

Marvelous Light

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon passionately explains that the true Christian is transformed by God's marvelous Light, which reveals divine truth, overcomes spiritual darkness, and brings a new, glorious life.

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:9, Job 10:18, John 1:9, Ephesians 2:1-5, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Philippians 3:20, Hebrews 11:1, Colossians 3:1-2

Topics: "Spiritual Illumination", "Conversion", "Divine Grace"

Description

In 'Marvelous Light,' C.H. Spurgeon vividly portrays the profound transformation that occurs when a person is brought out of spiritual darkness into God's divine illumination. He contrasts superficial, man-made Christianity with the true, God-made believer who experiences the life-changing power of God's grace. Through rich imagery and personal testimony, Spurgeon invites listeners to recognize the surpassing excellence of God's Light and its revealing power over sin, redemption, and eternal realities. This sermon is a compelling call to embrace the true Light that only Christ offers.

Transcript

"His marvelous Light." 1 Peter 2:9.

EVERYTHING about a true Christian is marvelous. He is a marvel to himself and a marvel to all who are around him. Mere professors—man-made Christians—people who have made themselves Christians by their own free will apart from the Spirit of God, have nothing marvelous about them. You can make professors of that sort by the score and you can see them dissolve by the score, for what man made, man can unmake! And what is merely natural has its season, like the leaves on the trees and, by-and-by, it withers away because its time to fade has come. But a true Christian is a God-made man, a twice-born man and he is a partaker of the Divine Nature. He is a mass of marvels, for he is dead and yet he is alive! He is one who lives here and yet his life has gone away up yonder. He is one who is a citizen of earth and yet his citizenship is in Heaven. He is a true man, but he is more than a man, for God has lifted him up above the level of other men, given him a life which other men do not possess, revealed to him secrets which others do not know and prepared for him a place into which the ungodly can never enter.

The longer he looks at himself, the more he wonders at God's Grace and at what God's Grace has done, is doing and will yet do for him. He is a riddle to himself—an enigma made up of a thousand enigmas. He probably does not fully understand all that has happened in any single day of his life—and there are certain days in which God's dealings with him quite stagger him. And though faith sees all things to be

plain, yet to mere human reason, things often appear to be in a snarl, and twisted together and he does not know what to make of them.

Everything about a true Christian is marvelous, as angels know, who often desire to look into the things which concern them, and as He knows, who is our Leader and Commander—who was a Man wondered at and whose faithful followers are all wondered at still, He, Himself is the greatest marvel of all! And among the many marvels that surround us is the marvelous Light of God in which we dwell. Those of us who are now in Christ, lived at one time in the gross darkness of ignorance. I mean even those of us who were brought up in Christian families and knew the letter of the Gospel well. We did not know its inner meaning and we never felt its power. We were in darkness, though, indeed, there was a certain measure of Light which had come to us, which made us responsible for our wrong-doing. Still, our heart remained in gross darkness.

And, by-and-by, this darkness was attended with much misery. There came to us a little Light—just enough to make our darkness visible. And so we perceived the darkness in which we dwelt and we began to sigh and cry, like prisoners shut up in an underground dungeon, to whom light and fresh air cannot come. Then everything about us seemed to blacken and the gloom around us deepened. We were in the dark as to our apprehensions of the future. We knew that we must die, yet we feared to die. We clung to life, yet, sometimes, we did not desire even life, itself, but said, with Job, "My soul chooses strangling and death rather than my life." The prospect of annihilation would have seemed almost like Heaven to us if we could, thereby, have gotten rid of our sinful, sorrowful being, clouded with apprehensions of the wrath of God and of judgments yet to come upon us. I know that I am talking about something which many of you understand! It was a thick Egyptian night in which you were then enveloped—a darkness that might be felt—and you tried your utmost to escape from it, but you could not, for it was in you. Your soul was in darkness, the Light within your spirit was

quenched and all around you seemed to darken, and darken, and darken, as though an eternal midnight were surely descending upon you!

