

PEACE BY BELIEVING NO. 510

A SERMON
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*“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
Romans 5:1.*

A MOMENT’S contemplation would suffice to awaken any man to the terror of the position involved in being at war with God. For a *subject* to be in a state of sedition against a powerful monarch is to commit treason and to incur the forfeiture of his life. But for a *creature* to be in arms against its Creator; for a *thing* that depends for its existence upon the will of God—to be at enmity with the God in whose hand its breath is; for a soul to know that God, who is terrible in His power, and Almighty to protect or to destroy, is his foe; that He whose anger endures forever, and His wrath burns even unto the lowest hell, is his chief and grand enemy—this is an appalling thing, indeed! Could any man but understand and realize this, smitten through with terrors as great as those which surprised Belshazzar when he saw the handwriting on the wall, he would cry out in anguish, and he would make a thrilling appeal for mercy. God is against you, O sinful man! God is against you, O you who have never submitted yourself unto His word! God is against you! And woe unto you when He shall tear you in pieces, for none can deliver you out of His hands! Happy! Happy beyond all description is the man who can say with our Apostle, “We have peace with God.” But wretched! Wretched, again, beyond all description! Wretched must that man be who is at war with his own Maker, and sees heaven itself in arms against him!

Chiefly, now, we shall endeavor to talk of *the peace which the believer enjoys*; and then I shall have *a few words of counsel, warning, and encouragement for those who have not this peace with God, or who may have had it, but for a time have lost the enjoyment of it.*

I. In speaking of THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH THE CHRISTIAN ENJOYS, we will commence with some remarks upon its basis.

There is the widest possible difference between a man being just in his own eyes, and his being *justified* in the sight of God. Yet, perhaps no fallacy is more common than to mistake the one for the other. Then, as a natural consequence of building on a weak foundation, the structure, however fair to look upon, is insecure. The *peace* in which multitudes of professors delight themselves is merely peace with their own conscience, and not in any sense peace with God. I know of no greater contrast than there is between that peace which is a mere stagnation of thought, a lull of anxiety, or blindness to danger, and that soul-satisfying peace which passes all understanding! The true peace of God flows like a river in unceasing activity; it preserves a tranquil frame amidst storm, tempest, and tribulation—by all of which it is frequently assaulted. It is a part of the armor of God with which a Christian is clothed, to withstand principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickedness in the evil day. Or, to change the figure, Christ gave His disciples this peace as a charm, when, as He was about Himself to depart, and go to the Father, He sent them forth to be buffeted about in the world. Just so in the text, if you pursue the subject in the next few verses, you will find that this peace with God is first given, and afterwards comes experience of tribulations everywhere else. We ourselves, brothers and sisters, have proved it. There is a natural disposition of sin to defile, but the blood of Christ speaks peace in the conscience; there is a constant tendency of the world to destroy our hope, but the peaceful word of Jesus comforts us; “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”—there is a painful proneness of human strength to fail, but the promise supports us—“This man shall be the peace when the Assyrian comes into our land.” And this true peace gives to the believer an inward sense of God’s acceptance. As Moses never lost sight of the goodwill of the Dweller in the bush, so, too, there is a more blessed assurance of goodwill in the faith that always realizes, “God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.”

