

Our Lord's Substitution

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon passionately expounds on the doctrine of Christ's substitutionary atonement, emphasizing that Jesus bore the full weight of believers' sins on the cross, securing their forgiveness and eternal life.

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:24, Isaiah 53, Psalm 32:2, Hebrews 10:12, Hebrews 12:3, John 19:30

Topics: "Substitutionary Atonement", "Christ's Sacrifice", "Faith and Forgiveness"

Description

In this powerful sermon, C.H. Spurgeon expounds on the foundational Christian doctrine of substitutionary atonement, emphasizing that Jesus Christ bore the full burden of believers' sins on the cross. Spurgeon passionately calls listeners to trust personally in Christ's finished work for forgiveness and eternal life. He also draws practical lessons from Christ's self-sacrifice, urging believers to imitate His humility and perseverance in service. This sermon is a stirring reminder of the sufficiency and exclusivity of Christ's atoning death.

Transcript

"Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree." 1 Peter 2:24.

PETER had almost incidentally mentioned his Master's name and, having done so, he felt that he must enlarge upon that theme, for the name of Christ was very dear to him. He seems to again hear that thrice-repeated question ringing in his ears, "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?" and he can still answer, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." So, having mentioned his Master's name, he feels that he must say something about Him. Oh, that we, also, may have such love for Christ that a touch of His hand, or a glance of His eyes may suffice to detain us! May we never be weary of hearing about Him! May His name exercise a sacred fascination upon us! May it cheer us in life and in death and be the theme of our song throughout eternity!

There is, perhaps, a special reason why Peter wrote, in this place, concerning the vicariousness of Christ's death. He had just been alluding to another aspect of that death. In the 21st verse, he had said, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps." "Ah," thought Peter, "they may, from my mentioning His death by way of example, draw the inference that Christ only died as our Exemplar." They may say—as, alas, so many in modern times have done—"that the death of Christ was merely the completion of His life and that He is simply the Savior of men by setting before them a higher ideal of what men should be than they would otherwise have been." The Holy Spirit forewarned Peter of this danger and taught him how to avert it, in the best possible way, by adding this most significant

sentence, "Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree." It is quite true that Christ is our Exemplar, but no man can ever follow Christ's example until he has first believed in Him as his Substitute and Savior. Christ did not come merely to be an example—when we are dead in trespasses and sins, of what use can His example be to us? It is life that dead men need and Christ came to bring us life! In our natural state, we are already condemned because we have not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. Of what use would an example of perfect innocence be to those who are already condemned? None whatever. But Jesus comes to bring us pardon bought with His own precious blood, that then, through gratitude to Him, we might begin a new life—and then His example might be of service to us. It behooves us, first and foremost, to view Christ as the Sin-Bearer, for, if we do not receive Him in that capacity, we have missed eternal life altogether and all our professed imitation of Christ will be but mere empty formality—which will fall far short of the righteous requirements of God.

We are going, therefore, to meditate upon the great central doctrine of our Lord's Substitution. I shall have nothing new to say upon it, for I find that "the old, old story" has an endless charm for Believers and I wish to tell it again in such a way that if it should have been, up to now, unknown to any hearer, he may give heed to it and, this very hour, find peace and pardon through believing in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior!

First, I shall speak upon the blessed fact mentioned in our text—"Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree." And then, secondly, I shall call your attention to some points of practical instruction which may be found in this blessed fact.

I. First, then, let us think about THE BLESSED FACT ITSELF.

That fact is that Christ Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree. This fact is the sum and substance, the pith and marrow of the whole Gospel, so, lay hold of it, feed upon it and live by it. God, of old, in Infinite Justice, determined that sin must be punished, but He also determined to save His people, whom He had given to His Son by the Everlasting Covenant. How could both these results come to pass? Divine Wisdom devised the plan of substitution and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became Man, that He might be able to be the Substitute for sinners. It was fitting that He should take that position, for He had, by His Covenant with the Father, assumed the place of Head of the race of mankind—the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven. The people, whom He had chosen as His own, were all represented in Him and, therefore, He was fully qualified to stand in their place and to serve and suffer in their place.

