

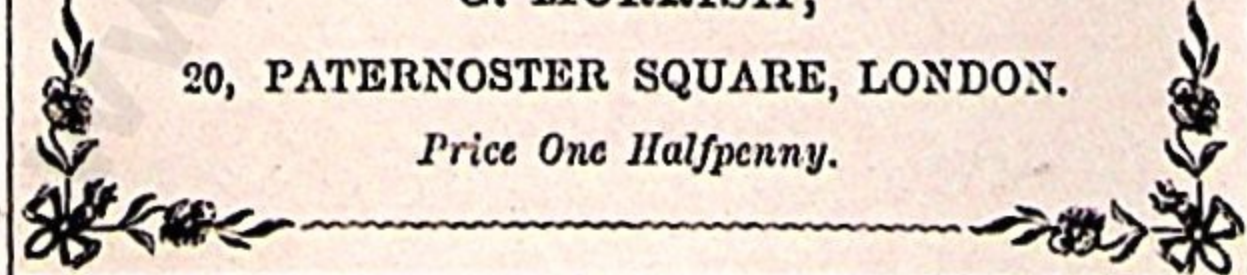
A LETTER  
TO  
A YOUNG BELIEVER  
UPON  
Peace with God.

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LETTER TO A YOUNG BELIEVER  
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MY DEAR ———, — You complain that you have not “settled peace,” and that thus you are making but little progress with the truth, or in the knowledge of the Lord. The complaint, I am sorry to know, is by no means uncommon; but it springs from an imperfect knowledge of the gospel, and from confounding two different things. I hope therefore, with the Lord’s blessing, to be able to help you, if you will care-



fully consider what I am about to write.

Your case reminds me exactly of another that recently came before me. "Have you peace with God?" I inquired. The answer returned was, "Not always." In both cases the confusion is between the peace made and the enjoyment of the peace. That is, when you are happy in the Lord you say, "Now I have peace;" but when from failure or trial you are depressed and gloomy, you think that your peace is gone. To meet this state of mind, I shall ask you to consider attentively *what are the foundations of peace with God.* It is an immense gain to the soul when it is clearly perceived that these lie not within, but without; for



then it will also be seen that our experiences have nothing whatever to do with the question. Turn then with me to Romans v. 1. There we read, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and if we examine the connection of this scripture, we shall at once learn the source of the peace of which it speaks. The connection is this. After the apostle has explained the way in which Abraham was justified before God, he proceeds: "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our of-



fences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God," &c. (Rom. iv. 23-25; v. 1.)

It is very clear from this scripture, *that the sole foundation of peace with God lies in the work of Christ.* In fact, the foundation having thus been laid, God declares that everyone who believes His testimony concerning it, believes that He in grace has come in and made full provision for the sinner's salvation, *believes thus in God,* is justified, and being justified has—enters upon the possession of—the peace which has been made by the death of Christ. But it will be observed that it is said that Christ was delivered for our offences, *and was*

*raised again for our justification.* (Rom. iv. 25.) That is, the resurrection of Christ is the abiding proof of the completion of His work, the evidence that the sins for which He died, and under which He went down into death, are gone for ever—the witness therefore that every claim that God had upon us has been fully met and satisfied. For if He were delivered for our offences, and He has left the grave, been raised out of death, the “offences” under which He went down into death must be gone, or He would still be a prisoner in the tomb. Hence the resurrection of Christ is the distinct and emphatic expression of God’s satisfaction with the atonement which was made on the cross.



It is thus abundantly evident, as before said, that the alone foundation of peace with God lies in the death of Christ. This is repeated again and again in Scripture. Thus we are said to be "justified by His blood" (Rom. v. 9); and again, "having made peace through the blood of His cross." (Col. i. 20.) It is therefore Christ who makes peace with God, and He has made it by His sacrificial death—the death that vindicated every claim God had upon the sinner, met every one of His righteous requirements from man, glorified Him in every attribute of His character; so that God now can beseech the sinner to be reconciled to Him. (2 Cor. v. 20.)

