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A sermon preached by the late Mr. J.E. Hazelton on March 29th, 1908 from the text "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" Matt 21.42.

This text forms one of the rebukes which fell from the lips of our Lord when addressing the chief priests and elders of the Jews, and, so enraged were they by His words, that they diligently sought to lay violent hands upon Him, but dared not do so because the people believed Him to be a prophet. Why was their hostility so great? It certainly was not owing to the manner of our blessed Lord for "grace was poured into His lips", and even the officers sent at another time to take Him excused their negligence saying, "Never man spake like this Man". The Lord Jesus was not aggressive, "He did not lift up His voice in the streets", as He Himself speaks by the prophet (Isaiah 42.2) "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets". All grace was indeed poured into His lips, for even at Nazareth in that early sermon in the synagogue the people at first marvelled at the gracious words which He uttered who came to speak the words of heaven upon earth. Therefore we may be quite sure that it was not the manner in which these rebukes were given that offended the Scribes and Pharisees, but it was the matter; it was the truth which those blessed lips set forth. As in Nazareth they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded from His mouth till He began to speak of God's sovereign and discriminating love, and of that love being extended toward Gentiles; then they rose up and tried to cast Him down from the hill. They listened on another occasion until He said "No man can come to Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him". Oh, what an awful commentary upon the condition which every man and woman by nature is in with regard to the truth of God! And what an unspeakable mercy to be brought to receive the truth which falls from our Saviour's lips in its love and power! We do not experience so much of it as we fain would, but what a mercy to be among the blessed ones concerning whom it is said "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me." Surely this is a mark of grace divine, a mark that God in mercy has spoken to our hearts, and that His mighty, overcoming grace has broken down the enmity towards the Gospel and the Truth of God. "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me." We cannot understand all the words that Jesus spake; no one ever can until He explain them. When we "walk with Him in white", when, through His goodness and grace, we join those whom He has made worthy, then shall we know even as we are known. Not only can we not understand all the words which He spake when on earth, but we cannot understand the dark providences through which we pass, which eat into our very hearts and make deep furrows there, but blessed be God we are not offended, for He is

----- too wise to err,
Too good to be unkind;

though He cause us sorrow and pain, we are not offended, for "He hath done all things beautifully well."

Again, not only is this a solemn truth and an awful commentary on the unconverted heart, but a glorious proof that the Old Testament Scriptures are completely inspired. Our Lord here points to those Old Testament Scriptures as foretelling truth, and He refers first of all to the 118th Psalm where we read "The stone which the builders refused, is become the Head of the corner;" He then refers to the 28th chapter of Isaiah, and the 16th verse - "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious corner Stone, a sure Foundation, he that believeth shall not make haste." The 118th Psalm was doubtless written by David about one thousand years before Jesus of Nazareth came, and Isaiah's prophecy was uttered about seven hundred years before His Incarnation, but both applied to Himself. Peter, by the Holy Ghost in the 4th chapter of the Acts, says "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus of Nazareth whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone (Jesus Christ of Nazareth), this is the Stone which was set at nought of you builders which is become the Head of the corner." Oh, the writers of the Old Testament Scriptures understood the plan of salvation, for they were taught by the same Spirit; both David in that Psalm and Isaiah in that prophecy rested upon the "precious corner stone" and it was in their eyes marvellous that the great God of Heaven should, in the purposes of His love and mercy, have decreed that, in days which they were not to see on earth, He should send His Son, Jesus of Nazareth, the precious Corner Stone. Perish the thought that the Church of Christ down all the ages is not one; that Old Testament believers are in some sense of the word below the Church of the New Testament! Those words in the 56th verse of the 8th chapter of John prove this, where our Lord says "Abraham rejoiced to see My day, he saw it and was glad" - glad it was the day of grace, glad because of the Corner Stone. The Church is one, and

"The Church's One Foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord."

A corner stone! A sure Stone, a reconciled Stone, the Stone on which the Church is built! But the Jews and religious teachers of the day of our Lord's sojourn upon earth absolutely rejected this; they built their hopes for the future on works, rites, ceremonies, deeds and tradition, and it is to a large extent the same today. How many there are who say that Christ is the Foundation and it is for you to build upon it - Christ and works! Oh, this will not do! What about your works, your works for the Lord? What merit is there in them? Why,

they are stained with sin, and are but wood, hay and stubble. "Accept Christ, close with Him, and then go and work and work and work." This is not the Gospel. Christ Jesus the Lord is a living Stone; souls are built upon Christ, not upon works, lively stones built upon the Living Stone. All this is brought about through the exercise of a God-given faith, whereby the Church is built on the Lord Jesus Christ, no superstructure of human merit being mingled with Him who is the

"Church's ONE Foundation".

