absolutely necessary seasons of rest, I cannot tell. But it says: that for seven days they were to serve without intermission both by day and night. So the Christian priesthood is to be perpetual. We are never to cease to serve God. You have heard of one that was so in love, that he did eat, and drink, and sleep for such an one: so the Christian is to "do all to the glory of God." Says one, "Can this be done? Are we to follow Romish monks and get into a monastery?" No! I have no doubt they are right in shaving their heads: shore is probably a great necessity for it. But unless we become demented, there is no need for us to imitate their example. The Christian is not to shut himself up, and become a hermit, and think that thereby he can cultivate holiness. That is unholiness: Christian holiness is social: the light of the world, the salt of the earth. We are to be in the world, though not of it; our priesthood exercised in the street, the shop, the family, and at the fireside. By day and night, to offer up prayers and praises and thanksgivings unto God, and so be perpetually a priest.

But what am I talking about? There are some, here; that have never yet been priests to God. What have they been doing to-day? Why even on God's holy day they do not serve him but themselves. Why, Sir! God has never reaped a solitary ear of grain from your field. Take care lest having lived to yourself, you die to yourself, having lived without God, you die without God, and find it a tremendous thing to stand and be judged without a Savior to be your helper, or interceding priest. I say nothing to you about being a priest to God. You need a priest for yourself, first. Do not go to any man. No man has power to help your soul, except to pray and plead for you. The saving, pardoning power lies only with Jesus Christ. Look away to him: he died: trust in his sacrifice: he rose, he ascended: he is standing at God's right hand. There is life for a look at him. Look! trust! and you shall then be cleansed, clothed, anointed, consecrated, and so serve God. But your first business is to go to Christ. Oh! may Christ come to you, and save you now, and he shall have glory out of us, world without end! Amen.

1 Peter 2:7 A Sermon From A Sick Preacher

NO. 3014

A SERMON PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH, 1906,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, IN THE YEAR 1869.

"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." — 1 Peter 2:7.

Not only was this the first text from which Dr. Spurgeon preached, but it was his theme on many subsequent occasions. Two of these discourses bear the same title, — "Christ Precious to Believers," although one of them is No. 242 in the New Park Street Pulpit and the other is No. 2,137 in the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

MY brethren! I am quite out of order for addressing you tonight. I feel extremely unwell, excessively heavy and exceedingly depressed, and yet I could not deny myself the pleasure of trying to say a few words to you. I have taken a text upon which I think I could preach in my sleep; and I believe that, if I were dying, and were graciously led into the old track, I could, with my last expiring breath, pour out a heartfelt utterance upon the delightful verse which I have selected. It happens to be the passage from which I first essayed to speak in public when I was but a boy of sixteen years of age; and I am sure it contains the marrow of what I have always taught in the pulpit from that day until now. The words are in the second chapter of the first Epistle of Peter, and the seventh verse: "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious."

We might find "ample room and verge enough" if we were to enlarge upon the preciousness of Christ in his person as God and

perfect man; his preciousness to his Father, his preciousness to the Holy Spirit, his preciousness to angels and glorified men. We might next speak of him in the preciousness of his work; showing his preciousness as the Mediator of the new covenant, and at the incarnate Messenger of that covenant on earth; his preciseness as working out a perfect righteousness, and as rendering a complete expiation. We might dwell upon his preciousness in all his offices, whether as Prophet, Priest, or King, and in all his relationships as Friend, Brother, as Bridegroom. Indeed, we have before us a subject as inexhaustible as the river of God, and as bright as the sapphire throne. If we should endeavor to show how precious the Well-beloved, which to complete is in all respects, we should need eternity in the task.

