

THE JEWEL OF PEACE

NO. 1343

A SERMON
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 BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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*“Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always
 by all means. The Lord be with you all.”
 2 Thessalonians 3:16.*

WHEN the heart is full of love it finds the hand too feeble for its desires. Therefore, it seeks relief in intercession and benediction—wishing, praying, and blessing where it cannot actually effect its loving purpose. The apostle would have done for the Thessalonians all the good that was conceivable had it been in his power, but his wishes far outstripped his abilities and therefore he betook himself to interceding for them and to invoking upon them the blessing of the Lord and Master whom he served. Here is a lesson for us in the art of doing good—as we lengthen the eyesight with the telescope, as we send our words afar by the telegraph, so let us extend our ability to do good by the constant use of intercessory prayer. Parents, when you have done all you can for your children, be thankful that you may introduce them to a further and greater blessing by commending them to the care of the great Father in heaven. Friends, do your friends the best possible deed of friendship by asking for them the friendship of God. You who love the souls of men, when you have poured out all your strength on their behalf, bless God that there is still something more which you can do, for by entreaties and supplications you may bring down from on high the earnest and the effectual energy of the Holy Spirit who can work in their hearts that which it is not in your power to accomplish. The apostle saw that the Thessalonians were much troubled and he wrote the most encouraging words to cheer them, but he knew that he could not take the burden from off their hearts and therefore he turned to the God of all consolation and prayed Him to give them peace always by all means. The slenderness of our power to bless others will be no detriment to them if it lead us to lay hold upon the eternal strength, for that will bring into the field a superior power to bless and our infirmity will only make space for the display of divine grace.

Let us look, first, at *the many-sided blessing* which the apostle invokes—peace. And then let us note *the special desirableness of it*. Thirdly, let us observe *from whom alone it comes*. And fourthly, note *the wide sweep of the apostolic prayer*.

I. First, then, let us look at THE MANY-SIDED BLESSING, “The Lord of peace Himself give you peace.” Some have thought to restrict the expression to peace within the church since disorderly members were evidently increasing among the Thessalonians, but that is a very straitened and inadequate interpretation and it is never wise to narrow the meaning of God’s Word. Indeed, such a contracted explanation cannot be borne, for it does not appear that the disorderly persons mentioned in the chapter had as yet created any special disturbance. They had been quietly fattening at the expense of their generous brethren and would not be very eager to quarrel with the rack from which they fed. Although, no doubt, church quiet is included as one variety of peace, yet it would be a sad dwarfing of the meaning of the Spirit to consider one phase of the blessing to the neglect of the rest. No, the peace here meant is “the deep tranquility of a soul resting on God,” the quiet restfulness of spirit which is the peculiar gift of God, and the choice privilege of the believer. “Great peace have all they that love Your law and nothing shall offend them.”

The peace of the text is a gem with many facets, but in considering its many-sidedness we must remember that its main bearing is *toward God*. The deepest, best, and most worthy peace of the soul is its rest towards the Lord God, Himself. I trust we know this and are enjoying it at this moment. We are no longer afraid of God—the sin which divided us from Him is blotted out and the distance which it created has ceased to be. The atonement has worked perfect reconciliation and established everlasting peace.

The terrors of God's law are effectually removed from us and instead thereof we feel the drawings of His love. We are brought nigh by the atoning sacrifice and have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We know that all His thoughts to us are thoughts of love and we bless His name that our thoughts toward Him are no longer those of the slave towards a taskmaster or of a criminal towards a judge, but those of a beloved child towards a kind and tender father. Fervent love reigns in our hearts, casting out all fear and causing us to joy in God by our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a great blessing. It is surely a choice delight for a man to know that whether he prospers or is afflicted, whether he lives or dies, there is nothing between God and him but perfect amity, for all that offends has been effectually put away.

Beloved, when the apostle wishes us peace in the words of our text, he no doubt means that our hearts should be at *perfect* peace by being placed fully in accord with the will of God. For, alas, we have known some who we hope are forgiven and are God's children, who, nevertheless, quarrel with God very sadly. They are not pleased with what He does and even complain that He deals hardly with them. They are naughty children and carry on a sort of sullen contention with their heavenly Father because He does not indulge them in all their whims and fancies. Now, may the Lord of peace put an end to all such grievous warfare of heart in His people. May you love the Lord so well and trust Him so fully that you could not pick a quarrel with Him even if He smote you and bruised you and broke your bones. Whatever He does is not only to be accepted with submission, but to be rejoiced in. That which pleases Him should please us. We have perfect peace when we can magnify and praise the Lord even for the sharp cuts of His rod and the fierce fires of His furnace. May the Lord bring us into this state, for there is no joy like it—perfect peace with God is heaven below.