Think not of works on Christ, but works from Christ, the precious "Corner Stone", the Rock of Eternal Ages. In other words, sinners in all their deformity and filth and need, with the eyes of their hearts and understandings opened to see their lost and ruined condition, come by a living faith to Christ the Rock of Eternal Ages and fall upon that Rock with the weight of all their sins. Such are made partakers of the purifying nature of the basis on which they rest, and then, through union to Christ, works, good works, that were before ordained that we should walk in them, develop themselves. It is all of grace from first to last!

Let us look briefly at the glorious Foundation, the Foundation Stone, then at the Foundation Stone declared in the Foundation Book, and lastly the Foundation Stone declared in the Foundation Book to be the spring of hope.

We have need to look to our foundation, that when the waters rise, we may realise that we are on something stable.

"When all around my soul gives way,"

be Thou my Saviour then

"My strength and Stay."

Look at the instructive and consoling figure which the Lord is pleased to use here - the figure of a Stone rejected by erroneous men and teachers down all the ages, but a Stone which notwithstanding all rejection has "become the Head of the corner", supporting, uniting, reconciling. It reminds us that Christ does and can bear the entire burden of the sins, miseries, and guilt of those who rest upon Him, the Corner Stone, the Head of the Corner rejected by the builders. It is also an enduring Stone for Satan and death must break asunder for ever when it falls upon them; predicted by Psalmists and prophets, it abides in all its beauty and power unto this day without crumbling, cracks, or strain. God chose it, "I lay" says the Father, "in Zion a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Corner Stone, and he that believeth shall not make

haste." This is the same Stone as set forth by our blessed Lord when Peter said, in the fulness of his heart, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "Blessed art thou Simon Barjona" said our Lord, "on this Rock" (the Rock of Christ, and the fact that the sinner's Saviour is the Son of the living God) "on this Rock will I build My Church" (living souls, called people) "on this Rock will I build My Church, and the gates of Hell" (the councils of devils) "shall not prevail against it." Peter gives to us the commentary on that word of the Holy Ghost by Isaiah, where, in connection with this Corner Stone, he says "He that believeth shall not make haste", for Peter quoting those words and expounding them says "He that believeth shall never be confounded", - that is what "not make haste" means. A child of God says, I am full of doubts and fears; the Accuser is busy; when I look within I wonder whether either God or good can dwell there; but Lord, Thou art my only hope, my only rest in this stormy world; Lord, I cling to Thee in the darkness and in the storm; I am not sure of myself, but I am sure of Thee. "He that believeth", - he that clings and cleaves in darkness - "shall not be confounded", for it is a chosen Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Corner Stone. It is precious in the Lord's sight, and, if you are truly cleaving to Jesus, He is precious in your sight, for "unto you that believe He is precious." Oh, listen, poor trembling one, often so full of fear, what does the Lord say in the seventh chapter of Matthew? "He that heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them, is like a man which built his house upon a rock, and the winds blew and the floods came and beat upon that house and it fell not, because it was founded upon a rock". Though all nature be let loose against you, though in your family, in your business, and in your pathway through the world, the winds beat, and the floods rise, and the rain dashes, your hope is founded upon a Rock, imperishably secure.

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
 He will not, He cannot desert to its foes,
 That soul though all Hell should endeavour to shake,
 He'll never, no never, no never forsake,

and some of us have proved it, and some of us are proving it.

"A TRIED STONE". Tried by the Father, and the Stone, blessed be the Name of our God, stood the trial; tried by Satan, the Stone stood the trial; tried by wicked men, the Stone stood the trial; tried by poor, perishing sinners, millions and millions of whom are today in glory, testifying that the Stone stood the trial. They ventured their all on Christ and found that He was "the Man who receiveth sinners", for the foundation of God standeth sure - the Head of the Corner. Oh, what a mercy that the Lord Jesus is the Head! This is the covenant of grace, that Christ is the Head of the Corner, that

no plan of salvation, no covenant of grace, no pathway to the skies could have been, had not God's dear Son undertaken our cause and stood as our Representative and Head.