Well, at that time, it happened to me, and I know that it also happened to some of you as it did to Peter, that the angel of the Lord suddenly smote us on our side and a Light shone into our prison and we arose, scarcely knowing what we were doing. But we girded our garments about us and followed our angelic leader, while the prison gates, which had formerly shut us in, opened before us of their own accord and we found ourselves to be free and in broad daylight, too, although, for a time, we could scarcely realize those blessed facts! We saw what we had never seen before. We enjoyed what we had never even hoped to enjoy! Yes, as in an instant we possessed what we thought must forever be denied to us! We scarcely knew how to contain our joy, but we made our way, as fast as we could, to the house of Christ's disciples who had prayed for us. And how we gladdened them as we told them the story of God's delivering and enlightening Grace, and so showed forth the praises of Him who had called us out of darkness into His marvelous Light! Truly, it was marvelous Light to us at that time. Many days have passed since then with some of us, but it is still marvelous Light and, as we look upon it now, it is not any less marvelous than it was at the very first!

It is of that marvelous Light of God that I am going to speak—and as I tell of my own experience of it, I pray God to grant that some of you who have never known its power in your own souls, may be made to rejoice in it.

I. I have already touched upon the first point, of which I want now to speak somewhat more fully—that is, THIS LIGHT APPEARS MARVELOUS BECAUSE OF OUR FORMER DARKNESS.

Out of darkness, light comes not. Out of our dark nature no marvelous light ever shone. This Light came from above and how marvelous it was! Imagine, if you can, the condition of a man who has lived all his lifetime in a coal mine. Suppose he never had a brighter light than his flickering candle and then, after a while, to be brought up the shaft, and to see the brightness of the sun at mid-day. I can scarcely picture his amazement—you may fancy what it would be like, but you can hardly realize it. Or suppose a still worse case, that of one born blind who had heard of a thing called light, but who could never imagine what it was like till a skillful oculist took away the film that was blinding him and his eyes were opened so that he could perceive the light. It would be very difficult to describe all the emotions of one who had never enjoyed the light before, but, certainly, such a person would be full of wonder and amazement! It would be, indeed, marvelous light to him.

You who have never been converted, who never were regenerated, do not know any more about the Light of God than the man in the coal mine knows about the sun, or that man born blind knows about the light of day! Perhaps you talk a good deal about it and, possibly, you write about it and you form judgments about it. And they are just as wise, and just as accurate as the verdict of blind men would be concerning colors of which they have no conception! You say, sometimes, concerning the Gospel, "It is all nonsense! There is no such thing as the Light of the Truth of God"—just because you never saw any, which is a very poor method of argument! I once heard a man say, "I have lived in the world 60 years and I never had the apprehension of anything spiritual." When I looked at his face, and especially at his red nose, I thought that what he said was very likely to be true, but I did not, therefore, conclude that there was nothing spiritual because he had not seen it! Any blind man might say, "I have lived so many years, and I have never seen the sun, so there is not any," but you would not accept negative evidence of that sort.

So, my dear Friend, whenever you are going to speak about something which you do not know anything about, just keep silent and let somebody else talk who does know. If you never knew what it was to be converted—if you never felt the Divine Life go coursing through your soul—if you never had the Divine Light flashing in the midst of the darkness of your spirit, pray speak with bated breath if you speak at all! And when you are going to write one of those famous articles of yours, just say to yourself, "Perhaps I had better take some subject that I understand, for this I do not know, as I never had the Light." If you ever had received it, then you might comprehend something of the wondrous change which conversion makes in a man and you would agree with us that the Light of the Gospel is, indeed, marvelous Light!

II. Secondly, we perceive that it is marvelous Light WHEN WE CONSIDER ITS ORIGIN. Our text tells us that it is God's Light—"who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous Light." What is

God's Light? Can you imagine how that Light existed before He made the sun or the moon? Light shone on this world before the sun and the moon were created, for light comes not from them except as God has stored it up in them, or continually supplies it to them. But there is always Light in God. He is the great Light-Creator, yet I never read that the

light which God created in the world was called His marvelous light. God made the light, but it was not His Light, even then. There is another Light which is natural to Him—a Light of brightness and knowledge, clear and heavenly—a Light such as mortal man attains not unto except as the supreme gift of the Grace of God shall visit him. It is this Light which rests upon the people of God. There is a light which lights every

man that comes into the world, but God's marvelous Light comes only to His chosen and gladdens only those whose eyes have learned to look to Jesus and who find their soul's confidence and salvation in Him who is the very Light of God.