**“Precious is the name of Jesus,
Who can half its worth unfold?
Far beyond angelic praises
Sweetly sung to harps of gold.**

**“Precious when to Calvary groaning,
He sustain’d the cursed tree;
Precious when his death atoning
Made an end of sin for me.**

**“Precious when the bloody scourges
Caused the saved drops to roll;
Precious when of wrath the surges
Overwhelm’d his holy soul.**

**“Precious in his death victorious,
He the host of hell o’erthrows;
In his resurrection glorious,
Victor crown’d o’er all his foes.**

**Precious, Lord! beyond expressing,
Are thy beauties all divine;
Glory, honor, power, and blessing
Be henceforth for ever thine.”**

The wording of the text binds our thoughts to one point. “Unto you therefore which believe he is precious;” it is not so much how precious he is, as how precious he is to you. If you are a believer, the text affirms that Jesus Christ is, without any adverb to limit the extent of the descriptive word, precious to you.

I. We shall, first, talk awhile upon the truth that Jesus Christ Is Now Precious To Believers.

Notice, attentively, how personally precious Jesus is. There are two persons in the text: “Unto you therefore which believe HE is precious.” “You” and “he.” You are a real person, and you feel that you are such. To yourself, you must ever be the most real of existences. You do not think of yourself as a person of whom you have read in history, or heard of in discourse, or seen from a window years ago. You have (to use an ugly word, since I do not know any substitute for it,) realized yourself; you are quite clear about your own existence. Now, in the same way, I pray you strive to realize the other Person! Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.” Jesus exists just as really as you do, and you must not regard him as a personage who was here one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine years ago, or one of whom you have heard, and whom you like to think of as a poetical conception; but there is a real Christ now existing; in spirit existing here; in real flesh and blood now standing at the right hand of the Father; and between him and you, if you are a believer, there exists a bond of unity which, though invisible, is nevertheless most matter-of-fact and positive. You believe in him, he loves you; you love him in return, and he sheds abroad in your heart a sense of his love. You twain are bound together fastly and firmly; there is neither myth, nor dream, either in him or in your union to him. He is and you are, and he is in very deed most precious to you.

Notice, too, that while the text gleams with this vividness of personality, to which the most of professors are blind, it is weighted with a most solid positiveness: “Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.” It does not speak as though he might be or might not be; but “he is precious.” There are some things about myself as a Christian which are frequently matters of question. I may gravely question whether I am growing in grace; and under such a doubt I may search my heart to see whether I love my Lord better, or whether I have more fully conquered my sins; but one thing I do not question, namely, that being a believer in him, Jesus Christ is unutterably precious to my soul. If thou doubttest thy faith, thou mayest doubt whether Christ is precious to thee; but if thy faith be

certain, the preciousness of Christ to thy heart is quite as certain. "He is precious." If the new life be in thee, thou art as sure to love the Savior as fish love the stream, or the birds the air, or as brave men love liberty, or as all men love their lives. Tolerate no peradventures here; allow no debate upon this vital point of thy religion. Jesus must be precious to thee. Cleanse thine eye if any dust hath dimmed thy sight of Jesus' preciousness, and be not satisfied till, in the language of the spouse, thou canst say, "My Beloved is the chiefest among ten thousand;" "yea, he is altogether lovely."

Mark, further, the absoluteness of the text: "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." It is not written how precious he is. The text does not attempt, by any form of computation, to measure the price which the regenerate soul sets upon her bosom's Lord. There is no hint that he is moderately precious; it does not even say positively or comparatively precious. I infer therefore that I may, if I choose, insert the word "superlatively"; and, certainly, if I did so, there would be no exaggeration, for more dear than light to the eyes, or life to the body, is Jesus to the sanctified heart. Each saint can truthfully sing, —

"Yes, thou art precious to my soul,

My transport and my trust:

Jewels to thee are gaudy toys

And gold is sordid dust."