And He did so, first, because the sins of God's people were laid upon Him. What says Isaiah? "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." If you carefully read through that 53rd Chapter of Isaiah, you will notice that, several times, in so many distinct words, the sin of Christ's people is said to have been transferred to Him and borne by Him. I remember, once, hearing a certain Divine assert that sin could not be transferred—but it was, for Holy Scripture again and again declares that it was. "Blessed is the man," says David, "unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity." The man has committed iniquity, but it is not imputed to him because it has been imputed to Christ Jesus, his Substitute, who stood in that sinner's place and took upon Himself that sinner's sin. In vision, I can see the Christ of God coming forth from the Father, bearing upon His shoulders the enormous load of His people's guilt. It well near crushes Him with its awful weight, but He presses on. He is Himself perfectly innocent, but sins not His own are reckoned to Him, for "He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many."

In due time, in consequence of this imputation, our blessed Master bore our sins in another sense, namely, by answering for them at the bar of God. As Joseph Hart sings—

"Come at length the dreadful night— Vengeance with its iron rod Stood, and with collected might Bruised the harmless Lamb of God" —because He was the Sin-Bearer. Christ then appeared with His people's sin upon Him—so, when Divine Justice came to punish sin and found it upon Christ, it arrested Him and bruised Him so sorely that He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. Justice took Him off, like a malefactor, to the Hall of Judgment and there was no one to declare His innocence or to plead for His release. He was brutally scourged and given over to the Roman soldiers, that they might treat Him as they would—for nothing was thought of Him, even as He had made Himself of no reputation. In the hall of the Praetorian guards, all manner of insults were heaped upon Him.

Then they took Him out to the hill of doom—they nailed Him to the transverse wood, they lifted Him up on high, they fixed His Cross in the earth and there they let Him die, hanging by His hands and feet. Thus was He, "Himself," bearing, "in His own body on the tree," the sins of all His people and, all the while, His soul was being tortured with sufferings that cannot be described in human language! We must be perfectly pure, as He was, before we can even begin to understand how sin must have affected Him. We must be perfectly happy, as He was, before we can comprehend how He suffered when He was enduring the wrath of God for our sakes and was forced to cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" That was because He was bearing the consequences of our sin. He took the sin upon Him and, therefore, He also took the sorrow which resulted from the sin. He took the place of the guilty, so He must suffer the penalty which they had incurred. And the text tells us, as a matter of fact, that He, Himself, bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

Before we pass on, let us draw the right inference from this blessed fact—namely, that if Christ bore our sins, we need not bear them—no, we do not bear them. If, as a believer in Jesus, I know that He bore my sin, it cannot be on my back and also on His! It cannot be that He took the sin upon Himself, yet left it upon me. A thing cannot be in two places at one time, so, if He bore my sin, I am clear! Again is verified the text I quoted to you just now—"Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity." How can He impute it to him when He has already imputed it to Christ and caused Christ to suffer in that man's place? So there, again, I say, is the very core of salvation, the heart of the Gospel— Christ suffering in the place of all who believe in Him!

Note carefully the words of the text. It says not only that Christ bore our sins, but, from the full, unqualified expression that is used, it is implied that He bore them all—"Who Himself bore our sins." That is to say, whatever sins a Believer has ever committed, or ever will commit, Christ bore them on the Cross! Sins original and sins natural. Sins actual

and practical. Sins of thought, word and deed. Heinous sin—blasphemies, uncleanness. Those that are thought to be the minor sins—evil imaginations, hasty words. I will not go on with the list, for time would fail me to get to the end of it! But when you have mentioned all the sins you can think of, I can still say that the text covers them all—"Who Himself bore our sins"—not some of them, not the greater ones, not the lesser ones to the exclusion of the greater, but all our sins—in His own body on the tree"—

"Covered is our unrighteousness, From condemnation we are free."

And the text, from its unguardedness, teaches us that Christ bore all our sins completely—"Who Himself bore our sins." They were all laid upon Him and He did effectually carry them away and make an end of

them. He bore them "to the tree," says the margin, and crucified them there. He carried them upon His shoulders, up to the Cross and there, once and for all, annihilated them, so that they have ceased to be. O my Soul, rejoice as you look upon the Sin-Bearer who made a full, complete and absolutely acceptable Atonement, finished transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity and brought in everlasting righteousness, as it was foretold that the Messiah would do! In this, we do rejoice—yes, and will rejoice!

