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Introduction

We should lay aside all evil dispositions, and desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby, 1 Peter 2:1-3. And come to God to be made living stones, and be built up into a spiritual temple, 1 Peter 2:4, 1 Peter 2:5. The prophecy of Christ as chief corner stone, precious to believers, but a stumbling stone to the disobedient, 1 Peter 2:6-8. True believers are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, etc., 1 Peter 2:9, 1 Peter 2:10. They should abstain from fleshly lusts, 1 Peter 2:11. Walk uprightly among the Gentiles, 1 Peter 2:12. Be obedient to civil authority, according to the will of God, 1 Peter 2:13-15. Make a prudent use of their Christian liberty, 1 Peter 2:16. Fear God and honor the king, 1 Peter 2:17. Servants should be subject to their masters, and serve them faithfully, and suffer indignities patiently, after the example of Christ, 1 Peter 2:18-23. Who bore the punishment due to our sins in his own body upon the tree, 1 Peter 2:24. They were formerly like sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, 1 Peter 2:25.

Verse 1

Therefore, laying aside - This is in close connection with the preceding chapter, from which it should not have been separated, and the subject is continued to the end of the 10th verse.

Laying aside all malice - See the notes on Ephesians 4:22-31 (note). These tempers and dispositions must have been common among the Jews, as they are frequently spoken against: Christianity can never admit of such; they show the mind, not of Christ, but of the old murderer.

Verse 2

As new-born babes - In the preceding chapter, 1 Peter 1:23, the apostle states that they had been born again; and as the new-born infant desires that aliment which nature has provided for it, so they, being born again born from above, should as earnestly require that heavenly nourishment which is suited to their new nature; and this the apostle calls the sincere milk of the word, ἡ γὰρ τῆς ἀληθείας ὁ γάλακτος ὁ καθαὶς καὶ ἄφρατος ὁ ἀκατάμιαντος ὁ ἀκριβής ἐστιν ὁ λόγος, or, as some translate, the rational unadulterated milk; i.e. the pure doctrines of the Gospel, as delivered in the epistles and gospels, and as preached by the apostles and their successors. The rabbins frequently express learning to know the law, etc., by the term sucking, and their disciples are often denominated those that suck the breast. The figure is very expressive: as a child newly born shows an immediate desire for that nourishment, and that only, which is its most proper food; so they, being just born of God, should show that the incorruptible seed abides in them, and that they will receive nothing that is not suited to that new nature: and, indeed, they can have no spiritual growth but by the pure doctrines of the Gospel.

That ye may grow thereby - ἵνα ἴητε, ἵνα ἴητε, ἵνα ἴητε ½ , Unto salvation, is added here by ABC, and about forty others; both the Syriac, the Arabic of Erpen, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Slavonic, Vulgate, and several of the ancient fathers. The reading is undoubtedly genuine, and is very important. It shows why they were regenerated, and why they were to desire the unadulterated doctrines of the Gospel; viz.: that they might grow up unto salvation. This was the end they should always have in view; and nothing could so effectually promote this end as continually receiving the pure truth of God, claiming the fulfillment of its promises, and acting under its dictates.

Verse 3

If so be ye have tasted - ἵνα ἴητε...ἵνα ἴητε...ἵνα ἴητε. Seeing ye have tasted. There could be no doubt that they had tasted the goodness of Christ who were born again, of incorruptible seed, and whose hearts were purified by the truth, and who had like precious faith with the apostles themselves.

That the Lord is gracious - ἀγαθὸς ὁ κύριος, ἀγαθὸς ὁ ἰσχυρὸς... ὁ κύριος ὁ ἰσχυρὸς, ὁ κύριος ὁ ἰσχυρὸς. From the similarity of the letters, many MSS. and several of the fathers have read, ἰσχυρὸς ὁ κύριος, ἰσχυρὸς ὁ κύριος, ἰσχυρὸς ὁ κύριος, the Lord is Christ, or Christ is the Lord.