Since no sparkling gems or precious metals, no royal regalia, or caskets of rare jewels can ever equal the value of Jesus, the comparison is vain. We therefore place him by himself alone, and say that he is absolutely precious to believers. Gold is precious, but the diamond is more so; and, in comparison with the diamond, the gold is of small account. The diamond is precious; but give a man a bagful of diamonds of the first water, and put him down in a desert, or let him be out on the wild waste of ocean, he would give all his diamonds for a draught of pure water to drink, or a crust of bread to eat; so that, in certain cases, even the excellent crystal would lose its value. In fact, mineral substances are merely arbitrary signs of value, they have but little worth in themselves; gold in itself is less useful than iron, and a diamond of little more account than a piece of glass. They have no absolute intrinsic value which would remain the same under all contingencies. But Christ is absolutely precious; that is to say, nothing can ever match him, much less excel him; and he is precious under all circumstances. There never can arrive a time when we shall be compelled to confess his want of value, or lower our estimate of him. He is infinitely precious. O my soul, dost thou esteem him so? My heart, art thou sure of this, that unto thee he is precious beyond compare; precious positively, precious comparatively, though heaven itself were compared, precious superlatively, beyond all things that can be dreamed of, or imagined. Is he to them essential preciousness, the very standard of all value! Thus it should be, for the text means no less: "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious."

The thought which I desire to bring out into fullest relief is this, that Jesus Christ is, today, continually precious to his people. The moment a soul believes in Jesus, his sins are forgiven. Well, then, the precious blood that washes all sin away, is not that done with, Oh, no! Unto you that believe, though you have believed to the saving of your soul, he is still precious; for your guilt will return upon your conscience, and you will yet sin, being still in the body, but there is a fountain still filled with blood, and thus unto you, experimentally, the cleansing atonement is as precious as when you first relied upon its expiating power. Nay, Jesus is more precious to you now than when first you were washed in his blood, and were made white as snow; for you know your own needs more fully, have proved more often the adaptation of his saving grace, and have received a thousand more gifts at his blessed hands. I do fear me that some Christians imagine that, after believing, all is done; but my Lord Jesus Christ is no old Almanack, used up, and of no further service. He is not like the physic which I took months ago, which then healed me of my disease, so that now I can afford to put the rest of it on the shelf, and laugh at it; oh, no! he is still my divine medicine. Still I need him, and still I have him. If I believe in him, I feel I want him more than ever I did, and he is dearer to me than ever he was. If I needed him aforetime as a poor guilty sinner, I want him, just as much as a poor needy saint, hanging upon his daily bounty, deriving life perpetually from his life, peace from the virtue of his precious blood, and joy from the outflowings of his love to me. Instead of Christ's losing value to the believer, the pith of the text is this, — that you, believer, when you get Christ, and get what Christ bringeth to you, instead of esteeming him as though he were an empty vessel, out of which you had drained the last drop, prize him most highly than ever you did before. He is not a gold mine worked out and exhausted, a field reaped of its harvest, or a vineyard where the grape gleanings are done: he has still the dew of his youth, the fullness of his strength, the infinity of his wealth, the perfection of his power.

II. Now, beloved, just for a minute or two, let us think how Christ Is Today Precious To You.

He is today precious to you because his blood, even now this day, is the only thing which keeps him from being a condemned sinner, exposed to the wrath of God. There has been enough sin upon your soul, my brother, my sister, this very day, to cast you into hell, if your surety had not stood between you and God's justice. You have been into no sinful company today; you have been in your Sunday-school glass, and I have been in the pulpit; but, ah! my pulpit sins would have damned me today, if it had not been for that precious blood, and thy Sunday-school sins would have shut thee up in hell, if that dear Mediator had not stood between thee and

God. So, you see, it is not merely the first day in which you believe in which he is precious to you, but right on still, as long as you are a sinner, the Intercessor stands and pleads for you, evermore putting your sin away; being yesterday, today, and for ever, your Savior, your shield, and your defense, and therefore evermore supremely precious.

Remember, too, he is precious, because the only righteousness you have is still his perfect righteousness. That which pleads with God for you is not what you are, but what HE is. You are accepted at this moment, but you are only "accepted in the Beloved," You are not justified because you feel in a sweet frame of mind, or because your heart rejoices in the name of God. Oh, no! your acceptance is all in your great Surety; and if it could be possible that he and the entire system of his grace could be withdrawn, and covenant engagements abrogated, you would be as unacceptable as even lost spirits are, and would be like them, for ever driven from the face and favor of God. Is he not, then, as your accepted Substitute, at this hour most precious to you?