Having explained this much, it fol-



lows that the one important question for the soul is, Do I believe God's testimony concerning His Son, and concerning the work He has accomplished? If there is any difficulty in answering this question, then no further progress can at present be made. A very simple test, however, will help to elicit the truth. On what do you rest for acceptance before God? Is it on yourself, your own doings, or your own merits or deservings? If so, you cannot be resting on the work of Christ. But if you own that by nature you are hopelessly undone and lost, and confess that you have no hope apart from Christ and what He has done, then you can humbly say, By the grace of God I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.



Supposing now that you can adopt this language, then I can tell you that you have "settled" peace with God, that nothing can ever deprive you of it—no change, no variety of experience; for it is your immutable, inalienable possession. The Scripture says, "Therefore being justified *by faith*" (and you say you do believe), "*we have peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Every believer—and the moment he believes—is justified, acquitted of all charge of guilt, and made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. v. 21); and being justified, he has peace—not peace in himself, be it observed, but peace *through our Lord Jesus Christ*; that is, the peace which now belongs to



him is the peace with God which Christ has made by His atoning sacrifice. And since it is the peace which He has made, being thus outside of ourselves, it can never be altered, and can never fluctuate; it is as stable and as durable as the throne of God; for, as we have seen, it is a peace which Christ has made through the cross; and what He has thus done can never be undone, and therefore it is an everlasting peace. And this abiding, settled, everlasting peace is the portion of every believer.

What you mean, then, when you complain that you have not settled peace is simply that you do not *enjoy* settled peace, that your experience fluctuates. It may be, therefore, as



well to inquire how the believer is to enjoy constant peace in his soul. The answer is very simple. *It is by faith.* If I believe God's testimony that peace is mine on faith in the Lord Jesus, I shall enter immediately on its enjoyment. This may be simplified by an illustration. Suppose that news is brought to you that by the will of a deceased relative you have become the owner of a large estate. The effect on your mind will depend entirely upon the fact whether or not you believe what you have heard. If you doubt the truth of the news, there will be no answering response to it; but if, on the other hand, it is duly attested, and you implicitly receive it, you will at



once say, The property is mine. So is it also in regard to peace with God. If you believe God's testimony that peace has been made by the blood of Christ, no depression of feeling, no conviction of unworthiness, no circumstances whatever, will be able to disturb your security upon this point, because you will see that it depends entirely upon what another has done. *What is thus needed for the enjoyment of settled peace is unwavering repose upon the word of God.*

The cause of so much uncertainty on this subject springs mainly from looking within instead of looking without to Christ — looking within to discover something that will give confidence that there is a real work



of grace begun in the soul, instead of looking without to perceive that the only foundation on which a soul can rest before God is the precious blood of Christ. The consequence is that, perceiving the corruption, the evil of the flesh, the soul begins to doubt whether after all it has not been deceived. Satan thus entangling the soul, plies it with doubts and fears, in the hope of producing distrust of God, if not utter despair. The effectual means of foiling his assaults in this direction is to appeal to the written word. In answer to all his evil suggestions we should reply, as our blessed Lord did when He was tempted, "It is written," and then we should soon find that nothing



could disturb our enjoyment of that peace with God which has been made by the precious blood of Christ, and which became ours as soon as we believed.

This foundation question settled, now freed from self-occupation, you will have leisure of mind and soul for meditation upon the truth as revealed in the Scriptures. "As a new-born babe, you will desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1 Peter ii. 2); and, moreover, if you study the word in the presence of the Lord, you will be guided by it into ever closer intimacy of communion with Himself, and as you trace out His infinite perfections and glories that are



unfolded to us and apprehended by the Spirit of God, your affections will be drawn forth in ever increasing fervency, and your heart, now satisfied, will overflow in adoration at His feet, and thus your complaint will be changed into a song of praise.

Believe me, dear ——,

Yours affectionately

in Christ,            E. D.

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