Yes, brethren, we reach a little further than reconciliation and submission, for we come into the enjoyment of conscious satisfaction. There are men who are at peace with God as to the forgiveness of sin and in a measure are in accord with His will, but they are not walking carefully in the path of obedience and so they are missing the sense of divine love. God is their Father and He loves them, but He hides His face from them. They walk contrary to Him and so He walks contrary to them. We cannot consider such a condition to be one of fullest peace. The truly restful state of mind is enjoyed when the heart and life are daily cleansed by grace so that there is nothing to grieve the Spirit of God and therefore the Lord feels it right to favor His child with the light of His countenance in full meridian splendor. O how blessed to bask in the sunlight of Jehovah's love, free from all doubt and having no more conscience of sin! In that sense of conscious favor lies the rest of heaven. May the Lord of peace Himself give us this peace.

Peace, because sin is forgiven, is the sweet fruit of justification, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Peace, because the heart is renewed and made to agree with the will of God, is the blessed result of sanctification, for "to be spiritually-minded is life and peace." Peace, because the soul is conscious of being the object of divine love, is a precious attendant upon the spirit of adoption which is the very essence of peace. Brethren in Christ, may this threefold peace with God be with you always.

Now we look further and note that this peace spreads itself abroad and covers *all things* with its soft light. God is great and fills all things, and he who becomes at peace with Him is at peace with all things else. Being reconciled to God, the believer says, "All things are mine, whether things present or things to come, all are mine, for I am Christ's and Christ is God's." Behold, the Lord has made us to be in league with the stones of the field and the beasts of the field are at peace with us. Providence is our pavilion and angels are our attendants. All things work together for our good, now that we love God and are the called according to His purpose. No longer are we afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction which wastes at noonday. Behold the Lord God covers us with His feathers and under His wings do we trust. His truth is our shield and buckler. Because we have set our love upon Him, He delivers us and He does set us on high because we have known His name. At peace with the Lord of hosts, we are at peace with all the armies of the universe, in alliance with all the forces which muster at Jehovah's bidding. Though we must be at war with Satan, yet even he is chained and made as a slave to accomplish purposes of good contrary to his own will. There is neither in heaven nor earth nor hell, anything that we need fear when

we are once right with God. Settle the center and the circumference is secure—peace with God is universal peace.

This practically shows itself in the Christian's inward peace with regard to his *present circumstances*, be they what they may. Being at peace with God, he sees the Lord's hand in everything around him and is content. Is he poor? The Lord makes him rich in faith and he asks not for gold. Is he sick? The Lord endows him with patience and he glories in his afflictions. Is he laid aside from the holy service which he so much loves? He feels that the Lord knows best. If he might be actively engaged in doing God's will, he would be very thankful and run with diligence the race set before him. But if he must lie in the hospital and suffer rather than serve, he does not wish to put his own wishes before the will of his Master, but he leaves himself in the Lord's hands, saying, "Lord, do as You will with me. I am so at peace with You that if You use me, I will bless You, and if You lay me aside, I will bless You. If You spare my life, I will bless You, and if You bring me down to the grave, I will bless You. If You honor me among men, I will bless You, and if You make me to be trodden under foot like straw for the dung-hill, I will still bless You—for You are everything and I am nothing—You are all goodness and I am sin and emptiness." The soul which thus has perfect peace as to all its personal surroundings is indeed happy. It is lying down in green pastures beside the still waters.

