

THE
PEACE OF GOD.

It is greatly to be feared that there are numbers of persons, who, though they appear to be quite at ease about their souls, would, nevertheless, hesitate to say, they have found *the peace of God*, the peace which flows from the knowledge of the fact, that "the Lord imputeth not iniquity." (Ps. xxxii. 2.) And yet, it is a very solemn thing to think, that the peace which comes from anything else is but a *false peace*, and not the *peace of God*. Now, there are two kinds of false peace. There is, first, that peace which is the sorrowful result of not caring about our souls at all. We see many running along "the broad way that leadeth to destruction," (Matt. vii. 13,) and yet the great question between God and their souls never gives them a thought, although we know, that, sooner or later, God will deal with *each one*, personally, about this very question; either *now*, in fullest *grace*, to settle it through the blood of Jesus Christ, shed for sinners; or, if we receive not this, by-and-by, in solemn, heart-searching *judgment*, when, "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with His mighty angels,

in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. i. 7, 8.)

Again, there are those, who, while their conscience accuses them, (Rom. i.) are seeking to quiet it in a way which God has not appointed. They seek to satisfy themselves with the thought of not being as bad as many of their fellow-men; they are not murderers, adulterers, drunkards, blasphemers, &c., and further, they are, it may be, religious people; they attend the public ordinances of religion regularly—they read the word of God, and pray daily; and, thus, they think to pass on in a quiet way, without making any great ado about religion.

But, alas! neither of these is the peace of God; and all who content themselves with such are just crying, "Peace, peace, when there is *no peace*." (Ezek. xiii. 10.)

Neither the peace which flows from carelessness, nor yet the peace which flows from self-righteousness can, by any means, be called the peace of God. They are both, alike, removed far away from that sacred reality; the former may be called the peace of unbelief; the latter, the peace of false religion; both are wrong—both lead to certain destruction—both stand in marked contrast with the peace which springs from the knowledge of the cleansing efficacy of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. That cannot be called true peace, which proceeds from ignorance of our

danger or carelessness about it; and he who is satisfied with such peace can only be compared to a man asleep in a house on fire, or on the very edge of a precipice.

Neither can that be called true peace, which has for its foundation *our* doings—*our* repentance—*our* sorrow—*our* prayers—*our* fastings—*our* graces—*our* feelings and experience—*our* knowledge—*our* service—*our* anything. Peace cannot be connected, in any one way, with ourselves; it must flow simply and solely from the one FINISHED SACRIFICE of Christ, who, by ONE OFFERING of Himself, COMPLETED the work of atonement, and FOR EVER MADE PEACE.

And, let the reader observe further, it is not his estimate of, or thoughts about, the work of Jesus, that can give him the peace of God. No; he must rest on God's estimate, on God's thoughts. The blood of Jesus is ever the same in the view of God, and true peace is based upon that, and upon NOTHING ELSE.

The following statement is truly valuable and consolatory for the poor sin-burdened conscience: "*It is not the work of the Spirit IN me, but the work of Christ FOR me, that gives me peace.*"

And now, dear reader, pause for a moment, while I reason with *you* about this momentous point. Do not, I beg of you, turn away, and say, you have heard it all before, and want not to hear it again; be assured of it, there is a day drawing nigh, when you would not for a thousand worlds you had turned a deaf ear to

the voice of mercy and grace published to you in the name of Jesus Christ; therefore, *as you value your soul*, attend to me.

And first, then, I would ask you, are you one of those who are sitting *at ease in the world*, and saying, "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant?" (Isaiah lvi. 12.) Perhaps you think, that because "all things continue as they were since the beginning of the creation," "the Lord is slack concerning His promise." (2 Pet. iii. 4-9.) But be not deceived; for "God has appointed a day, in which He will judge the world *in righteousness*, by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all, in that He hath raised Him [*i. e.* Jesus] from the dead." (Acts xvii. 31.) "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against *all* ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." (Rom. i. 18.) "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*" (Ezek. xviii. 4.) "Cursed is every *one* that continueth not in ALL THINGS that are written in *the book of the law to do them.*" (Deut. xxvii. 26; Gal. iii. 10.) "These are the *true* sayings of God;" and, since they are, how can you sit still? The avenger of blood is gone forth, (Num. xxxv.) and, so sure as he finds you outside the walls of "the city of refuge, *blood shall go for blood.*"

Surely, such words as these should rouse you from your sad slumber; beware of shutting your ears to them, lest, perhaps, your slumbers should terminate in that place "where hope never comes!" (sad thought!) But do not suppose that I want to alarm you; nay,

dear reader, I would not raise a single fear in your mind which "the glorious gospel of the blessed God" (1 Tim. i. 11) would *not at once* calm. What I desire is to frighten you away from the *false peace* in which you are going on from day to day, which must plunge your poor soul *in eternal ruin*.