And now, as to the experimental basis of that peace which the believer has with his God—it must have some solid rational ground; it must have some basis which judgment may estimate. I know some who have an apprehension of peace with God that has no foundation whatever. Let me describe the person. “Are you living in peace with God, my friend?” “Yes,” he says, “thank God, I have enjoyed a sense of peace for 20 years.” “How did you get it?” “Well, as I was walking one day, in great distress of mind, on such-and-such a road, a feeling of comfort came over me, and it has remained with me ever since.” “Yes, but, friend, what is the reason of your hope? What is the ground of your confidence that you have peace with God?” “Well, you see, I felt comfortable, and I believe that I have felt comfortable ever since.” “No, no. That’s not the matter at which I aim. What is the *ground*? What is the doctrinal proof? What is the matter of fact that gives you comfort?” “Well, do not press me,” he says, “for I do not know. Only this I know—I did feel happy, and I have felt happy ever since, and I have not had any doubt.” That man, mark you, if I am not mistaken, is under a delusion! If I err not, it is very possible that that man has received a draught of the opium of hell! Satan has said to him, “Peace, peace,” where there is no peace, and he is going undisturbed, and quiet, down to the place where he shall lift up his eyes and discover too late his error! The peace of a Christian is not such a lull of stupefaction as that. It has a reason; it has some groundwork; and when you come to pull it to pieces, it is as completely a logical inference from certain facts as any deduction that could be drawn by mathematical precision! Let me, however, bring up a few more who think they have peace but build their supposition on wrong grounds. Here is a man who very flippantly and joyously says, “Peace with God, sir? Yes, peace with God—I enjoy the unbroken satisfaction that I have made my peace with Him.” “Well, how?” “Why, you see, some years ago I never went to a place of worship on Sunday at all, and I felt one day that I was doing wrong. Here was I going to the theater most nights, and I was doing my trade in a very bad way, and now and then I took too much drink. I was doing a great many things that were wrong, and I thought it was time for me to turn over a new leaf, and I have done so. Now I generally go to a place of worship twice on the Sunday. I may now and then indulge myself—well, who is there who never does anything wrong? But still there is very great amendment in me; if you ask my wife, she sees a wonderful change; and if you ask my employees, they will say I am a different man from what I used to be! Now, I think I am not like the man you brought up just now, with no ground for his peace. I think I have a very good ground for mine, for I am very well deserving of my Maker now. I feel now, if I go to a place of amusement where I ought not, I cannot pray that night; but the next night I try over again, and manage to get through my form of prayer, and on the whole I am doing so well that I think I may say I have a good bottom and ground for saying that I am at peace with God.” Now, let this man be reminded that it is written, “By the works of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight.” All these moral things of which he has spoken are good enough in themselves. They will be very excellent in the temple of Christianity if they are placed at the top; but, if they are used as foundations, a builder might as well use tiles and slates and chimney-pots for foundations and cornerstones as use these reformatory actions as a ground of dependence!

Man! Do you not perceive that your foundation is not an even and secure one? What about the past? What is to become of the sins already committed? How are you to get rid of these? Do you suppose that the payment of future debts will discharge old liabilities? Go to your tradesman, and tell him that you owe him a very great sum of money, and you cannot pay him a farthing of it. Do you expect he will not sue you in court because you never intend to get into his debt again? I think he will tell you that is not a method of business he understands! Certainly this is not the way in which God will deal with you! Your old sins! Your *old* sins! Your OLD sins! What about those? Those unpaid debts? Those crimes as yet unburied? Let your conscience give them a resurrection in your memory tonight. What about these? Surely you can have no peace with God while these remain unforgiven! Besides, you have an inward conviction that you have not peace with *God*, but only peace with yourself. You do feel a little better sometimes, but it is a very poor sort of confidence that you have, for a little sickness shakes it. How would you like to die now? Would you wrap yourself up in these miserable rags of yours and say, “Lord, You know I have sinned, but then I have done my best to make up for it.” You know and feel that this bed is shorter than a man can stretch himself on, and this blanket too narrow for a man to wrap him-