Blessed be God, this peace is mainly to be found *in the soul itself* as to its own thoughts, believings, hopings, expectations, and desires. We have not only peace towards the outer world, but peace within. After all, happiness and peace lie more within the man than in anything about him. Heaven lies more in the heart than in golden streets, and hell's flame consists rather in man's tortured conscience than in the Tophet fire which the breath of God has kindled. So the peace which Jesus gives is within us, "The good man is satisfied with himself." Some minds are strangers to peace. How can they have peace, for they have no faith? They are as a rolling thing before the whirlwind, having no fixed basis, no abiding foundation of belief. These are the darlings of the school of modern thought, whose disciples set themselves as industriously to breed doubt as if salvation came by it. Doubt and be saved is their gospel and who does not see that this is not the gospel of peace? Indeed, they are receptive and are peering about for fresh light, though long ago the Sun of Righteousness has arisen. Such uncertainty suits me not. I must know something or I cannot live. I must be sure of something or I have no motive from which to act. God never meant us to live in perpetual questioning. His revelation is not and cannot be that shapeless cloud which philosophical divines make it out to be. There must be something true and Christ must have come into the world to teach us something saving and reliable. He cannot mean that we should be always rushing through bogs and into morasses after the will-of-the-wisp of intellectual religion. There is assuredly some ascertainable, infallible, revealed truth for common people. There must be something sure to rest upon. I know it is so and declare unto you what I have heard and seen. There are great truths which the Lord has engraven upon my very soul, concerning which all the men on earth and all the devils in hell cannot shake me. As to these vital doctrines, an immovable and unconquerable dogmatism has laid hold upon my soul and therefore my mind has peace. A man's mind must come to a settlement upon eternal truths by the teaching of the Holy Spirit or else he cannot know what peace is.

I would ask for every one of my brethren that they may find an anchorage of mind and heart and never leave it. We have been often spoken of as an old-fashioned church and your minister is said to be *Ultimus Puritanorum*, the last of the Puritans, a man incapable of any thought beyond the limit of the old-fashioned theology. I bless the Lord that it is even so. I am indeed incapable of forsaking the gospel for these new-fangled theories. Down went my anchor years ago. It was a great relief to me when I first felt it grip and it is a growing joy to me that I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him. Pretensions to original thought I have never made. I invent nothing. I only tell the old, old story as God enables me. "Ah," said a certain divine to me one day, "it must be very easy for you to preach because you know what you are going to say—your views are fixed and stereotyped. As for me," he said, "I am always seeking after truth and I do not know one week what I may preach the next." Thus speak the teachers—do you wonder if the disciples wander into skepticism? Has the Lord taught the man nothing of sure truth? Then let him wait till he has received His message. Till he knows the gospel in his own heart experientially as the power of God unto salvation, let him sit on the penitent form and ask to be prayed for, but never enter a pulpit. What are church-

es at to tolerate these sowers of infidelity? Time was when the fathers in our Israel would have chased from their pulpits those who glory in the unbelief which is their shame. May the Lord of peace Himself give you peace as to your personal beliefs and convictions, and then when you get into deep waters of trial and sorrow you will say, "Ah, I did believe the right doctrine after all. I can feel the grip of my anchor on the things unseen. I have not been deceived. I have not followed cunningly devised fables, for the promise is true and I feel the power of it. It sustains and cheers and comforts me under all my trials and I know that it will do so even to my dying hour." May every troubled thinker find the peace of faith and never lose it.

Many minds are forever restless as to their fears. It is a great thing to know what you tremble at, for when you know what you fear, your fear is half gone. The indefinable shape, the mysterious hand which has no arm but writes upon the wall in strange characters—the cloudiness of all things dreaded makes the mind more restless. But blessed is the man to whom the Lord has taught His fear, so that he knows what he fears and does not permit his hopes to be in perpetual eclipse.

Of this many-sided peace we must say something more. The Thessalonian church had been troubled three ways. They had been *persecuted from without*. That is not a pleasant thing, but the apostle says, "You that are troubled rest with us." Now, when the Lord Jesus Christ says to a persecuted saint, "I am with you: all the evil which is done unto you is done unto Me, and you are bearing it for My name's sake," then, beloved, no persecution can break the peace of the soul, but rather the sufferer rejoices and is exceeding glad that he is counted worthy, not only to believe in Christ, but to suffer for His sake.