The text also implies, from its being free from any kind of limitation, that Christ alone bore them—"Who Himself bore our sins." There was no Peter, or James, or John to help Him in His hour of deepest need. Nor did an angel tread that winepress side by side with Him. Alone and singlehanded, our great Champion entered the arena and won the victory for us! Let this be one of the chief articles in our creed henceforth and forevermore. I say to the man who calls himself a priest, "No, Sir, I do not need any absolution from you, even though you may be a lineal descendant of the Apostles—through Judas Iscariot—for I am perfectly satisfied with the forgiveness which I have obtained by faith in Christ Jesus! You say that you can offer for me the unbloody sacrifice of the "mass" in order to help in the putting away of my sin, but I need nothing of the kind, for Christ, Himself, bore our sins in His own body on the tree." On that tree, He Himself said of His atoning Sacrifice, "It is finished." "This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified." Let these words roll out like a thunder peal and let all men know that there is no need of any addition to that Sacrifice—either of penance, or "purgatory," or human merit, or priestly power—nor can there be any repetition of it! Love's redeeming work was done by Christ, alone, and in Him we rest and in Him, alone!

The sweetness, however, of this passage lies in the fact that Christ bore our sins. Come, Brothers and Sisters, can we all say that—"Christ bore our sins"? I am not now talking of the general aspect of the work of Christ, for it had a special aspect to Believers and the full blessings of the Atonement only comes to them. "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it." Can we say, then, "Who Himself bore our sins"? Let me put it in the singular, and pass it round to each one here—can you say, my Friend, "Who Himself bore my sins in His own body on the tree"? My sins, so many and so heavy, and once so terrible to me—He bore them, bore them all and I am clear and free from every charge because He bore them! This is being saved. I trust Christ and know, in consequence, that He bore my sins—then I am saved! How many of you are thus saved? May the heart-searching Spirit of God go from soul to soul and constrain you to give a true answer! And if you cannot reply in the way we wish, give the other answer and say, "I do not know that Christ bore my sins."

When you get home, write that down, and look at it—"I am not trusting in Christ. I have no part nor lot in Him. My sin is pressing upon me, but I have no saving interest in Christ." I think that if you were to write that down legibly with pen and ink—and then sit down a little while and think it over—it might be much more useful to you than any word of mine. "No, Sir," you say, "I would not like to write that." But, surely, you may write what is true! A man ought not to be afraid to know the truth about his spiritual state, nor yet to write it for his own eyes to see. I do not ask you to print it in the newspaper or in a book, but just to put it down for your own information—"I am without Christ. I am an unbeliever. I am still in my sins. If I die as I am, I shall be lost." Oh, may God grant that you may see your true condition and feel it and not rest until you can say, "Now I have believed, and I know that Christ, Himself, bore my sins in His own body on the tree." If you are trusting Him, you know that He did so. Your faith is the evidence of your election and the proof of your redemption—and if you do but simply and completely trust Him, He has saved you and you

may rejoice in the fact that, in the sight of God, you are fully and freely forgiven!

II. Now, secondly, I am to call your attention to SOME POINTS OF PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION which may be found in the blessed fact mentioned in our text. I always like to be as practical as possible in my preaching and I think there are, in this great Truth of our Lord's Substitution, some practical lessons which we shall do well to learn.

The first is this. See the self-sacrifice of Christ and imitate it. Jesus Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He was not forced to do it. He might still have remained in Heaven, sharing in all His Father's Glory, forever, but, out of love and pity for us, He descended from His Divine eminence, veiled His Godhead in our humanity and came to earth among the sons of men that He might bear His people's sins up to the tree and away from the tree. Can anybody measure the self-denial of the Savior in acting thus? Is it possible for us to estimate the stoop of love and the amazing suffering which He endured for us? Then, let us learn from Him what self-sacrifice means. I do not believe in our service for Christ always being pleasant. If we are truly His servants, there will sometimes be a galling of the shoulders by the yoke of our servitude and we shall delight to be thus galled for His sake. Has any Christian ever given what he ought to give until he reaches the pinching point when he has to deny himself in order that he may give to God's cause? Has any Christian ever done for his Savior what he ought to do if he has not come to the point of real self-denial in it? To go to the Sunday school class when it is a pleasing duty, is all very well, but, in the service of our Master, we ought to keep on at such work even if the brain should be weary and if, in such trying weather as we often have, it should seem to be almost impossible to get through it.