self in. Renounce this confidence, for it is one that will never stand before God! To give an instance of yet another case—one in which I tread on more delicate ground. Beloved, there are some who have peace which they explain to you in such a way that while I trust they have a peace with God, I fear they misunderstand the ground of it. Some true Christians will talk to you in this way—“I hope I am at peace with God now, for my faith is in active exercise; my love is fervent; I have delightful seasons in prayer; the eyes of my hope are no longer dim, and my patience can endure many things for Christ! My courage did not fail me yesterday in the midst of Christ’s enemies; my graces are vigorous; the Spirit of God has been blowing across my soul as over a garden; and all the graces, like flowers, have yielded their best perfume, and therefore I feel that I have peace with God.” Oh, believer, believer! Are you so foolish as having begun in the Spirit by faith, to be made perfect in the flesh by your own doing? Remember, if you have peace, if you put your peace here upon your graces, then there will come another day—perhaps it may come tomorrow—when all those graces will droop like withered flowers, yielding no perfume! Instead of beauty there shall be baldness; instead of ornament there shall be decay; a day when you shall see yourself in your true natural colors, and discover yourself, like Job, and cry out as he did, “Lord, I am vile!” What will you do, then, with your peace? Why, if you have begun to look to your graces in any way for peace, then you are looking to a fickle source! You are going to the cistern, instead of living by the fountain! You are using Hagar’s bottle, instead of sitting like Isaac at the well to drink from never-ceasing streams. Yet this is an evil into which we are so apt to fall after having done well for the Master, and being helped to serve Him. It is true we do not trust in these things. I hope God has delivered us from self-righteousness; yet there is just that, “Now I *must* be a child of God—now I *must* truly be an heir of heaven—for look how I have been sanctified! Mark how I have been edified and built up in the faith.” Ah, brothers and sisters, there is the cloven foot there! Be on your guard, it is an unclean thing; it will bring you into pain and bondage; it will make you sick, and put your feet in the stocks, and thrust you into the inner dungeon before long. Flee from it as you would from a serpent. Stand always under the dear cross of Christ, looking up to His wounds, rejoicing in His all-sufficiency, and building your peace there and there alone!

I fear, too, that there are not a few who, I trust, have genuine peace, but who, nevertheless, are tempted to found their confidence upon their enjoyments. We have our enjoyments—God be thanked for this. Oh, there are times when our communion is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ! We have not been into heaven, but we have heard some of the songs of the angels on the other side the pearly gates, or, if not the songs, we have heard the echo of them in our hearts. There are times when we have been in prayer, and our soul has been like the chariots of Aminadab, swift and strong. We have had our seasons, as it were, of witnessing the transfiguration! We can remember Tabor’s mount—well can we remember the hill Mizar, and the Hermonites—for there He spoke with us; we have had our experience of Jacob’s dream, as well as our fellowship with Jacob’s wrestling; we have seen the Lord, and by faith have put our finger into the print of the nails, and thrust our hand into His side; He has kissed us with the kisses of His love, and His love is better than wine. But the tendency is to say, “Now I *have* peace with God; now I *must* be reconciled to Him; now I will press out the wine of comfort from these grapes.” If we do this, let us remember that perhaps tomorrow we may be in Gethsemane! We may have our times of agonizing and fruitless prayer; we may be in the valley of despondency, or in the blacker valley of the shadow of death—no present joys, no promises applied with power, no whispers of Christ’s love, no sweets of His covenant, no delighting ourselves in the Lord—all may be dark and dreary—well, what then? Ah, my brothers and sisters, we shall find ourselves weak, because we have taken our *comforts* to be the basis of our peace, instead of continuing to look solely and only to *Christ!* Let me warn you, beloved, though this may not seem a case as dangerous as some others, yet let me warn you that it is essential to our comfort that we should stand to this and to this only—being *justified by faith* we have peace with God! Our peace is solely the result of a justification achieved through faith, and not the result of enjoyments, or of graces, much less of good works, or of any foolish irrational impression which we may think we have been favored with!