This seems to refer to Psalm 34:8: O taste and see that the Lord is good; ἰψὺ...ἴψι±ἴψι, ἵψ ἰψῖ±ἱ ἰψῖἵψῖ,, ἵψ ἀ½·ἱ,, ἱῖῖ·ἱῖῖ,, ἱῖῖ, ἀ½· ἰῖῖ...ἰῖῖῖῖ, , Sept. And there is still a reference to the sucking child that, having once tasted its mother's milk, ever after desires and longs for it. As they were born of God, and had tasted his goodness, they would naturally desire the same pure unadulterated milk of the word.

Verse 4

To whom coming, as unto a living stone - This is a reference to Isaiah 28:16: Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation. Jesus Christ is, in both the prophet and apostle, represented as the foundation on which the Christian Church is built, and on which it must continue to rest; and the stone or foundation is called here living, to intimate that he is the source of life to all

his followers, and that it is in union with him that they live, and answer the end of their regeneration; as the stones of a building are of no use but as they occupy their proper places in a building, and rest on the foundation.

Disallowed indeed of men - That is, rejected by the Jews. This is a plain reference to the prophecy, Psalm 118:22: The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

Chosen of God - To be the Savior of the world, and the Founder of the Church, and the foundation on which it rests; As Christ is the choice of the Father, we need have no doubt of the efficacy and sufficiency of all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of a lost world. God can never be mistaken in his choice; therefore he that chooses Christ for his portion shall never be confounded.

Precious - $\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath},\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}$. Honourable. Howsoever despised and rejected by men, Jesus, as the sacrifice for a lost world, is infinitely honorable in the sight of God; and those who are united by faith to him partake of the same honor, being members of that great and glorious body of which he is the head, and stones in that superb building of which he is the foundation.

Verse 5

Ye also, as lively stones - $\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}$. Living stones; each being instinct with the principle of life, which proceeds from him who is the foundation, called above $\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}$, a living stone.

The metaphor in this and the following verse is as bold as it is singular; and commentators and critics have found it difficult to hit on any principle of explanation. In all metaphors there is something in the natural image that is illustrative of some chief moral property in the thing to be represented. But what analogy is there between the stones of a building and a multitude of human beings? We shall soon see. The Church of Christ, it is true, is represented under the figure of a house, or rather household; and as a household or family must have a place of residence, hence, by a metonymy, the house itself, or material building, is put for the household or family which occupies it, the container being put for the contained. This point will receive the fullest illustration if we have recourse to the Hebrew: in this language, $\times'\times^{TM}\times^a$ (beith) signifies both a house and a family; $\times'\times^Y$ (ben) a son; $\times'\times^a$ (bath) a daughter; and $\times\circ\times'\times^Y$ (eben) a stone. Of all these nouns, $\times'\times^Y$ (banah), he built, is, I believe, the common root. Now as $\times'\times^{TM}\times^a$ (beith), a house, is built of $\times\circ\times'\times^Y$ (abanim), stones, hence $\times'\times^Y$ (banah), he built, is a proper radix for both stones and building; and as $\times'\times^{TM}\times^a$ (beith), a family or household (Psalm 68:6) is constituted or made up of $\times'\times^Y$ (banim), sons, and $\times'\times^Y$ (banoth) daughters, hence the same root $\times'\times^Y$ (banah), he built, is common to all; for sons and daughters build up or constitute a family, as stones do a building. Here, then, is the ground of the metaphor: the spiritual house is the holy or Christian family or household, this family or household is composed of the sons and daughters of God Almighty; and hence the propriety of living stones, because this is the living house or spiritual family. As a building rests upon a foundation, and this foundation is its support; so a family or household rests on the father, who is properly considered the foundation or support of the building. But as every father is mortal and transitory, none can be called a living stone, foundation, or support, but He who liveth for ever, and has life independent; so none but Jesus, who hath life in himself, i.e. independently, and who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, can be a permanent foundation or support to the whole spiritual house. And as all the stones - sons and daughters, that constitute the spiritual building are made partakers of the life of Christ, consequently, they may with great propriety be called living stones, that is, sons and daughters of God, who live by Christ Jesus, because he lives in them. Now, following the metaphor; these various living stones become one grand temple, in which God is worshipped, and in which he manifests himself as he did in the temple of old. Every stone - son and daughter, being a spiritual sacrificer or priest, they all offer up praise and thanksgiving to God through Christ; and such sacrifices, being offered up in the name and through the merit of his Son, are all acceptable in his sight.