Moreover, beloved, Jesus Christ is precious to you at this moment, as much as ever he was, because from henceforth it is his example which you strive to imitate. So far as he is an example to his people, his character has always been most admirable in your esteem, and this day you delight to know that, in his life, God's law appears--

"Drawn out in living characters."

You aspire to be like him now; you expect to be perfectly like him in the day of his appearing. Now, because he shows you what you shall be, and because in him lies the power to make you what you shall be, is he not therefore daily precious to you? In proportion as you fight with sin, in proportion as you seek for holiness with inward longings and sublime partings, in that proportion will Jesus Christ, the Paragon of all perfection, be precious in your esteem. Beloved, you are to be crucified with him; your flesh, with its corruptions and lusts, must die upon his cross as he died. Is he not precious when you believe that it will be by virtue of his death that sin will die in you? You are to rise in him; nay, I trust you have already risen in him, into newness of life; I hope you are panting more and more after the resurrection life, that you may no longer regard the dead things of this world, but live for eternal things, as those whose "life is hid with Christian God." If so, I know you will prize a risen Savior, and your appreciation of him will increase as you drink more deeply into the fellowship of the risen life. Forget not, beloved, that our Redeemer has ascended, and in that ascension every saint has his share. I do not say that you all enjoy your share yet; but, in proportion as you do so, you will reckon Christ to be precious; for he "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places;" "our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ," whose Second Advent is to be the perfection of our spiritual life, the unveiling of the hidden beauties and manifestations of the sons of God. Just in proportion as you enter into your royal heritage, and live in it, and believe in it, in this proportion Jesus Christ will be precious to you.

Beloved, let me tell you a secret. To many of you, there is as much in Christ undiscovered as you have already enjoyed. Your faith has only yet grasped Christ as saving you from going down to the pit, — Christ is precious to you so far; but if your faith could even now comprehend the fact that you are one with Christ, members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, that you are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, ah, then, how doubly precious would Jesus be! As surely as your faith grasps more, and becomes more capacious, and appropriating, Christ will grow in preciousness to you. I am persuaded that there is a meaning in these words which none of God's saints have yet been able to discover, a deep mysterious preciousness of Jesus, only to be known by a close and intimate acquaintance with him such as falls to the lot of few. "Unto you therefore which believe," — just in proportion as you believe, the larger, the stronger, the deeper, the purer, the sublimer, the more full-grown your faith, the more unto you Jesus Christ is precious. Ask, then, for more faith, that Jesus may be more precious to you, and God grant it to you, for his name's sake!

III. Thus much on that point, now a few words on another. Because Jesus Is Precious To Believers, He Efficaciously Operates Upon Them. The preciousness of Christ is, as it were, the leverage of Christ in lifting up his saints to holiness and righteousness.

Let me show you this. The man who trusts Christ values Christ; that which I value I hold fast; hence, our valuing Christ helps us to abide steadfast in times of temptation. The world saith to a Christian, "Follow me, and I will enrich thee." "Nay," saith the Christian, "Thou canst not enrich me; I have Christ, and I am rich enough." "Follow me," saith the world, "and I will bless thee; I will give thee the delights of the flesh." "Nay," saith the heart, "thou canst not bless me, for these things are accursed, and would bring me sorrow, and not pleasure; Jesus Christ is my pleasure, and to love him and to do his will is my joy." Do you not see that the greater your value of Christ, the greater your strength against temptation? Although the devil may tempt you with this and that, yet Jesus Christ, being more precious than all else, you say, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou canst not tempt me while Christ is dear to my spirit." Oh, may you set a very high value upon Christ, that thus you may be kept firm in the day of temptation!