Next, the Thessalonian church was annoyed by certain *false teachers*. They did not absolutely teach novel doctrine, but upon a basis of truth they erected an edifice of error. They exaggerated one special truth and carried its teaching to extravagance. They said, "Christ is coming, therefore the day of the Lord is immediately at hand." They belonged to that order of fanatics who are always raving about "the signs of the times" and pretending to know what will happen within the next twenty years. There were impostors of that sort in Paul's day and there are such impostors now. Believe them not. They can see no more of the future than blind horses. I put them all together as impostors, whether they are preachers or literary hacks, for no man knows the future and no man can tell his fellows about it. I care no more for their explanations of prophecy than for the pretended winking of the eyes of the Madonna—yet they will continue the cheat and will be saying one thing this time and another that—that this and that wonder shall happen and that terrible judgments shall overwhelm our nation. The apostle would not have the Thessalonians disturbed in their minds by fears about the future. Brethren in Christ, the most terrible fact of the future can be no just cause of alarm to a true believer. The Lord comforts His people and there is nothing in His plans or purposes which is intended to disquiet them. You may rest assured that if any doctrine in the Bible prevents a godly man from enjoying peace it must be because he has not yet understood it fully or else has mistaken its bearing towards himself. Truth must minister peace to true men. All truth, whether doctrinal or prophetic, are on the side of the children of God. How can it be otherwise? The apostle tells the Thessalonians not to be disturbed about the coming of Christ. "The Lord be with you all," says he, and if the Lord is with us, what matters it to us whether He personally comes at once or chooses to delay? We should be looking for His coming, but not with alarm, for the fact that He has come, already, is a wellspring of delight. We glory in His first advent and do not dread the second. Since we are already raised up into the heavenly places to sit with Him by faith, what matters it to us whether He is up there or down here or whether we are in heaven or on earth, so long as we abide in Him? There may arise, possibly there will arise, wild fanatics who will again spread alarming news about wars and rumors of wars and select some fatal year as the end of all things. Well, if such things should be, if crowds should go into the wilderness or into the city to look for the coming of Christ, believe them not, but sit still in peace and tranquility of spirit and say, "My soul loves Him and He loves me. He cannot mean ill to me whether He destroys the earth or spares it. Though the heavens pass away and the earth itself melt with fervent heat, my heart is resting in her Lord and knows herself to be secure." Thus the Lord saves His people from the disturbance caused by false teaching.

There were also in the church disorderly characters, people that went about spreading idle tales and gossiping. They would not do anything for a living and so they set people by the ears. But when the Lord gives a Christian deep spiritual peace within, he soon puts aside the small nuisances of idle tongues

and disorderly deeds. He refuses to be worried. Mosquitoes buzz around every Christian church and blessed is the man who does not feel their bite or heed their buzzing. His soul shall dwell at ease. Peace from church troublers is a great blessing and we ought to praise God for it when we are in the enjoyment of it, for strife within the church, like civil war, is the worst of warfare. O to live in holy love and unbroken concord in reference to all our fellow Christians. May the Lord of peace grant us this.

Thus, you see, the peace which is here spoken of has many sides to it. May you possess it in all its forms, modes, and phases, and may your spirit enter into the peace of God which passes all understanding.

II. Now, secondly, let us note THE SPECIAL DESIRABLENESS OF PEACE. It is a very great thing for a soul to realize perfect peace, for if it does not do so, it must miss the joy and comfort and blessedness of the Christian life. God never meant His children to be like thistledown, blown about with every breath, nor as a football, hurled to and fro by every foot. He meant us to be a happy, restful, established people. The cattle eat the grass, but they are not fattened till they lie down and ruminate in peace—the Lord makes His people to feed and to lie down in quietness. You do not know the gospel, dear friends, if you have not obtained peace through it. Peace is the juice, the essence, the soul of the gospel. Doctrines are clusters, but you have never trod them in the winepress, you have never quaffed the flowing juice of their grapes if you have not peacefully considered divine truth in the quiet of your heart.

Without peace you cannot grow. A shepherd may find good pasture for his flock, but if his sheep are hunted about by wild dogs, so that they cannot rest, they will become mere skin and bones. The Lord's lambs cannot grow if they are worried and harried—they must enjoy the rest wherewith the Lord makes the weary to rest. If your soul is always sighing, moaning, and questioning its interest in Christ; if you are always in suspense as to what doctrine is true and what is false, if there is nothing established and settled about you, you will never come to the fullness of the stature of a man in Christ Jesus.

Neither without peace can you bear much fruit, if any. If a tree is frequently transplanted, you cannot reasonably look for many golden apples upon its boughs. The man who has no root-hold, who neither believes, nor grasps, nor enjoys the gospel, can never know what it is to be steadfast and unmovable; neither will he be always abounding in the work of the Lord.

