

PEACE WITH GOD.

“ BEING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD
THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.”

ROM. V. 1.

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"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."—Rom. v. 1.

It is the proper portion of every *Believer* to say this of himself;—yet, if he does not, and cannot say so, God can, and God does say it of him; but his peace of soul depends on *his* being able to say it, —to say it as knowing the blessedness of it in his heart. If any man who believes in Jesus cannot say these words, then he furnishes a sad proof of the working of that evil heart of *unbelief* which still remains in us. These are nothing more than the words of faith, as opposed to unbelief;—they are the expressions of what *faith only* can find.

Concerning faith I would say this;—*faith* (that is, justifying faith) *always looks to an object external to ourselves*. This will serve as one sure test of what is faith, and what is not; whatever looks *within* for the ground of peace with God is not *faith*. I would also add, that *faith's eye always rests, as the ground of peace, on the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ*. Hence faith never looks *inward at self*, to find reasons for peace with God, but *outward at Jesus*. But unbelief is always looking just the other way for peace,—never at Jesus, but always at self! Unbelief can never say, *I have no confidence in the flesh*, for it has confidence in nothing else; but faith always says this, and also adds, *I rejoice in Christ Jesus*. Faith makes

nothing of self; but loves to be occupied with Christ. Faith is, therefore, always humble and always holy.

And how unspeakable the value of being privileged to fix my soul by faith on the contemplation of Jesus, and then to see all his excellence as mine: to have *faith* in lively exercise—faith which looks away from self and all that flows from self: and to see how *every thing* I can *possibly want, to commend me to God, is provided for me in Christ*. Do I want forgiveness of sins? His blood cleanseth from all sin (1 John i. 7). Do I want life? “In him was life” (John i. 4). “God hath given to us *eternal* life, and this life is in his Son” (1 John v. 11). Do I want righteousness? God hath made him righteousness unto us (1 Corinthians i. 30). And so with every excellence; every thing that is excellent and precious with God, all is *in Him*; and the believer is “*accepted in the Beloved*.” Thus it is that faith finds peace, and “joy unspeakable and full of glory;” for faith discerns the infinite value of the *blood of Jesus*, and the infinite excellency of Jesus Himself, *and appropriates all this to itself*.

Observe, too, this: Faith does not look on Jesus, or on His blood, as that with which it has nothing to do, as a man looks at the riches of *another*. No, *faith* always looks at all the riches and excellency of Christ as *its own*; and thus it is that we get *peace* and *joy*, through faith. It would never give *me* peace to look at Christ and his riches in glory, if not able to say “*all is mine*;” nay, it

would be torment: but faith always *appropriates* Christ to itself: this is how a believer looks at Christ. And do you ask how can he do this? what title has he to do this? I answer he has *God's authority* for this; for God never sets Christ before a soul for any other purpose but that he may by faith appropriate *Him* to himself. This is the very object of God in preaching Jesus: not to torment souls by shewing them *good* which they *cannot have*, but to declare to them the "good tidings" that Christ and all his perfectness, and surpassing glory, shall belong to every soul that believeth on Him. Let us be very watchful, therefore, against that heart of unbelief which Satan would lead to say, "I do believe in Christ as preached by God in the Gospel: but is he *mine*?" This is sad unbelief, and should be treated accordingly. It is the lie of Satan, and must be so, for this reason: because God says, "By Him all that believe *are* justified from all things." Here God identifies faith in Jesus with justification from all things; and what God has joined together let not man put asunder.

But let me add one thing more. Though faith is always occupied with Christ, faith does not stop even there. Faith knows Christ to be the way to GOD. "We have peace with GOD, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Never forget that God's great object in giving Christ was that we might be brought unto HIMSELF. Christ died, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto GOD. And the discovery

of this, and the enjoyment of what springs from it, is faith's great joy. There is a way of using Christ quite opposed to this,—using Christ rather as an end in himself, than as the appointed means of bringing unto GOD. But those who do this can really know very little even of Christ Himself. For the presence of God is really the place to learn and enjoy the blessedness of Christ. But God Himself—as God—is the grand resting-place of faith. “That your faith and hope might be in GOD.” Here the soul *rests*, for here it has reached the very spring and fulness of all blessedness. Here Christ Himself rests,—rests in God, in company with all who, through Him, are brought unto God. What a home is this! what a haven! How holy a rest too! what but *grace* could lift us sinners there? what but all the excellency of Christ, made ours by God, could fit us to be there! But we have peace even there—“*peace with God.*” For faith's portion is Christ's excellency; and thus every believer has Christ's own fitness for the presence and bosom of God. “Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.” Remember, therefore, that he who believes in Christ, as preached in the gospel, has all the value of Him on whom he has believed, as his own. What his faith has laid hold of is *all his own*—for *ever* his own; and he never, in this sense, gets more than he got the first moment he believed. He may, and will, *learn more of what he has got*; but to learn the *value* of a gift,

and to *receive* a gift, are very different things. When a soul believes in Jesus, *Jesus is his*; God has given him to Christ, and Christ to him: and yet he will for ever and ever be learning the value, the unspeakable value, of that wondrous gift. But how different to increase in the knowledge of Jesus *as mine*, and to be uncertain whether he be mine at all. How miserable this last state! How blessed the former! How wretched for a starving man to be looking through a grating at a feast of which he cannot partake: how miserable for a naked man to see abundance of clothing not for him and not his! But how blessed to be seated at the table wondering at its abundance of all kinds of food! How blessed to be looking at the beautiful texture and enduring substance of that *robe* in which love has *already* clothed me. This is the peaceful joy of faith! This it is which puts thanksgiving in the heart, and draws the sacrifice of praise from the lips. None can bless God but those who know *assuredly* that God *has blessed and enriched* them. (Read 1 Peter i. 3 to 9). Now Satan well knows this; and he longs to keep believers in doubt, because he thus robs *them* of peace, God of praise, and Jesus of honor. But while Satan thus seeks to keep the soul of the believer in doubt, there is another and a greater than he who ever seeks to lead that soul into perfect peace. The blessed Spirit of God “takes of the things of Christ and reveals them unto us.” He thus ever leads to

Christ. Thus, and thus alone does the Holy Spirit lead into peace. He is given to the believer for this very end: it is His blessed work to testify to the believer what Christ is, and what Christ is *unto him* (John iv.). Thus the believer has nothing less than God Himself, the Holy Ghost, ever ready to guide his faith to the fountain and reservoir of all his blessings. And when doing this, the blessed Spirit not only shows the soul what is *there*, but He is the witness to those who by faith see it, that *all—all* is theirs (Romans viii. 16; Ephesians v. 1, 13, 14). Now unbelief turns its head and its eyes within, and says, "Let me look within!" And thus it looks away from all the fulness and exceeding blessedness of Christ, to which the Spirit would lead, to look at its own poor wretched self! What wonder that none who do this have peace? They *cannot* have peace;—for God says *peace* comes by *faith* in *Jesus*; and if we look at ourselves for it, we shall never have it!

One word more: I have said that Jesus, apprehended by faith, gives peace and joy, confidence and praise; but he also gives more, he gives power for *holiness*, and strength against *sin*, Satan, the flesh, and the world. Never shall we get *real divine* power against evil, or for good, but as faith, led of the Spirit, draws it from Christ. Therefore, those only who have full and perfect peace through faith in Christ, will be *really, practically holy*.