"Oh," asks someone, "can a man have this Light? I do not believe it." Again I tell you, my Friend, that I did not expect you would believe it! He who has never had any experience of it may well doubt its existence. But he who has ever had the Light of God shining into his soul, is as conscious of becoming a new man—as conscious of seeing after another fashion than he ever saw before—as a blind man would be if his eyes were suddenly opened! I know that this world is not to me, now, the world that it once was. All things were then seen, if seen at all, as in a mist so thick that I took the transient to be the eternal and I highly prized trifles while I despised that which was most precious! I put light for darkness and darkness for light—bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter—for my foolish heart was darkened, but I knew it not. But, now, such a change has come to me that all things have become new and, in speaking of my own experience, I am also telling of the experience, not merely of some of you, but of hundreds of you upon whose hearts the Divine Light has come, changing all things around you! They are not what they seem to others, to be, for they are all now seen in the clear white Light of God, Himself, and you know even as you are known.

III. Thirdly, this is marvelous Light BECAUSE OF ITS EXCELLENCE OVER ALL OTHER LIGHT.

This Light, which God gives to His people, is far superior to the light which comes of education, or of meditation, or which can be produced by any human effort. When you have gone through a street lighted with electric light, I have no doubt you have smiled to see, side by side with it, the gas lamp with its little yellow attempt at showing that it could not shine. But how bright was the electric light at the side of it! Yet, if it is left to burn at mid-day, how dim it seems compared with the sun! And how the sun must smile at all our attempts to light up this world without him! Well, now, the best light that a man ever gets by his own unaided effort is no better than that of a candle, or, if you will, than flickering gaslight. But the Light of God—the marvelous Light of God, is the illumination caused by the Holy Spirit shining into the inmost recesses of the soul in full meridian splendor! It is the Light of God, and there is no other light that is like that! He who has but a spark of that Light may not know so much about some things as the worldly-wise man knows, but he is well acquainted with many things to which the other man is an utter stranger!

Cowper said, as some of you may remember, when contrasting the infidel Voltaire with the poor, godly lace-maker, she—

"Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true, A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew."

Perhaps you smile and think within yourself—"That is not knowing much." Ah, but to know the Bible to be true, to live in that Bible Truth and to have it all round about you, filling the air, filling your own soul, filling earth and Heaven with wondrous things that the spirit's eye can see—this is truly marvelous! He who sees even the most of this world has but the same sort of eyes that birds and beasts have—but he who knows his Bible to be true and who realizes the truth of it in his soul—has another set of eyes that can peer into another realm altogether. He sees spiritual things and around him there shines a Light which is, indeed, marvelous!

IV. Fourthly, this is marvelous Light BECAUSE OF WHAT IT REVEALS, for that man who has the Light of God shining in his soul sees that which is invisible.

"O utterer of paradoxes!" cries someone. Yes, but I cannot otherwise express the Truth. This illuminated man sees God, whom ordinary human eyes can never see. He looks back into the ages past and gone and he sees God making all the worlds that ever existed, while those who are reckoned as wise men, but who are without that Light of God, spin ingenious but worthless theories about how those worlds grew! These men have such wonderful theories that it really seems surprising that they do not, themselves, make a few worlds, since they profess to have found out so many ways of making them! But the opened eyes see "that the worlds were framed by the word of God," and it sees God's hand in all the histories of all the centuries—and it even sees God's hand in the things recorded in the newspaper that most startle us! The man who has his eyes opened sees Heaven and Hell, eternity and everlasting life. He sees them—not with dull optics, like

these eyes of ours which, after all, do not really see, for it is the soul behind the eyes that really looks out through that window and perceives what is to be seen. But, in this marvelous Light of God, the soul sees without any optics and without any glass—it has flung away its telescope, for it has come so near the object upon which it is gazing that there is no need of any intervening medium! It walks and talks with the angels and, what is far better, it speaks with God Himself! This is indeed marvelous Light which has made us to see things that to ordinary mortal eyes are invisible!