We know, too, some who, because they have no conscious peace with God, lack all stability and are the prey of error. That doctrine can soon be driven out of a man's head which affords no light and comfort to his heart. If you derive no sweetness from what you believe, I should not marvel if you soon begin to doubt it. The power of the gospel is its best evidence to the soul—a man always believes in that which he enjoys. Only make a truth to be a man's spiritual food, let it be marrow and fatness to him, and I guarantee you he will believe it. When truth becomes to a proud carnal mind what the manna became to murmuring Israel, namely, light bread that his soul abhors, then the puffed up intellect cries after something more pleasing to the flesh, but to the mind which hungers and thirsts after righteousness, the gospel is so soul-satisfying that it never wearies of it.

Brethren, you must have peace for your soul's health. What a difference there is between a soul at peace and a soul continually tossed about! I have seen one man's heart like a country whose hedges are broken down, whose walls are laid level with the ground, where irrigation is neglected, where tilling has ceased, where the vines are untrimmed, where the fields are unplowed, and all because there is a perpetual sound of war in the soul and the song of peace is never heard. Such a soul may be likened to the Holy Land beneath Turkish rule where no man has rest and consequently the highways lie waste and the gardens are a desert. But I have seen another man's life which has grown up under the influence of holy peace, from whom God has kept back the wandering Arabs of doubt and fear, and to whom He has given a settled government of grace and an establishment in steadfastness and quiet assurance and lo, that man has been as the land which flows with milk and honey. As war spends and peace gathers the riches of nations, so does inward strife devour us, while spiritual peace makes the soul fat. Even as Palestine, when it abounded in corn and wine and oil, could nourish Tyre and Sidon, which border thereon, even so does the man who is rich towards God through internal peace become a feeder of other souls till even they who are but borderers upon Immanuel's land obtain a blessing. Beloved, I would that every Christian knew this soul-enriching peace to the full. I am sorry to meet with so many who "hope" they are

believers and “trust” they are saved, but they are not sure. Ah, brethren, in these matters we must get beyond mere hopes. We must reach to certainties. “Ifs” and “buts” are terrible in the things which concern the soul and eternity. We must have plain and unquestionable security here, divine security applied to the soul itself by the Holy Spirit. Friend, you are either saved this morning or you are not saved. Either you are in the love of God or you are not. Either you are secure of heaven or you are not—one of the two. I beseech you, do not let these things be in jeopardy—chance anything rather than your soul. Cry mightily to God that you may have these things fixed, certain, positive, beyond all dispute, for then shall your soul enjoy peace with God and so shall you become strong, useful, and happy.

III. Now, thirdly, we shall get into the very heart of our text while we consider for a minute or two THE ONLY PERSON FROM WHOM THIS PEACE MUST COME, “Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace.” Who is this “Lord of peace” but the Lord Jesus, the Prince of peace, born into the world when there was peace all over the world? It was but a little interval in which the gates of the temple of war were closed, and lo, Jesus came to Bethlehem and angels sang, “Peace on earth.” He came to establish an empire of peace which shall be universal and under whose influence they shall hang the useless helmet high and study war no more. “The Prince of peace!” How blessed is the title! So was it written of old by Isaiah, and Paul, the true successor of Isaiah, changing but a word, now speaks of, “the Lord of peace.” This is He who, being in Himself essential peace, undertook to be the Father’s great Ambassador, and having made peace by the blood of His cross, ended the strife between man and his offended Maker. This is He who is our peace—who has made Jew and Gentile one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition which stood between us. This is the Lord who, when He stood in the midst of His disciples, gave them peace by saying, “Peace be unto you.” And this is He, who in His departure made His last will and testament and wrote therein this grand legacy, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world gives give I unto you.” This is that Lord of peace to whom it is part of His nature and office to give peace.

I want to call particular attention to the apostle’s words in this place. He does not say, “May the Lord of peace send His angel to give you peace.” It were a great mercy if He did and we might be as glad as Jacob was at Mahanaim, when the angels of God met him. He does not even say, “May the Lord of peace send His minister to give you peace.” If He did, we might be as happy as Abraham when Melchizedek refreshed him with bread and wine. He does not even say, “May the Lord of peace at the communion table, or in reading the Word, or in prayer, or in some other sacred exercise give you peace.” In all these we might well be as refreshed as Israel was at Elim, where wells and palm trees gladdened the tribes. But he says, “The Lord of peace *Himself* give you peace,” as if He alone in His own person, could give peace, and as if His presence were the sole means of such a divine peace as he desires.