I have sometimes heard it said, "Oh, but the Lord cannot expect us to do that!" There are two ways of looking at that expression. I do not expect much from some people, but from those for whom Christ died, from those whose sins He bore, we ought to expect anything and everything of which they are capable if they act up to the measure of their sacred obligations! Many servants of our Lord Jesus Christ have been content to be poor, or have been satisfied to abide in a very lowly station in life, or have been willing to go to distant lands and suffer great privations and hardships. And the secret of their willingness to deny themselves has been that each of them could truly say, "Christ denied Himself for my sake. He bore my sin on Calvary's Cross and if His blessed and perfect shoulders could bear the load of my sin, shall I not bear the far lighter load of His service? Shall I not take His yoke upon me and learn of Him, as He has bid me do?"

Are you worried by the little troubles of the family? Are you getting tired of trying to bear a testimony for Christ in the workshop? Are you becoming weary, my Brother, or my Sister? Then remember what Paul wrote to the Hebrews, "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds." Think how He bore your sins and from this moment feel, "I will count self-denial to be a luxury if I may but exhibit to Him my love and let Him see that I am not altogether oblivious of that which He endured for me." Come, Beloved, can you not be stirred up to some nobler form of love than you have ever before known? Is there not something more that you could do, or something more that you could suffer by way of proving your love to Him who, Himself, bore your sins in His own body on the tree?

In the next place, see what abasement there was in Jesus Christ bearing our sins. Up, up, up, our soaring thoughts may fly, but we can never reach the height of His magnificence in the eternal world with the Father! Yet down, down, down He comes, till He is a poor Man—no, more—a despised Man, a suffering Man, a condemned Man, a crucified Man, a dead Man lying in a borrowed tomb! That is a wondrous

stoop, but the greatest condescension of all is indicated by that expression in our text "Who Himself bore our sins." Well, then, what say we concerning this abasement of our Lord? Why, surely, that we ought to be ready to be despised and reproached for Christ's name's sake! I think we get off wonderfully easy, in these days, compared with what some Christians have had to bear for Christ's sake and the Gospel's. Yet, in days gone by, some of us have known what it was to have all manner of evil spoken against us falsely and to be reviled again and again for Christ's sake. It is a good thing when a Christian minister feels that he has given up his character and everything else to Christ, so that, if men choose to slander and abuse him, he will bear it all so long as he may thereby but honor Christ and keep his conscience clean.

If you are a Christian, you must expect to be dragged through all the muddy pools that your persecutors can find. If you do even a little wrong, they will magnify it a thousand times—and if you do no wrong at all, the most blameless life will not enable you to escape from the envenomed tongue of slander! If that is your lot, just bear it. Be willing to be Christ's servant, to be, as the Apostle Paul was, Christ's branded slave, bearing in your body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Say, to your Lord, as Thomas Haweis wrote—

"If on my face, for Your dear name, Shame and reproaches be, All hail reproaches and welcome shame, If You remember me."

I know that some of you young people get dreadfully frightened at the ugly epithets which have been applied to you. Perhaps you say that you do not like to be ridiculed because you are a Christian. Why, you ought to be proud of such treatment! Just adopt the very nickname that they give you and let it be to you what the stars and garters are to the nobility of England—bear it as the insignia of a Knight Companion of the Cross of Christ. The Lord grant you Grace, in this matter, to account the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt!

Those two things are, I think, clearly enough set forth in the text—our Savior's self-sacrifice and self-abasement. And it is equally clear that those who would be His followers should imitate Him, as far as they can, in both these respects.

Notice, next, our Savior's willingness, as it is set forth in the text. "Who Himself bore our sins." There was, in His self-sacrifice and self-abasement, the utmost spontaneity, freeness, voluntariness. Nobody pressed Him to it. He Himself did it and He did it of Himself, unprompted, unsolicited. No sinners followed at His heels, crying, "Blessed Savior, bear our sins for us!" No necessity, except the wondrous love of His own great heart, constrained Him to be a Sin-Bearer. He could truly say, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God." He told His disciples that He had a baptism to be baptized with and that He was straitened until it was accomplished. He loved us so much that He could not be content without dying for us. Now, mark, this is the way in which we ought to serve God—freely, cheerfully, gladly. I dislike, above all things, that kind of holiness into which a man has to be flogged, for it could only be a mockery of holiness! I loathe that generosity which only flows through much pumping and that work for Christ which results from such a remark as this, "You must do it. Somebody will think ill of you if you don't." Bear your fruit to Christ freely—do not need to have it forced, like hothouse grapes. Grow on the wall and bear your fruit freely. The best juice that comes from the grape is that which leaps from it on the first pressing—and the best piety in the world, the best virtue, the best service is that which a man freely yields to Christ and His cause.