And it is such marvelous Light because it enables us to see them so clearly. To the man who has this Light, God does not appear to be sitting like the heathen Jove is represented, upon a distant Olympus and sleeping while the world is troubled. He who lives in this marvelous Light sees God here, there, everywhere—within him, and about him, he feels the Presence of God! He has an immediate consciousness that God is with him. And, better still, such a man as that sees God to be reconciled by the death of His Son. He sees God to be his Father, for he is made a partaker of the Divine Nature, "having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." It is, indeed, marvelous Light to see God that enables us thus!

A further characteristic of this Light is that it enables us to see right into the heart of things. By this world's light, you only see that such-and-such a thing is, you see the appearance it presents. But this Light lets you see into the innermost heart of truth and, what is still better, it brings the Truth of God right into your soul. By this Light, you not only see the Doctrine of Election, but you also know yourself to be elect! You see the great Truth of Redemption and you know yourself to be redeemed! By this Light, you see Regeneration and you feel the pulsing of the Life of God within your spirit and, though mortal eyes have not seen Heaven, neither have the ears of man heard its rapturous harmonies, nor has the true conception of Heaven entered into the heart of man, yet the Spirit of God brings Heaven down to us and raises us up to Heaven so that we sit among the heavenly in Christ Jesus and, "our conversation is in Heaven, from where we also look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." All this proves that it is a glorious Light of God, does it not?

The man who has not this Light, may believe there is a God. Yes, and he believes that there is a Cham of Tartary, but he does not care about him. He believes that there is a Heaven, but it never enters as a factor into his life to operate upon him. He believes that there is such a thing as sin and he says, "Oh, yes, yes, yes! We are all sinners, no doubt." But he who has this marvelous Light sees sin so as to tremble at it and to hate it. It is a present thing with him which he abhors! He also sees the atoning blood of Jesus and knows that by it he is cleansed from sin and he rejoices in this as a blessed matter of fact.

"Oh," says someone, "that is all fancy!" Of course it is only a matter of fancy to you! Did I not tell you so when I began my discourse? To a blind man, a picture by Kaphael or Titian is all fancy. You say to him, "How splendidly the colors are laid on there! Do you see that wonderful effect of light and shade?" But your wise blind man says, "I do not believe a word of it." Of course he does not! We cannot hope that he will do so all the while that he is blind and, in like manner, he who knows nothing of God's marvelous Light, will ask, "Who is he that bears witness concerning this strange thing?" "Well, Sir, he is one among a great number who have as much right to be believed as you have, for he is as honest a man as you are." Hundreds of us—thousands of us can bear witness concerning the phenomena of Divine Grace—the mysteries of the new creation—the putting into a man of a new life! And we have as much right to be believed as gentlemen who bear witness about the backbone of a fish and who would feel insulted if we said that they told us lies. We have never examined their fish, but we believe their testimony because we know they have studied the question of which they speak.

They have never looked into our inner life, but they have as good reason to believe our testimony as we have to believe theirs! And this is our witness—that there is such a thing as God's marvelous Light, that the Light of Divine Grace has broken in upon our soul and brought us to see a new Heaven and a new earth, and to live in a new creation altogether, waiting for the time when Christ shall come to take our body, as He has already taken our soul, into that new world and make us perfect with Himself forever!