This is the true metaphor, and which has not, as far as I know, ever been properly traced out. To talk of $\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}$ stones being said to be alive as long as they are not cut out of the quarry, but continue to partake of that nourishment which circulates from vein to vein, $\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}'\hat{\imath}\hat{\imath}$ is as unsatisfactory as it is unphilosophical; the other is the true metaphor, and explains every thing.

Verse 6

Behold, I lay in Sion - This intimates that the foundation of the Christian Church should be laid at Jerusalem; and there it was laid, for there Christ suffered, and there the preaching of the Gospel commenced.

A chief corner stone - This is the same as the foundation stone; and it is called here the chief corner stone because it is laid in the foundation, at an angle of the building where its two sides form the ground work of a side and end wall. And this might probably be designed to show that, in Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles were to be united; and this is probably the reason why it was called a stone of stumbling, and rock of offense; for nothing stumbled, nothing offended the Jews so much as the calling of the Gentiles into the Church of God,

phrase in this place is meant the time in which they should be brought before the heathen magistrates, who, after an impartial examination, should find them innocent, and declare them as such; by which God would be glorified, the work appearing to be his own. Others think that it signifies the time in which God should make them the offer of mercy by Jesus Christ. The words, however, may refer to the time in which the Christians should be called to suffer for the testimony of Christ; the heathens, seeing them bear their sufferings with unconquerable patience, were constrained to confess that God was with them; and not a few, from being spectators of their sufferings, became converts to Christianity,

Verse 13

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man - In every settled state, and under every form of political government, where the laws are not in opposition to the laws of God, it may be very soundly and rationally said: "Genuine Christians have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them." Society and civil security are in a most dangerous state when the people take it into their heads that they have a right to remodel and change the laws. See the whole of this subject fully handled in the notes on Romans 13:1, etc., to which I beg every reader, who may wish to know the political sentiments of this work, to have recourse.

The words $\text{ἐν παντί τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ τῷ κράτει τοῦ κυρίου καὶ τοῦ κράτους τοῦ κυρίου}$ literally signify, not every ordinance of man, but every human creature; yet $\text{ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ τῷ κράτει τοῦ κυρίου}$ signifies sometimes to arrange, order, as well as to create, and therefore our translation may do: but as the apostle is evidently speaking here of magistracy, or legislative authority, and as the appointment of magistrates was termed a creating of them, it is better to understand the words thus, All the constituted authorities. So, Decem tribunos plebis per pontificem creaverunt; Cor. Nep. "They created ten tribunes of the plebeians, by the high priest." Carthagine quotannis annui bini reges creabantur; Caesar. "They created two kings every year at Carthage." Consules creantur Caesar et Servilius; Sallust. "Caesar and Servilius are created consuls." Creare ducem gerendo bello. "To create a general to conduct the war." The meaning of St. Peter appears to be this: the Jews thought it unlawful to obey any ruler that was not of their own stock; the apostle tells them they should obey the civil magistrate, let him be of what stock he may, whether a Jew or a Gentile, and let him exercise the government in whatsoever form. This is the general proposition: and then he instances emperors and their deputies; and, far from its being unlawful for them to obey a heathen magistrate, they were to do it for the Lord's sake, $\text{ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ τῷ κράτει τοῦ κυρίου}$, on account of the Lord, whose will it was, and who commanded it.