But, it may be, you have begun to think seriously about your soul and eternity; perhaps your conscience condemns you, and tells you you are a sinner, and exposed, as such, to the righteous judgment of a sin-hating God; if so, take care how you settle yourself down in any peace short of *the peace* which *Christ* made by the "*blood of His Cross*." (Col. i. 20.) Many, when they begin to see their danger, "go about to establish their own righteousness," instead of "submitting themselves to the righteousness of God." (Rom. x. 3.) Is this the way with you? Perhaps you are a religious, as well as a moral, man,—you are regular in your attendance on the public ordinances of religion—you read the word, and pray daily; and, further, you like to be in the company of those who talk of religion. Well, all this is very well in its right place; but are you building your peace of conscience upon the *mere performance* of these things? Can you really say that you have solid, well-grounded peace, *independent* of such exercises, and that you engage in them because your heart delights in such things.* Had you *peace* with

* The grand difference between human religiousness and true Christianity is this; the former offers a hiding-place *from* God;

God, before you began to do such and such things? or, are you doing them in order to stifle the cries of your conscience, and thus procure yourself (*a false*) peace? If such is the case, be assured of it, you have not yet found "the peace of God, that passeth *all* understanding." Such things may do very well to get you a good name amongst men, who can only look on the outward appearance, but they will never be able to stand before the searching glance of Him who "looketh *upon the heart*." (1 Sam. xvi. 7.) Indeed, I doubt very much if you are fully satisfied with yourself. I dare say, if one could get a glimpse at your *inward thoughts* sometimes, we should see that even your own conscience tells you, *all is not right*: and surely, dear friend, you do not suppose that the righteous tribunal of Him, who "*is a consuming fire*," (Heb. xii.) will be more easily met than the tribunal of our unenlightened consciences; for indeed, we

the latter finds its hiding-place *in* God. (Comp. Gen. iii. 10, with Ps. xxxii. 7.) Adam sought, by his fig-leaf apron and by retreating behind the trees of the garden, to hide himself from God; but David found his hiding-place in God. Now, the thought of a poor sinner's being hidden in God himself could only have emanated from the Divine mind. Man never could have thought of it. His very highest thought is to seek, by his own works, his prayers, fastings, almsdeeds, ordinances, ceremonies, and, in short, by all his doings, to screen himself from the holiness of God; whereas, the moment the Cross is seen by the eye of faith, he finds that very holiness to be his safe abode and resting-place. This is God's righteousness, as set forth in Romans iii. and iv. The soul that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is privileged to know, that the very holiness of God is the basis of his peace. The Cross, which reveals that holiness, secures the believer's peace. Hence I may ask, "How can man be just with God?" or "How can God be just in relation with man?" The Cross is the glorious answer to both these questions. There God's righteousness is set forth, and there the soul finds peace.

who, with open eyes, rejected *the truth of God*, and received the *lie of Satan*, (see Gen. iii.) are now very incompetent judges of what would be fit to enter into the presence of the God of light and truth. Therefore, "if our hearts [which can only know a few *glaring things*] condemn us," how shall we stand in His presence, who "is greater than our heart, and knoweth *all things*." (1 John iii. 20.) "*All things* are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have [*personally*] to do;" (Heb. iv. 13;) and if we are not able to obtain peace with our own consciences, how shall we expect to have "peace with God?" (Rom. v. 1.) Everything *short* of this blessed peace is just a "refuge of lies," (Isa. xxviii. 17,) which shall be *swept away*, when that tremendous day comes, "which shall burn as an oven." (Mal. iv.) It matters not what its foundation may have been, whether great morality, or great religiousness, *all* must be shaken to pieces, when "the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow," because "built upon the sand," (Matt. vii. 26, 27,) sufficiently strong to *deceive* the soul, until the *very time* it is most wanted, and *then* slipping from under it. Things may go on very smoothly with us *now*; we may be looked upon as very decent, upright people, yea, as very religious people; but, alas! when *the terrible day* arrives, we shall find, that such things only procured us *peace with men*; that what we really want we have not,—"*peace with God*." Do not be afraid to sift your heart, and see on what it is

you are resting. Is it the Rock of ages? is your anchor cast "within the veil?" (Heb. vi.) If you really have *peace*, through the knowledge of Jesus Christ *crucified* and *risen*, then you need not fear, but greatly rejoice, at the issue of this sifting; for *this*, and this alone, is what Scripture calls "*the peace of God.*" But if you have not found this, will it not be a most blessed thing, if you are led to give up every "refuge of lies," every *wrong foundation*, every *false peace*, which *must* inevitably plunge your soul in eternal perdition? Be not deceived; "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ;" (1 Cor. iii. 11;) other refuge can no man find from the terrible judgments that are, ere long, coming upon the earth, than *Christ*, who is "within the veil;" (Heb. vi. 18, 19;) and other peace can no man make, than that which *has been made* "by the blood of the Cross," which is ready for all who *will believe*. (Col. i. 20; Rom. v. 1.) It will not suffice, that a man is a member of a church *professing* to be built upon this foundation; for there is no church but the "Church of the *living God*," (1 Tim. iii. 15,) of which *Christ* is the *living "Head,"* (Eph. i. 22,) *true believers* the *living members*, (Eph. v. 30,) and into which we obtain entrance through *living faith*.