V. Fifthly, this Light is marvelous BECAUSE OF WHAT IT PRODUCES.

I have already shown you its marvelous character in that it reveals a new world to a man, a world he once despised—and it makes him value it and live worthy of it. Thus it produces a great change in that man, for it makes him love the things he once hated and hate the things he once loved. I heard someone say, "'Take care of Number One, is a capital rule. Self-love is the first law of nature.'" But, when this marvelous Light breaks in upon a man, that law of nature ceases

to operate and he says, "No, the first law of my new nature is that I should honor my God, that I should do that which is right, that which is just, that which is true, that which is loving, that which will be like the life of Jesus Christ my Lord." If you carefully watch that man, you will see him beginning to give up many of the pursuits that once delighted him. Perhaps you will say, "Poor man, he is denying himself," but he will answer, "No, I am not. I could not enjoy those things now. In fact, I hate them. They were very pleasurable to me once but, then, I was a blind man. Now that I can see, they give me no pleasure." Such a man, before his conversion, may have enjoyed a spicy song which had just a little touch of what should not have been in it. But, now, if he hears the sound of it in the street, he is ready to cover his ears, for he cannot bear it. "Sing us one of the songs of Zion," he says now—the very songs that he used to call "Methodist cant, Presbyterian hypocrisy," and all sorts of evil names! Now that he has the new life within him, there are new tastes developed.

If this were the proper time, I could tell some remarkable stories of marvelous changes that have been worked in some people whom I know. I am sure they would not recognize themselves if they were to meet their old selves as they were five years ago, or, if they did, they would cross the road and get on the other side of the street, so as not to come into contact with their old selves. They would say, "Thank you, no. I would rather not walk with you. You are not good company for me. I hoped you were dead and buried, and I never wanted to see you again. I am dead with Christ, I have been buried with Christ, I have risen from the dead in Him and I am a new creature in Him," This marvelous Light makes a wonderful change in a man's character! That is to say, if it really comes to him because, you know, there are some who go into

the Enquiry Room and kneel down and cry a good deal—and all the good that can possibly do is to take away some of the superfluous fluid from the brain, for there is no heart in their repentance—it is mere excitement and nothing more.

But it is a very different thing to have the Light of God—to have the Holy Spirit really shed abroad in the heart. Do not any of you be satisfied with saying, "I am converted. Happy day!" Mind that you are converted. Be sure that it is heart-work, soul-work and that the Spirit of God has worked it—not the preacher—not an excited evangelist—not a book you read—but that God Himself has come to you and made you a new creature in Christ Jesus, for, unless this is the case, I shall not be able to speak of the change as I have spoken, and which, to my intense joy, I have seen in hundreds, and in thousands who have passed from darkness to Light, and from the power of Satan into the Kingdom of Christ.

One change that always takes place as the result of receiving this Light is great joy. The joy is not always as great in all to whom the Light comes but, still, it does bring great joy wherever it shines. Talk of true happiness—it is nowhere to be discovered till the eternal Light breaks in upon the mind and heart! And then, Heaven has begun below! Some of us have our full share of pain of body and depression of spirit, yet, in our worst moments, we would not change places with the happiest worldling that lives! Not even when most depressed and weary would we exchange our position, even for a minute, for that of the greatest emperor in the world who does not know that Inner Light. I can truly say, and so can many of you—

"I would not change my blest estate For all that earth calls good or great! And while my faith can keep her hold, I envy not the sinner's gold."

VI. Lastly, it is marvelous Light BECAUSE IT WILL NEVER GO OUT.

As it is the Light of God, the devil cannot blow it out. If all the devils in Hell were to try to blow out one single spark that is in a true Believer's heart, they might puff till they died of puffing, but they would never put that spark out! God has lit it and they cannot quench it. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." If you do not keep this everlasting life, it is quite clear that you never had it. If you really have eternal life—it must be eternal life—and it shall abide with you forever.

But, what is better, not only shall you never lose it, but it will continually increase! If you have God's marvelous Light, though it seems only like starlight now, it will soon be like moonlight. Then it will be daylight and soon it will be noontide, for, to whomever God has given a little of this Divine Light, more is sure to follow, for the Light of God, which is given to us by the Holy Spirit, is the very Light of Heaven—it has only to be fully developed! You have all the

elements of eternal happiness within your own spirit if the Holy Spirit has truly enlightened you and made your character like that of the Lord Jesus Christ. As to death—well, at the moment of death, you will leave your body behind and you will leave with it all tendency to sin! The root of eternal blessedness is in you, now, if the Lord has really looked upon you in love and you have looked to Christ by faith. You have the plant of Grace springing up! Some of you have leaves and buds, so all that will happen to you in Heaven is that the buds will open and the flower will be perfected—but it is all there right now. Christ said, "I give"—not, "I will give"—but, "I give unto My sheep eternal life." You have eternal life if you believe in

Him—the same life that will develop in Glory is in you now!