“The Lord of peace Himself give you peace.” The words are inexpressibly sweet to me. If you will think for a minute you will see that we never obtain peace except from the Lord Himself. What after all in your worst times will bring you peace? I will tell you. “This man shall be the peace.” To me it has often afforded great peace to think of His mysterious person. He is a man tempted in all points like as I am, a man who knows every grief of the soul and every pain of the body, hence His tender sympathy and power to succor. Have you not often derived peace from that sweet reflection? You know you have. His person then is a source of peace. And have you not been rested in your soul by meditating upon His death? You have viewed Him wounded, bleeding, dying on the tree and insensibly to yourself, a wondrous calm has stolen over your heart and you have felt pacified concerning all things. Yes, Jesus is Himself that bundle of myrrh and spice from which peace flows like a sweet perfume. When He comes very near your heart and lays bare His wounds and speaks His love home to you, making you feel its divine fervency, when He assures you that you are one with Him, united to Him in an everlasting wedlock, which knows of no divorce—then it is that your soul is steeped in peace. This is an experiential business and no mere words can express it. “The Lord of peace Himself give you peace”—this, I say, He does mainly by manifesting Himself to the heart of His servants.

Then notice that the text says, “*Give* you peace,” not merely offer it to you, or argue with you that you ought to have peace, or show you the grounds of peace, but, “give you peace.” He has the power to breathe peace into the heart, to create peace in the soul, and lull the spirit into that sweet sleep of the beloved which is the peculiar gift of heaven. “I will give you rest,” said He and He can and will do it.

"The Lord be with you all"—as much as to say, "That is what I mean." I pray that Jesus may be with you, for if He is present, you must enjoy peace. Let the sea rage and let every timber of the ship be strained—yes, let her leak till between each timber there yawns a hungry mouth to swallow you up quick—yet when Jesus arises He will rebuke the winds and the waves and there will be a great calm. "It is I, be not afraid," is enough to create peace at once. May you always know this peace which Jesus alone can give.

IV. Now I must conclude with the fourth head which is a consideration of THE SWEEP OF THE PRAYER, "The Lord of peace Himself give you peace *always*." What! Always at peace? Yes, that is what the apostle desires for you. May you have peace given you *always*. "Well, sir, I feel very happy on Sabbath-days. I have such peace that I wish I could have a week of Sundays." May the Lord Himself give you peace *always*, on all the weekdays as well as on the Lord's days. "Truly, I have been very happy of late," says one, "God has prospered us and everyone has been very loving in the family. But I do not know how I should be if I had an awkward husband and unruly children." Sister, I will tell you what I want you to be—I would have you restful under all circumstances— "The Lord of peace give you peace always." "I enjoy such peace in the prayer meeting," says one. I want you to have peace in the workshop also. "I have peace when I get alone with my Bible," cries another. We pray that you may have equal peace when you are troubled with the ledger, tired with those unpaid bills and dull trade, and cross currents of business. You need peace always. Our friends who are commonly called Quakers have, as a rule, set us a fine example of calm, dignified quietness and peace. How undisturbed they generally appear. Whatever they fail in, they certainly excel in a certain peacefulness of manner which I hope is the index of calm enjoyed within. Numbers of professors are very fretful, excitable, agitated, hasty, and fickle. It should not be so, brethren. You ought to have more weight about you, more grace, more solidity. Your soul's affairs are all right, are they not? All is right forever—everything is signed, sealed, and delivered—the covenant is ordered in all things and sure and everything is in divine hands for our good. Well, then, why not let us be as happy as the angels are? Why are we troubled? Is there anything worth shedding a tear for, now that all is well for eternity? Our want of peace arises from the fact that we have not realized the fullness of our text. "The Lord of peace Himself give you peace always." He can always give you peace, for He never changes. There is always the same reason for peace. You may always go to Him for peace and He is always ready to bestow it. Oh that we might always possess it!

