



¹ Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, ² As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: ³ If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. ⁴ To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ⁵ Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. ⁶ Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. ⁷ Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, ⁸ And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. ⁹ But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: ¹⁰ Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (1 Peter 2:1-10)

There is a great Stone at Mount Horeb from which God made life-saving waters gush forth to the thirsty Children of Israel in the Wilderness. *Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.* (Ex 17:6) - the same Mount Horeb upon which Moses had heard the Voice of God speaking from a Burning Bush. (Ex 3:2) It was the same Mount Horeb at which the Children of Israel stripped themselves of gold ornaments and other unnecessary accoutrements of wealth and gave for the building of the Tabernacle of God in the Wilderness by Horeb. (Exodus 33) I consider Mount Horeb, standing before Mount Sinai (Mount of Judgment) to be the Mountain of Mercy. Its great Stone from which water gushed represents our Lord Jesus Christ who was that same Rock that followed the Children in the Wilderness. *And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.* (1 Cor 10:2-4) In another sense, that great Stone Mountain represents the Mercy Seat of God - our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is something of the nature of stone that has a permanence far beyond the ordinary, but that Chief Cornerstone (which is Christ) is more than ordinarily permanent - it is Eternal.

Before we approach the Rock of our Salvation, we must heed the words of St. Peter: "*Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*" Have we known that the Lord is gracious? Of course, we have if we have received forgiveness of our prolific sins and redemption from the wages for those sins which is death. Therefore, we must reflect that grace in

our living.

The Living Stone

To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. In the physical world in which we live, there is no organic, or living, stone. All stone in our world is made, as are we, of clay. There is no life in our worldly stones, and there is no life in those who are *dead in trespasses and sins*. (Eph 2:1) But there is an Eternally Living Stone on High which is Jesus Christ! It is this Stone to which St. Peter makes reference as a Living Stone! Though the only Living Stone to appear unto men - for all others were dead - and the only one of merit, it was rejected by those who despised God as revealed in the Law and the Prophets of old. Israel had created their own god who would conform to their own values and mores much like the modern Church of our day. The modern church has rejected the Moral Law of God and has preferred Mammon and all that the license of Mammon offers - homosexuality, abortion, drug culture, drunkenness, etc.

Earthly Stones

The stones of this world are rolling stones in every sense - they have no fixed position in the same way Jude describes the sinner as *wandering stars*. So, too, have our fallen churches arrived at that sad definition of Jude: *Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.* (Jude 1:11-13) A wandering star is a meteor with no fixed orbit destined to burn and perish in the atmosphere of another body.

Unfortunately, evangelists in the nations abroad have come to place great authority in the deception spewed out by these modern churches who teach their youth to bring the discordant values of the world into their worship scene - jumping and yelling (as if God were deaf) and playing musical scores that more properly fit into the night club environment than the Holy Place of God.

Christ is that One Living Stone, and all who are in Christ are part and parcel of that Living Stone - 'chips off the old block,' so to speak! *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* The sacrifices of the Christian is not how much wealth we return to God, but of how much of ourselves we give! In that Temple that is Christ, there is a 'YOU-shaped' void that only you can fill. God has a purpose from each of His Elect, and a place!

Here follows a precious text of Scripture that is both beautiful and enlightening: *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.* I would like to relate and illustration of the Great Pyramid at Giza that my father told me to explain this last passage.

Illustration

The wise architects who designed and planned the construction of the Great Pyramid took many pains to see that every minute detail was considered (and there are far more than the scope of this illustration); That portion of the pyramid below the earth

is an inverse replica of that above. Much like our earnest plea in the Lord's Prayer. *Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in Heaven.* The engineers even designed each stone and the place it should occupy in the vertically decreasing levels of the Pyramid. Each stone was cut to the specifications of the designers before the construction ever began. Once the stones were quarried, they were dragged, one at a time, to the scene of construction. There was one great stone that seemed prematurely placed near the base that kept getting in the way of the buildings in bringing other stones to the pyramid. They found it necessary to grudgingly work around this Stone which became a Stone of offense and of cursing.

As the Great Pyramid neared completion, all that remained to add was the Capstone. To their great sorrow, the workmen determined that the Stone of Offense around which they had stumbled and cursed was the Capstone which had been designed by the architects before construction. But now it was too late to place this massive stone atop the pyramid, thus today the Great Pyramid at Giza is missing its Capstone. I am afraid the modern church as well is missing its Capstone and Chief Cornerstone!

It takes a miracle of God to make an inorganic, non-living stone awake to life. But that is what God does for us. We who were dead in trespasses and sin have been made alive through the mercy and grace of God - and none of our own doing! I suppose if I had to reveal my favorite verse of the Bible, it would come close to being the last one that I read, for these following are very dear: *4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.* (Eph 2:4-9)

St. Peter's benediction to today's text is equally beautiful and wonderful for expression: *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.* We are made, by the grace and unmerited favor of God, a living stone occupying our particular place designed by the Great Creator in the Temple of God. We are living stones because we are connected to the Living Stone which is Christ!

The only Rock music sung in Church should be "Rock of Ages, cleft for me!"