Notice further this valuing of Christ helps the believer to make sacrifices. Sacrifice-making contributes a large part of any high character. He who never makes a sacrifice, in his religion, may shrewdly suspect that it is not worth more than his own practical valuation of it. When a man hath a very important document about him, on which depends his title to his estates, if a thief should try

to take it from him, he will suffer the thief to tear away his garments, to rob him of anything he has except his treasure; that he takes care to hold fast as long as he can. Indian messengers, men entrusted with jewels, have been known to swallow them to preserve them from robbers, and to allow themselves to be stripped naked of every rag they wore, but they would not lose the jewel with which their prince had entrusted them. So the Christian will say to the world, "Take away my fortune; take away my livelihood; take away my good name, if thou wilt, O lying world; but, despite all, I will retain my Savior, for he is precious! "Skin for skin; yea, all that a man hath will he give for Christ, and he never will or can give Christ up if Christ be precious to him.

See, then, that believing in Jesus makes him precious, and his being precious helps us to make sacrifices most cheerfully for his dear sake.

Moreover, brethren, this valuing of Christ makes us jealous against sin. What, I say, does Jesus Christ deign to live under my roof? Then, while he lives in my heart, I will give no roostingplace to any foul bird of sin that might begin hooting in his ear. No, ye enemies of Christ, begone, begone, begone! My Beloved shall have the best chamber of my spirit, undefiled by your filthy feet. We are afraid lest we should do anything to grieve the heavenly Lover of our souls; this makes us keep our garments white, and pick our steps through this miry world. Hence, a right valuing of Christ promotes direly the highest degree of sanctification. He who loves the Redeemer best purifies himself most, even as his Lord is pure.

Besides, beloved, high valuing of Christ helps the Christian in the selection of his associates in life. If I hold my Divine Lord to be precious, how can I have fellowship with those who do not esteem him? You will not find a man of refined habits, and cultured spirit, happy amongst the lowest and most illiterate. "Birds of a feather flock together." Workers and traders unite in companies according to their occupations. Lovers of Christ rejoice in lovers of Christ, and they delight to meet together; for they can talk to each other of things in which they are agreed. I would recommend you to choose the church of which you would be a member, and the pastor whom you would hear, by this one thing; by how much of Christ there is in that church, and how much of the savor of Christ there is in that ministry. It is an evil thing for a child of God to be enchanted by mere rhetoric as well might you choose a table to feast at merely on account of the knives and forks, or the polish of its mahogany. You require food for the soul, and there is nothing that will long feed a true heart but Jesus Christ, who is the meat and the drink of his people. Love to Christ soon makes a Christian discontented with mere oratory. He cannot be satisfied even with the best doctrine apart from Jesus. "They have taken away my Lord," saith he, "and I know not where they have laid him." I must hear about Jesus; and if that silver bell does not ring, then all the rest may chime as they may, but my ear is at unrest until I hear that celestial sound.

Thus, a lofty estimate of Christ will be seen, if I had time to track it, to operate through the entire history of a Christian.

Little need is there more fully to particularize, but we must not fail to remark that a sense of the Redeemer's preciousness makes the Christian useful, for that which is much on the heart will soon creep up to the tongue, and the testimony of the heart is a notable method of spreading the gospel. If thou lovest Christ much, thou wilt speak about him. Thy restrained speech will almost choke the thy soul will be hot within thee whilst thou art silent, till, at last, like a fire in thy bones which cannot longer be concealed, it will break out, and thou wilt say to others, "My Beloved is the fairest and noblest of all beloveds; oh, that you all knew him and loved him as I do! If you see him, his face is brighter than the sun in its strength; if you hear him, his voice is sweeter than the chorus of heaven; if you draw near to him, his garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia; and if you trust him, you will find him to be faithfulness and truth itself." Broken the words may be, the sentences may not flow with rhythmical harmony, but he who really loves Christ must out with it, somehow or other. Thus, telling out, with a burning heart, the things which he has made touching the King, others will hear the good news, and they will ask, "Who is this Precious One?" and they will, by God's good Spirit, be led to seek him and find him too. So, the Christian valuing Christ will come to be useful to the souls of men; indeed, as I have said before, it will exercise an operating power on the entire Christian manhood, and render it holiness unto the Lord.