Notice, again, it is written, "May the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always *by all means*." Can He give us peace by all means? I know He can give us peace by some means, but can all means be made subservient to this end? Some agencies evidently work towards peace, but can He give us peace by opposing forces? Yes, certainly. He can give peace by the bitter as well as by the sweet, peace by the storm as well as by the calm, peace by loss as well as by gain, peace by death as well as by life. For notice there are two grand ways of giving us peace and one is by taking away all that disquiets us. Here is a man who frets because he does not make money or because he has lost much of his wealth. Suppose the Lord takes away from him all covetousness, all greed of gain, all love of the world—is he not at once filled with peace? He is at peace not because he has more money, but because he has less of grasping desires. Another man is very ambitious. He wants to be somebody. He must be great and yet he never will be and therefore he is restless. Suppose the grace of God should humble him and take away his lofty aspirations so that he only wishes to be and to do what the Lord wills? Do you not see how readily he rests? Another man has an angry temper and is soon put out—the Lord does not alter the people that are round about him, but He changes the man himself—makes him quiet, ready to forgive and of a gentle spirit. What peace the man now feels! Another person has had an envious eye—he did not like to see others prosper and if others were better off than himself, he always thought hardly of them. The Lord wrings that bitter drop of envy out of his heart and now see how peaceful he is—he is glad to see others advanced and if he is tried himself it helps to make him happy to think that others are more favored. It is a great blessing when the Lord removes the disturbing elements from the heart. Even curiosity may be a source of unrest. Many are a great deal worried by curiosity. I have sometimes wanted to know why the Lord does this and that with me. Blessed be His name, I am resolved not to question Him any more in that fashion. Somebody prayed the other day that I might see the reason why the Lord has lately afflicted me. I hope the brother will not pray that any more, for I do not want to know the Lord's reasons—why

should I? I know He has done right and I will not dishonor Him by catechizing Him and wanting Him to explain Himself to a poor worm. This is where the mischief has been with most of us, that we have wanted to see how this and that can be right. Why should we? If God conceals a thing, let us be anxious to keep it concealed. A servant was passing through a street with a dish that was curiously covered. There met him a fellow who said, "I am most anxious to know what your lord has put in that dish, for he has so carefully covered it." But the servant said, "Therefore should you not desire to know, for seeing my lord has so carefully covered it, it is clear that it is no business of yours." So whenever providence puzzles you, take it as a sign that the Lord does not mean you to understand it and be content to take it upon faith. When curiosity and other restless things are gone, peace is enjoyed.

Then the Lord has ways of giving us peace by making discoveries of Himself. Some of you do not know as yet the things which would give you peace. For instance, if you did but know that He loved you from before the foundation of the world and that whom once He loves, He never leaves, you who are now afraid that you have fallen from grace would obtain strong consolation. Ay, and if you understood the grand doctrine of the divine decree and saw that the Lord will not fail nor be discouraged, nor turn aside from one jot or tittle of His purpose, then you would see how you, poor insignificant believers though you are, are one stitch in the great fabric that must not be suffered to drop or else the whole fabric would be marred. You would understand how the eternal purpose ordered in wisdom and backed up with sovereign power guarantees your salvation as much as it does the glory of God and so you would have peace.

Many a soul has not the peace it might have because it does not fully understand the atoning blood. The great doctrine of substitution is not seen in all its length and breadth by some minds. But when they come to see Christ standing in the place of His chosen, made sin for them, and the chosen standing in Christ's place, "the righteousness of God in Him," then will their peace be like a river. The grand truth of the union of the saints with Christ, if it is once understood, what a means of peace it is! He that believes in Christ is one with Him, a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones, one with Christ by eternal and indissoluble union, even as the Father is One with the Son. If this is known, together with the doctrine of the covenant, the attribute of immutability, the eternal purpose, and the marriage union between Christ and His elect, deep peace must be enjoyed, like the calm of heaven, like the bliss of immortality.

But there are some to whom this peace cannot come, some concerning whom the Lord says, "What have you to do with peace?" "There is no peace, says my God, unto the wicked." Your works, your prayers, your repentances—none of these can bring you peace. As for the world and the pleasures thereof, they are destructive to all hope of peace. Come this day and believe in the great sacrifice which God Himself has prepared in the person of His crucified Son. Come look into Emanuel's face and read where peace is to be found. Come to the great gash in Jesus' side and see the cleft of the rock where God's elect abide in peace. Trust in Jesus and you shall begin a peace which shall widen and deepen into the peace of God which passes all understanding, which shall keep your hearts and minds by Christ Jesus. Amen.

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