Verse 14

Or unto governors - By king as supreme, the Roman emperor is meant; and by governors, $\text{ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ τῷ κράτει τοῦ κυρίου}$, are meant, leaders, governors, presidents, proconsuls, and other chief magistrates, sent by him into the provinces dependent on the Roman empire.

For the punishment of evil doers - This was the object of their mission; they were to punish delinquents, and encourage and protect the virtuous.

Verse 15

For so is the will of God - God, as their supreme governor, shows them that it is his will that they should act uprightly and obediently at all times, and thus confound the ignorance of foolish men, who were ready enough to assert that their religion made them bad subjects. The word $\text{ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ τῷ κράτει τοῦ κυρίου}$, which we translate put to silence, signifies to muzzle, i.e., stop their mouths, leave them nothing to say; let them assert, but ever be unable to bring proof to support it.

Verse 16

As free - The Jews pretended that they were a free people, and owed allegiance to God alone; hence they were continually rebelling against the Roman government, to which God had subjected them because of their rebellion against him: thus they used their liberty for a cloak of maliciousness - for a pretext of rebellion, and by it endeavored to vindicate their seditious and rebellious conduct.

But as the servants of God - These were free from sin and Satan, but they were the servants of God - bound to obey him; and, as he had made it their duty to obey the civil magistrate, they served God by submitting to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.

Verse 17

Honour all men - That is, Give honor to whom honor is due, Romans 13:7. Respect every man as a fellow creature, and as one who may be a fellow heir with you of eternal life; and therefore be ready to give him every kind of succor in your power.

Love the brotherhood - All true Christians, who form one great family of which God is the head.

Fear God - Who gives you these commandments, lest he punish you for disobedience.

Honour the king - Pay that respect to the emperor which his high authority requires, knowing that civil power is of God; that the authority with which he, in the course of his providence, has invested him, must be respected in order to its being obeyed; and that if the man be even bad, and as a man be worthy of no reverence, yet he should be respected on account of his office. If respect be banished, subordination will flee with it, and anarchy and ruin will rise up in their place. Truly religious persons are never found in seditions. Hypocrites may join themselves with any class of the workers of iniquity, and say, Hail, brethren!

Verse 18

Servants, be subject - See the notes on Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:22 (note); and Titus 2:9 (note).

With all fear - With all submission and reverence.

The good and gentle - Those who are ever just in their commands, never requiring more work than is necessary or proper, and always allowing sufficient food and sufficient time.

The froward - ἰσχυρὸς ἁγῶν, ἁγῶν, ἁγῶν. The crooked, perverse, unreasonable morose, and austere. Your time belongs to your master; obey him in every thing that is not sinful; if he employs you about unreasonable or foolish things, let him answer for it. He may waste your time, and thus play the fool with his own property; you can only fill up your time: let him assign the work; it is your duty to obey.

Verse 19

For this is thankworthy - If, in a conscientious discharge of your duty, you suffer evil, this is in the sight of God thankworthy, pleasing, and proper; it shows that you prefer his authority to your own ease, peace, and emolument; it shows also, as Dr. Macknight has well observed, that they considered their obligation to relative duties not to depend on the character of the person to whom they were to be performed, nor on their performing the duties they owed to their servants, but on the unalterable relations of things established by God.

Verse 20

For what glory is it - It appears from this that the poor Christians, and especially those who had been converted to Christianity while in a state of slavery, were often grievously abused, they were buffeted because they were Christians, and because they would not join with their masters in idolatrous worship.

Verse 21

Hereunto were ye called - Ye were called to a state of suffering when ye were called to be Christians; for the world cannot endure the yoke of Christ, and they that will live godly in Christ must suffer persecution; they will meet with it in one form or other.