IV. Christ being thus precious, His Preciousness Becomes The Test Of Our Christianity.

I shall not prolong this humble talk; but shall, in conclusion, put a question to you, Beloved brother or sister, you know very well that I would be the last person in the world to speak lightly of the value of sound doctrine. I wish we were all far more acquainted with the Scriptures than we are; and that the doctrines of grace were more clear to our understandings, and more imprinted upon our hearts; but there are some people, who love a certain set of doctrines so much, that, if you diverge a hair's breadth, they will denounce you as rotten at the core. They will not associate with any who do not say, "Shibboleth," and sound the "ah" very harshly too. They will cut off and condemn all God's people who do not precisely agree with them. Now, mark you, it is not written, "Unto you that believe a code of doctrines will be precious," That is true, but it is not written so in the text. The text is, "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." It is better to count Christ precious than it is to count orthodoxy precious. It is not loving a creed, but it is loving Jesus, that proves you a Christian. You may become such a bigot that it may be only the laws of the land which keep you from burning those who differ from you, and yet you may have none of the grace of God in your heart. I love Protestantism; but if there is anything in this world that I have a horror of, it is that political Protestantism which does nothing but sneer and snarl at its fellow-citizens, but

which is as ignorant as a sow about what Protestantism truly is. The great truths of Protestantism — not merely Protestant ascendancy, — and the great secret power of those truths, far more than the mere letter of them, is the thing to be prized. You may get it into your head that you are a member of the one only true church, you may wrap yourself about with any quantity of self-conceit, but that does not at all prove you to be a possessor of grace. It is love to Christ that is the root of the matter. I am very sorry, my dear brother, if you should hold unsound views on some points; but I love you with all my heart if Jesus is precious to you. I cannot give up believers' baptism; it is no invention of mine, and, therefore, I cannot give up my Master's ordinance. I am sure that it is Scriptural. I cannot give up the doctrine of election, it seems to me so plainly taught in the Word; but over the head of all doctrines and ordinances, and over everything, my brother, I embrace thee in my heart if thou believes in Jesus, and if he be precious to thee, for that is the vital point. These are the matters of heart-work that mark a Christian; nothing else is so true a test. If you cannot say, "Jesus is precious to me," I do not care to what church you belong, or what creed you are ready to die for, you do not know the truth of God unless the person of Christ is dear to you.

This may serve as a test for each one here. My brother, my sister, dost thou believe in him who is the Son of God, and yet was born of the Virgin here on earth? Dost thou rely alone on him who, on the cross, poured out his heart's blood to redeem sinners? Dost thou depend on him who now standeth with his priestly garments on before the throne of the infinite majesty, pleading for the unjust, that they may live through him? If thou dost, then answer this question: Dost thou love Jesus now? Dost thou love him with thy heart and soul? Wouldst thou serve him? Dost thou serve him? Wilt thou serve him? Wilt thou subscribe thy hand to be his servant from this day forth? Didst thou declare now, if not with lip, yet honestly with thy soul, "He is precious to me, and I would give up all else sooner than give up him?" Then it is well with thee! Be thou happy and rejoice. Come thou to his table, and feast with him at the banquet of love.

If not, thou hast not built on the rock. If thou art not loving Christ, I pray thee examine thyself, and see where thou art, for there is but a stop between them and hell. Repent! May God convert thee, and give them now to put thy confidence in Jesus, and now to be saved, that he may be glorified in thee, for hitherto he has had no glory from thee. Unto you that do not believe, Christ is not precious, and you will go your way, and despise him. Oh, that you were made wise by the Holy Ghost, and taught to consider things aright! Then Christ would be precious indeed to you. He is the only way for your escape from the wrath to come. He is the only hope for you of ever entering the gates of heaven. He must be your only shelter when the world will be all ablaze, as soon it shall; when the stars shall fall, like withered leaves from the trees; when all creation shall rock and reel, and his voice shall resound in earth, and heaven, and hell, "Awake, ye dead, and come to judgment!" The only hope of a Savior, in that last tremendous day, must be found in Jesus. Oh, seek him now while he may be found, call upon him now while he is near! Turn not your heel away him now, lest you turn once for all to perdition. Come to him now; believe in him now; and he shall have the glory. Amen.