What is your hope for heaven? THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST, the cleansing by the PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST. Sanctification, redemption and all that we hold most precious are here in this Stone, for the Foundation of God standeth sure". None but Jesus then, in His fulness (all wrapped up and implied in the Head of the Corner), in His completeness, might and power. Not your building, but God's - Christ in His FINISHED WORK. Are we convinced of our lost estate without Christ? Is the desire of our hearts to be "made comformable to Christ's image?" If so, this is unmistakably the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's work; we "see the kingdom of God", and "except a man be born again" saith the Master, "he cannot see the kingdom of God", that is, he can have no thought of the beauty and excellency of the everlasting Gospel. "It is the Lord's doing and marvellous in our eyes; it is marvellous in the eyss of angels, for they desire to look into these things, but marvellous, says the Lord Jesus, "in our eyes", as in the 64th chapter of Isaiah and the 4th verse we are given this beautiful word, "for since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him". "Marvellous in our eyes!" The Holy Ghost takes this passage in the second chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, verse 7, and thus applies it "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard neither hath entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him". but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." Oh God, it is marvellous. "marvellous in OUR eyes", that poor, worthless, black, Hell-deservingssinners should see the kingdom of God, see the Rock and build on the Rock, and cleave to the Rock! Marvellous indeed!

"Wonders of grace to God belong."

"Deliver him from going down into the pit for I have a Ransom for him". "Marvellous in our eyes" that He should have left the royalties above and come to suffer, bleed and die, with no inducing cause in you and in me, but all proceeding from His Heart of love!

"The things that God hath prepared for them that love Him" It is "LOVE" in the epistle to the Corinthians, and "WAITETH" in the prophecy of Isaiah. Let us compare these two words. One says, Oh, I wish I could say I loved Him; my love is so weak and faint. "These things are prepared for him that WAITETH for Him", and the thought is this :- waiting for Him in the dark; cleaving to the Rock, resting on the one Foundation. "It was now dark", says the Evangelist concerning our Lord, "and the disciples were by themselves in the boat and Jesus had

not yet come to them"; they were waiting, waiting; doubts and fears rose high; they expected to be swallowed up; "it was now dark and Jesus was not come", but He had not forgotten them. All their hopes were on Him, and when the night was darkest, He came "walking upon the waves saying "It is I, be not afraid" The chief Corner Stone was their hope and desire in the dark.

Secondly, this Corner Stone is declared in the Foundation Book. "Thy Word is true from the beginning", and just as there was no speck of sin or stain of impurity in the Person of our blessed Lord, so there is none in the Word of the living God. Oh, the Bible, beloved friends, contains that which is the only balm to heal the wounds of sin, and that which is the only bread for the immortal soul. It is the Head of the Corner, and contains nothing less or more than the Word of Jehovah, the Word of our God. It is of all books the Head of the Corner. "This is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes". It supplies us with all that hope can desire, and with all that our deepest necessities can crave, therefore cleave to it, all ye that fear God in this day of rebuke and blasphemy. Let your reading be more and more not in many books but in one, for all that is good in other books is contained in its glory in the Book of books. Let none give up verbal inspiration who profess the Name of Christ, nor let any cast away the promises as of little worth for they will be needed in the hour of death and at the Day of Judgment. The written Word of God is life's staff, ministered by the power of the blessed Spirit.

Lastly, the Foundation hope. It all springs from the Foundation Stone, the Corner Stone, declared in the Foundation Book for

The Scriptures and the Lord
 Bear one tremendous Name,
 The written and the Incarnate Word
 In all points are the same.

A hope built on this Foundation is a hope "that maketh not ashamed", Peter says, "He that believeth shall not be confounded". "Whom have I in Heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee". Without a hope of salvation, a hope of Heaven, and a hope of the world to come, what a dreary desert would this life be! It is a hope that is destined to be realised, "Because (He) lives, (we) shall live also", for He has said, "Father, I will that they also may behold My glory." Are we leaning upon the Rock of eternal Ages? are we resting our soul's salvation upon the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, there is a hope that shall not be ashamed nor disappointed. Knowing this Corner Stone, we

"nightly pitch our moving tent
 A day's march nearer Home."

It is the blissful hope which Jesus Christ has given, the hope that when days and years are past, we all shall meet in Heaven to have fellowship with the Corner Stone. Communion - that springs from union, and as we are brought by living faith to fall upon Jesus, experimental union between a living Christ and a "living stone" is set up, and the heavier the burden the harder we have to lean; the fiercer the winds the more closely we have to cling, and so we learn more in adversity than in prosperity, and we cleave to the Rock in the storm. The light of the promises gleam more brightly at such times, for our Lord who created the wind and the waves, who holds the wind in His fist, and the waves in the hollow of His hand, knows how to cope with the storm. He died and has risen again, and has said "I will NEVER leave thee, I will NEVER forsake thee". "It is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes". When we reach the other side, and see face to face our Saviour the greatest wonder in Heaven will be our union with Him, and we shall say "It is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes", for we have been made to partake of a salvation which a Triune Jehovah planned, wrought out and revealed. Sin and a tempting devil will then be no more remembered.