You may be a member of some religious denomination—you may be a constant attendant on the preaching of the word—you may take your place periodically at the communion of the Lord's Supper—you may be a most

zealous promoter of Missionary, Tract, and Bible Societies—you may be a liberal donor to charitable institutions—you may even be an eloquent preacher and advocate of christianity; you may be all these, and yet a total stranger to the genuine peace of God. You may have attained a name amongst men, and even amongst Christians, for these things, and yet your own heart may secretly condemn you, and tell you *all is not right*. Your heart and conscience can never be at rest until God's peace is your peace; and you know full well, that God's peace is not based upon anything in you, or done by you. Ah! no; the peace of God could rest upon no other basis than the precious blood of Christ; and if you can rest your peace upon that also, you are all right and safe, otherwise you are only deceiving yourself and others.

You cannot be too simple in the ground of your faith; you must add nothing—absolutely nothing—not even the work of the Holy Ghost—to the finished work of the Son of God, as a means of attaining peace. The Holy Ghost has not made peace, but Christ has, and the Spirit will ever tell us so; for He bears witness to Christ, and not to himself.

I need not say that the Holy Ghost, and all His precious operations and fruits, are *absolutely essential* to the christian life; but, in the matter of the sinner's peace, we can admit nothing as the foundation thereof, but the accomplished work of the Lamb of God.

Thus then, if it be asked, How the *true*

“peace of God” is to be procured? the holy word of God answers, “Not by works of righteousness which *we* have done,” (Titus iii. 5,) but by believing on the Son of God, who came “preaching *peace* to all,” (comp. Acts x. 36; Eph. ii. 17,) having “made it by *the blood of His Cross.*” Again; “*Being justified by faith, we have (now) peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (Rom. v. 1.) And the Holy Ghost has proclaimed, by the mouth of the apostle Peter, that “there is none other name *under heaven given among men*, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts iv. 12.) But, perhaps, dear reader, you are ready to say, ‘I do believe on the Son of God; I believe that He came into the world, took our nature upon Him, and died upon the cross for sin, and was raised again the third day, and that there is no other name by which a sinner can be saved, but His name.’ Well, this is a very sound confession, so far as it goes; but are you in the enjoyment of the results of all this? If you really believe all this, then you possess eternal life, and Divine righteousness. “He that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life;” and again, “By Him [Jesus] all that believe are justified from all things.” (Acts xiii. 39.) For one to say that he believes all this, and yet that he does not know his perfect justification before God is a complete contradiction. If I am amongst the “all that believe,” I am assuredly “justified from all things.” God says so, and therefore I am bound to believe it, and rejoice in it. The completeness of the justification

is founded upon the completeness of Christ's work. Faith owns this, and fills the soul with joy and peace. I know that my sins are forgiven, and my conscience gets rest. It is deeply important to see that we are privileged to know the forgiveness of *our own sins*. There are many who, every first day of the week, declare their belief "in the forgiveness of sins," and yet who would regard it as a presumption, for one to say, he believed in the forgiveness of *his* sins. "We know that we have passed from death unto life."

Is it presumption to *take God at his word*? God has said, "*He* (no matter who) that believeth on the Son *hath* (now) everlasting life." (John iii. 36, v. 24; 1 John v. 12.) Mark, it is not said, he shall, or may, have it, but he "*hath*" it. "*Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, [nothing less than] Abba, Father.*" (Gal. iv. 6.) Is it not far greater presumption to "*make God a liar?*" (1 John v. 10,) which you are doing, if you are not rejoicing in the knowledge of the full forgiveness of *your* sins. Jesus Christ did not come to *put us in the way of making peace for ourselves*; He came to make peace, and to give it to us as a free gift, "without money and without price." (Isa. lv.) May this blessed message of "peace and goodwill" be published far and wide, that sinners may hear and live.

But never let it be forgotten, that, though "the grace of God that bringeth a full and free salvation hath appeared to all men," yet, where

ever it is received, it "teacheth to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." (Titus ii. 11, 12.) If we are not showing out the latter, we may rest assured, we do not fully understand the former. Living faith in the living Son of God, crucified for sin, and risen, is the grand source and root from which all good works must spring, and whatsoever work or religious service springs not from this is *selfishness*—an abomination in the sight of God; no matter what we ourselves or others think of it, God has said, "whatsoever is not of *faith* is sin." (Rom. xiv. 23.)

May you, dear reader, have this precious faith, and may "*the peace of God*, which passeth all understanding, keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus." Amen.

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