We say that one volunteer is worth five pressed men in the defense of one's country and I am sure that he is. The mercenary is but a poor tool compared with the noble citizen who grasps his sword to defend his

hearth and home. And, in the service of Christ, troops of slaves may be urged forward, but they never do anything for Him. It was said of the Persians that whenever they went to battle, you could hear the sticks of the captains who were beating the soldiers to make them fight—and they won no victories. Look, on the other hand, at the brave Spartan—he was glad at the very thought of fighting, he lived in it. He was a born lion and he rushed to the fray, delighted to be in the fiercest conflict! He was the man to win battles and so is it with the Christian to whom the service of God is his holiday—his holy day. To serve the Lord Christ in any way that is possible to him, is his highest ambition. He does not wish to be excused. He desires to be invited. As the eagles gather to the place where the carcass is, so do men of this stamp gather to the spot where the service of God can best be carried on! Leap to the front, Christians! Leap to the front and let no one hold you back, for, if Christ willingly suffered for us, we ought willingly and gladly to serve Him!

I ask you, next, to notice the reality of our Lord's Substitution. "Who Himself—what? Proposed to bear our sins? Oh, no! That rendering will not do! We must try again. "Who Himself promised to bear our sins"? No, no! That is not correct. "Who Himself began to bear our sins and then became tired of the task"? No! Yet I have read, in somebody's book, something very much like that. "Who Himself talked about bearing our sins"? "Who Himself had a good word to say in commendation of somebody else who would bear our sins"? No! None of these are correct readings, for our Lord's Substitution is something actual and real! He bore our sins and bore them, not according to fiction or imagination, but, "in His own body"—in His own hands, His own feet, His own side—"Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree." The bearing of our sins was as real as our sins were! Well, then, let us take care that we render to the Lord Jesus whatever actual service we can in return for His actual Sacrifice for us!

Did you ever hear a thrilling sermon or a very stirring speech about serving the Lord and, as you listened to it, did you keep on saying to yourself, "Yes, I will do that! I will excel others in earnestness! I will make great sacrifices for the cause of God! I will be very prayerful! I will be one of the most devoted Christians who ever lived"? So you talked and

patted yourself on the back and said, "Well done!" But you never did anything, yet you gave yourself the credit for doing it.

I have heard of a man who owed a great deal of money and when a bill became due, he got it renewed—and then he came away and said, "There, that is all right now." And when the bill became due again, he did the same, yet he never paid sixpence of the debt—but he always walked away and seemed as pleased as if it had been paid! We have far too many professing Christians of that kind—they are great at moving and seconding resolutions and making fine speeches—but nothing ever comes of them!

Now, in our Lord's case, there was actual, solid service and suffering for us! So do not try to put Him off, Brother, Sister, with good intentions and with the repetition of those intentions again and again! Come, now, for the love we bear His name—let us really get at actual service for Him. If it is only the teaching of one poor little boy to read his Bible, it will be far better than talking about what we mean to do, even if we utter it with commanding eloquence which might move the nations!

To drop two-pence into the offering box will be better than writing a fine essay on generosity and never giving anything! To breathe one real fervent prayer to God will be better than a long parade of your own excellencies, or a doleful talk about the sad declension of the Church and I know not what besides! There is nothing that can take the place of real service for Christ! We have a great deal of talk from some people who do very little work.

I sometimes wish that those who write me long epistles about various plans and schemes and who draw out elaborate details of what could be done if everybody gave so much, would only give their share and not make any plans at all! We can all make plans when we need them, but a more important thing is to take our share and to do our part in the actual work. If we all do that, some of us will be following our Lord better than we are now doing.

My last observation is this—Notice the strong personality of our Lord's Substitution—"Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree." He did not employ anybody else to accomplish the great work of our redemption, but He did it Himself, in His own proper Person. You and I do not believe in sponsors, but, assuredly, one of the worst forms of sponsorship is that of a man getting somebody else to do his work for Christ. I sometimes admire the way in which certain persons, who have no special gifts, will try to get others to do what they cannot do. A friend said to me, "I have often wished to preach the Gospel, but I am slow of speech and I have come to years at which I cannot expect to ever become fluent. So I want to find somebody who has a ready tongue and who can speak well for my Master. I wish you could tell me of such a man." I said that I thought I knew several, but what would be the good of them? "Because," he said, "I will sponsor one—I will find the means for his support so long as he will go about and preach Jesus Christ."