"I did not know that," says someone. Well, did you think that you were going to be born-again a second time? That can never be! To be born-again is mentioned in Scripture, but to be born-again, and again—I never read of that in the Word of God though I have heard certain people talk about falling from Grace and being restored—as if they could be born-again, and again, and again, and again, no end of times! But there is nothing like that in the Bible. The great change takes place once and that change is final. If you are born-again, you receive the life that you will live in Heaven. Just think of this! Christ has gone to Heaven to prepare a place for you, but He has left within your bosoms, now, the life that is to be in Heaven! Pray God to develop that life—entreat the Lord to increase it. Think a great deal of it. Value it highly. Suffer not your body, which is its temple, to be dishonored by sin. God dwells in you—the Divine Life is within you—so, I beseech you, live as those should live who are not only heirs of Heaven, but who have the life of Heaven already abiding in their hearts! Come, my Brothers and Sisters, let us rejoice and be glad as we thus think of this marvelous Light which is to be our Light forever and ever, for, up there, the Lord God gives them Light and He gives Light to us even now! And it is His Light and there cannot be any Light better than His! So, in it let us rejoice and magnify His name.

I wish that some here who have not this Light, could be set a-longing for it. Mr. Bunyan says that even if we do not invite the sinner to come to Christ, if we spread a good table before him, it makes his mouth water—and that is the next best thing to an invitation! Does any poor soul begin to say, "I do not know anything about that Light. I am not going to deny that it may exist, but I would be a fool if I were to go upon negative evidence. I wish I did know"? Well, you may know! Do your soul this piece of justice—go and pray to God to make you know it. Go and bow before Him and say, "Lord, if You do, indeed, reveal Yourself to men by your Spirit in Christ Jesus, reveal Yourself to me." He will hear you, I am sure of that. Even if He did not, there would be this reflection on your mind, that, having listened to the testimony of one who has no motive for deceiving you, you have at least given enough credence to it to try it and test it. And you will feel all the easier in your mind even if the experiment should fail.

But it will not fail, for never did a soul, in honest, guileless heartiness, seek the Light and love of God, and seek in vain! And nor will you! Go, then, to God through Jesus Christ, and this marvelous Light shall break in upon you. God grant it, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: 1 PETER 2.

Verses 1-3. Therefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speaking, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby: if indeed you 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-speaking. 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 follow 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.

4. To whom coming. That is, to the Lord. We are always to be coming unto Him. We began our spiritual life by coming to Jesus, and we are to continue coming to Him. "To whom coming."

4. As unto a living stone. We are to settle down on Him as the stones of a building settle down upon the foundation. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone."

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."

6. You also, as lively stones. Or, livingstones.

6. Are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. You must 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, everyone 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 Abiram, 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 forbid that we should, with unhallowed hands, try to steal away from God's people what is the right and prerogative of them all!" "You also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

6. Therefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believes 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 believes 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."

7. Unto you therefore who 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 who believe He is an honor."

7, 8. But unto them which are 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,

9, 10. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous Light: who 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."

10, 11. But are now the people of God: who 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 fouls the spirit and defiles the heart! "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

12. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, when 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, when they speak against you as evildoers."

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 is 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.

15, 16. Forso is the will of God, that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free— What a grand word that is, "as free"! Byron wrote—

"He is the free man whom the truth makes free, And all are slaves besides." But we may alter that, and say, "He is the true free man whom His Lord makes free." "As free"—

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 also recollect the earlier command—"Honor all men"—

"A man's a man for all that"

Whatever his condition may be, 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."

18-26. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if a man for conscience toward God, endures grief, suffering wrongfully.

For what glory is it, if when you are buffeted for your faults, you shall take it patiently? But if when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For to this you were called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you 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 judges righteously: who His own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

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