

For Dominion Presbyterian.

The Stone.

AN ANALYSIS BY K.A.O.

"A stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation."—Isaiah 28: 16.

A stone is as durable as the centuries. If it disintegrates (and it resists the process) it has simply changed form. So is Christ durable, and such is His bread of truth. If it be not "broken" it cannot be assimilated. If it be not enduring it will not vitalize the soul. But it is as He is—like the stone. Like the soil formed from the disintegrating rock, it is of Him. Christ is truth, for Christ is God. He is the Stone of prophecy.

Stone is tried. Perhaps it is too porous and, being therefore absorbent, might not resist the expansion effected by the frost. Or it has iron in it, and will rust and stain and fall apart. Or it may have been a deep sea sediment long ago and now, though free from foreign matter and close-grained and hard as adamant it shatters in the quarrying. The stone is tried. It is found to be of such quality as it possesses. So is Christ tried. God tried Him. "My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken me?" Satan tried Him. "Get thee behind me Satan." The martyrs tried Him. They died like men accompanied by "the form of one like unto the Son of God." Heresies, denials, criticisms, carping questions, all have shot their shaft at Him. But Christ holds sway still, and is always gaining ground. He has been tried and has failed in no particular. He is the Tried Stone of Prophecy.

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A corner stone is a picked stone. It shows finished workmanship; is flawless; and bears historic inscription. History records the laying of it, and the people regard it. It is of value by comparison with the other stones, both of the foundation and of the superstructure. So were Moses and Aristotle and Paul and George Paxton Young among great teachers. But Christ is greatest. Only His teaching is precious in the last analysis.

Jesus Christ, as the foundation stone of the world's history, and of the Church and Kingdom, is beautiful. We contrast the grand description of the foundation of the Heavenly City in the Apocalypse and get an idea of the beauty we ought to find in Him.

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And is He not historic? He was foretold and portrayed in prophecy and sung in ancient song—its concentric theme. Nay. He holds both prophecy and history in His hand, for He was "before the world began," and by Him God "made the worlds." More than that, He is the chief figure in the fulfilment of prophecy. Nor does He own a prototype, although He seeks exponents. His history goes on making, for He lives in the lives of His people. Like any corner stone, chosen and well placed, He is conspicuous. He could not but be so. "All men seek thee" is ever true of Him—and everywhere—for all desire that which only He can give. It is our part to make Him so conspicuous that many will both see and choose Him as their life's corner stone and make His words true. "If, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." He is the "precious corner stone," as perfect and outstanding as He is precious.

Uncertainty is enervating. Certainty is satisfactory, even when it is not gratifying. Christ Jesus is the "sure foundation." "Well and truly laid" is that foundation of our faith. Deep and broad, commensurate with the superstructure to be reared upon it, and that of the grandest conception—Christ's Church and Kingdom. "In all points tempted as we are, yet without sin," "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," "learning obedience by the things which He suffered." He has paid the penalty of our sins in dying for us and has conquered our enemy in rising again from the dead, and helps our infirmities now by His teaching, example and intercession. Surely we may build upon Him and rest ourselves there.

All this is Christ—"a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." "He that believeth will not make haste," the prophet adds. He will be confident, patience will develop within him, yet will he never be dilatory in his building; he will exercise watchfulness, within and without; and will keep himself invigorated and ready by prayer and service. Death is quarantined. Christ has died and is risen. Let the building go on apace, nothing slighted through fear.

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* For Dominion Presbyterian.

Psalm II.

A new version by W. M. M.

Why do the nations 'gainst the Lord
Tumultuously rise?

Why 'gainst the Lord's anointed do
The rulers ill devise?

'Let us asunder break their bands
And spurn their yoke', they say;
But He that sits in heaven shall laugh
And them in wrath disdain.

'My King on Zion have I set,
And this is my decree',
Saith God, 'Thou art my Son, this day
Have I begotten thee.'

'Ask Thou of me and I will give
The nations for thine own;
The earth's remotest bounds shall yield
Their homage to Thy throne.'

'And thou shalt rule them with a rod
Of iron who oppose,
And as a potter's vessel dash
In pieces all thy foes.'

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings,
And own Jehovah's sway
With joy and fear, lest by His wrath
Ye perish in the way.

For quickly may His anger blaze,
His wrath swift vengeance wreak
Upon His foes; but happy they
Who in Him refuge seek.

A Prayer.

Almighty God, by whose word all things work, by whose guidance all things go, so order our inward life, that we may be enabled to understand the things that we see; and by Thy guidance in the spiritual life and in charity, so order what there is disordered in our lives, so bring our minds to the truth, our consciences to the law, our eyes to the light, and our hearts to Thy true love, that, amidst the seeming discords of life, we may hear the music of the heavenly will and catch oftentimes the charms of the heavenly order. So give us hope that we may pass on through time, into the higher and better education of the eternal life to come, and that at last we may know those things that are hidden, and which now we cannot know, and learn the glorious beauty and the glorious loving of the eternal years.

The Glory of Man.

"The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."—Isaiah 60:19.

The aching void which sin has left within the soul of man is to be filled up by the friendship of God; it could be filled up by nothing less. The prophet saw what was needed, at once by the Church and the individual believer; and in his own glowing strains, announces what it is that constitutes our glory, namely, our God.

Our God—not the idols on which we are prone to rest, as if they could meet the demands of a being like man's soul, created for eternal duration, and for boundless blessedness.

Our God—and not our own handiwork, proud as we are of such transient or polluted things.

Our God himself—and not the works even of his hands, glorious though they be, and reflective of his wisdom, his goodness and power. Not the sea, that type of his immensity; not the sky, the most dazzling of his works; not the earth, stored as it is with his bounty; but himself, in all his perfections—his love, his compassion and his mercy to man. Now could the thought be entertained of an angel flitting from star to star, and trying to find in each some new form of glory, is it likely that he would ever discover ought to eclipse the appointed glory of the believer—his God? There, then, let the soul rest—there let it be at peace, at perfect peace; it is still a blind and a degraded thing, if its God do not yield it joy.

But how is all this verified? In a way which is at once exquisitely simple and unspeakably gladdening. Everything that the believer has (except indwelling sin) is God's. Has he righteousness? It is the righteousness of God. Has he hope? It is hope in God. Has he peace? It is the peace of God. Has he joy? It is joy in God. And has he glory? "Thy God thy glory," is the divine reply. Such is the provision made to satisfy the believer's soul; and surely on that he may repose and enjoy the peace, while he delights in the smile of his God. And now, my soul, how is it with thee? Hast thou learned to soar, or art thou still groveling in the dust? Is God thy glory and thy joy, or is some perishing thing all that thou hast to satisfy the vast desires of the heart?

The Onward Flow of time.

The opening year must remind us all of the onward flow of time. Rev. Frederick W. Robertson in apt figure says: "Have you ever seen those marble statues fashioned into a fountain, with the clear water flowing out from the marble lips or hand—on and on forever? The marble stands there, passive, cold, making no effort to arrest the gliding water. So it is: that time flows through the hands of men, swift, never pausing until it has run itself out, and the man seems petrified into a marble sleep, not feeling what it is which is passing away forever. And the destiny of nine men out of ten accomplishes itself before they realize it slipping away from them, aimless, useless, until it is too late."