Christ also suffered for us - And left us the example of his meekness and gentleness; for when he was reviled, he reviled not again. Ye cannot expect to fare better than your master; imitate his example, and his Spirit shall comfort and sustain you. Many MSS. and most of the versions, instead of Christ also suffered for Us, leaving Us, etc., read, suffered for You, leaving You, etc. This reading, which I think is genuine, is noticed in the margin.

Verse 22

Who did no sin - He suffered, but not on account of any evil he had either done or said. In deed and word he was immaculate, and yet he was exposed to suffering; expect the same, and when it comes bear it in the same spirit. It is very likely that the apostle mentions guile, because those who do wrong generally strive to screen themselves by prevarication and lies. These words appear to be a quotation from Isaiah 53:9.

Verse 23

But committed himself - Though he could have inflicted any kind of punishment on his persecutors, yet to give us, in this respect also, an example that we should follow his steps, he committed his cause to him who is the righteous Judge. To avoid evil tempers, and the uneasiness and danger of avenging ourselves, it is a great advantage in all such cases to be able to refer our cause to God, and to be assured that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

The Vulgate, one copy of the Itala, St. Cyprian, and Fulgentius, read, Tradebat autem iudicanti se injuste; âœHe delivered himself to him who judged unrighteously;âœ meaning Pontius Pilate. Some critics approve of this reading, but it has not sufficient evidence to recommend it as genuine.

Verse 24

Who his own self - Not another in his place, as some anciently supposed, because they thought it impossible that the Christ should suffer.

Bare our sins in his own body - Bore the punishment due to our sins. In no other sense could Christ bear them. To say that they were so imputed to him as if they had been his own, and that the Father beheld him as blackened with imputed sin, is monstrous, if not blasphemous.

That we, being dead to sins - ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὡς νεκροί, ὡς ἡμεῖς ἦν, ὡς ἡμεῖς ἦν, ὡς ἡμεῖς ἦν, ὡς ἡμεῖς ἦν, ὡς ἡμεῖς ἦν. **That we, being freed from sin - delivered out of its power, and from under its tyranny.**

Should live unto righteousness - That righteousness should be our master now, as sin was before. He is speaking still to servants who were under an oppressive yoke, and were cruelly used by their masters, scourged, buffeted, and variously maltreated.

By whose stripes ye were healed - The apostle refers here to Isaiah 53:4-6; and he still keeps the case of these persecuted servants in view, and encourages them to suffer patiently by the example of Christ, who was buffeted and scourged, and who bore all this that the deep and inveterate wounds, inflicted on their souls by sin, might be healed.

Verse 25

For ye were as sheep going astray - Formerly ye were not in a better moral condition than your oppressors; ye were like stray sheep, in the wilderness of ignorance and sin, till Christ, the true and merciful Shepherd, called you back from your wanderings, by sending you the Gospel of his grace.

Bishop of your souls - Unless we consider the word bishop as a corruption of the word ἐπίσκοπος, (episcopos), and that this literally signifies an overseer, an inspector, or one that has the oversight, it can convey to us no meaning of the original. Jesus Christ is the Overseer of souls; he has them continually under his eye; he knows their wants, wishes, dangers, etc., and provides for them. As their shepherd, he leads them to the best pastures, defends them from their enemies, and guides them by his eye. Jesus is the good Shepherd that laid down his life for his sheep. All human souls are inexpressibly dear to him, as they are the purchase of his blood. He is still supreme Bishop or Overseer in his Church. He alone is Episcopus episcoporum, ὁ ἐπίσκοπος τῶν ἐπισκόπων; a title which the Romish pontiffs have blasphemously usurped. But this is not the only attribute of Jesus on which they have laid sacrilegious hands. And besides this, with force and with cruelty have they ruled the sheep: but the Lord is breaking the staff of their pride, and delivering the nations from the bondage of their corruption. Lord, let thy kingdom come!