That seemed to me to be a right thing, especially when the gentleman said, "I do speak for Christ as much as I can." Many Christian people say, "We are doing a great deal at our church. We have an excellent Sunday school. We have an admirable Tract Society. We have a capital Young Men's Institute." Wait a moment, Friend, and let us sit down and figure it all out. What class do you take in the Sunday school? "Oh, ahem! Ahem! I don't take any." I thought so, but what part do you take in the tract-distribution? Oh, there are 50 or 60 distributors, Sir!" Yes, but what part do you take in it? None at all, I can see. "Well, our church does a great deal for home missions." But what do you do for home missions? I see that some of you smile at this personal question. I wonder whether that is because you would not like to be pushed into a corner in that way! But I want to push you into that corner! I want to get you to answer—without any personal questioning from me—by taking stock of yourself! An owl is a fine bird to look at, but he is a very small bird when he is plucked—he is nearly all feathers—and I think that a great many Christian professors are very much like owls. They are fine birds to look at, but it is mostly feathers—is it mostly feathers with you?

Let me remind you of our text—"Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree." There is a poor Christian woman lying bedridden. She very seldom has a visitor—do you know her? "Yes, I know her, and I got a city missionary to call upon her." But the text says, "Who Himself bore our sins." Poor Mary is in great need. "Yes, I know, Sir, and I asked somebody to give me something to give to her." Listen—"Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree." There is your sister, who is unconverted. "Yes, Sir, I know it, and I-I-I have asked Mrs. So-and-So to speak to her." "Who Himself bore our sins." Can you not get to that point and do something yourself? "But I might do it badly." Have you ever tried to do it at all? I believe that personal service for Christ, even when it is far from perfect, is generally much more efficient than that sort of substituted service which so many prefer. Oh, if we could but get all those who are

members of our churches to personally serve the Lord Jesus Christ, what a powerful church we would have! Would not the whole South of London soon feel the power of this church of more than 5,000 members if you all went to this holy war—each man, each woman—by himself or herself? But it is not so. Many of you just talk about it, or propose to do something, or try to get other people to do something.

"Well, but really, Sir," one says, "what could I do?" My dear Friend, I do not know exactly what you could do, but I know that you could do something. "Oh, but I have no abilities! I could not do anything!" Now, suppose I were to call to see you and, meeting you in your parlor, I were to say, "Now, my dear Friend, you are no good to us. You have no abilities—you cannot do anything." I am afraid that you would be offended with me—do you not think that you would? Now, it is not true, is it? You can do something—there never yet was a Christian who had not some niche to occupy—at least one talent to lay out in his Master's service! You young people who have lately joined the church—little more than boys and girls—begin personally to serve Christ while you are yet young, or else I am afraid that we shall not be able to get you into harness in later life. And even those who are encumbered with large families and great businesses, or with old age and infirmities, yet say, nevertheless, "We must not sit still. We must not be idle, we must do something for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We must serve Him who, Himself, bore our sins in His own body on the tree."

In the spirit of this text, go forth and, even before you go to bed, do something to prove your love to Jesus—and unto His name be glory forever and ever! Amen and 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. If you have once had that sweet taste in your mouths, you will wish to have it always and you may do so if you continue to drink the unadulterated milk of the Word of God and do not sour that good milk through tempests of malice, envy and evil speaking.

4. To whom coming. We should always be coming to Christ. We have come to Him, we are coming to Him and we will keep on coming to Him—"To whom coming."

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."

4, 5. Disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, you 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.

6-8. Therefore also is it contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believes on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious: 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. 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!

9. 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 Oh, the dignity which Christ has put upon the meanest Believer! What a high office and, consequently, what a solemn

responsibility is ours!

10. Which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but 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 pit 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 lifted you up. 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.

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 by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak 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."

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 harsh. For this is thankworthy, 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. 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 depicted in a bad way. I would 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 you do well, and suffer for it," there is then an acceptableness with God if you take it patiently.

21-23. For even hereunto were you 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 Himself 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. The Lord make this true of all of us, for Christ's sake! Amen.

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