Where, then, does the Christian’s conviction of his peace lie with God? Well it lies in this—that he is justified by faith. The process is plain. It is as clear, I say, as a proposition in Euclid. Christ stood in my place before God. I was a sinner doomed to die; Christ took my place; He died for me. Well, then, how

can I perish? How can I be punished for offenses which have been punished already in the person of my substitute? God demands of me to keep His law perfectly; I cannot do it. Christ has done it for me—kept the law—magnified it, made it honorable. What more can God demand of me? I, a sinner, am washed in Jesus' blood! I, guilty, am clothed in Jesus' righteousness. You ask, "How? I cannot see it is so." True, it is so by *faith*! God says that he who *believes* in Christ shall be saved—I believe in Christ—therefore I am saved. He says, "He who believes on Him is not condemned." I believe on Him; therefore I am not condemned—this is clear reasoning! Very well, then, the man who has believed in Christ has his sins forgiven, and the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and therefore he is at peace with God. Now this is reasoning which no logic can deny! There is a rebel—first he is pardoned, next merit is imputed to him—and he is at peace with his king and a rebel no longer. There is a child; he has offended; his father takes him, accepts him for his elder brother's sake, and he is at peace with his father. The thing is clear enough! Here is a reason for the hope that is within us, which we may give with meekness and fear! It is true, never with diffidence and timidity! We may venture to give it in the presence of the old dragon, and defy him to break its force. We might give it, even, in the midst of a congregation of assembled demons and defy them, if they can, to break its power. We may give it in the presence of the Eternal God, for He will never deny the word on which He has caused us to hope. "Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." It stands forever. Stand here and you stand so fast that no howling tempest of temptation can sweep you down! Stand to this, that Christ has finished your salvation for you, that He has done everything that omnipotent justice can ask; He has endured all the penalty, drained the cup of wrath, obeyed the law completely, given to divine equity all it can demand—and therefore, believing in His name, standing in His righteousness, accented in His suretyship—you must have peace with God! This is the basis of the Christian's peace—one on which he may sleep or wake, live or die—and live eternally, without condemnation or separation from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord!

Continuing our remarks on this subject, we shall now turn your attention to the channel of this peace. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God *through our Lord Jesus Christ*."

Take it for a certain fact, then, that we are justified as the result of what Christ has done for us, seeing that He "was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification." And the experience, insofar as we have assurance of our being personally justified, is the result of our trusting Christ. What then? How are we to enjoy the comfort of it? There are times when we begin to doubt whether we are justified. Brothers and sisters, we must not come to our *faith* to get comfort, but to the primary *cause* of our justification; the channel through which the comfort comes is *Jesus Christ*. So then, though justification by faith, is, in itself, a well of comfort, even from that well we cannot get it, except we use *Christ*—who dug the well—to be the bucket to draw the water up from its depths. It must come through Christ! I will suppose, then, that I am in doubt and fear tonight, and need to get my peace restored—how shall I seek it? Through Jesus Christ, the surety and substitute Himself! How? First, by believing in Christ all over again, just as I did at the first. Christ tells me that He came to save sinners, I am a sinner, therefore He came to save me. He says He can save me. This looks reasonable. He is very God; He is perfect man; He has suffered and offered a complete atonement. He tells me He is *willing* to save me. This also appears reasonable, for why else should He die, if He did not wish to save? Then He tells me if I will trust Him, He will save me. I trust Him, and I have not the shadow of a doubt that He will be as good as His word. If He is faithful and just—of which who dares to breathe a suspicion?—this soul of mine, in heaven, must be! It is committed to the Redeemer's charge with every pledge that God can give, with more security than we could ever ask; in Him I trust—in Jesus, and in Jesus, only! Brothers and sisters, this is how you must get your peace with God tonight—through Jesus Christ—by going to Him, by a simple faith, just as you went at the first. Some silly people who have got high doctrine in their heads, so high that it smells offensive in the nostrils of those who read the Scriptures—they say we teach that man is saved by mere believing. We do—by mere believing! There is a poor, starving man over there. I give him bread—his life is spared. Why do not these people say this man was saved by mere eating—by mere eating! And here is another person whose tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth by thirst, and is

ready to die. I give him water, and he drinks, and his eyes sparkle—and the man is saved by mere drinking. And look at ourselves—why do we not drop down dead in our pews? Just stop your breath a little while and see. Surely we all live by mere breathing! All these operations of nature that touch the vital mysteries may be sneered at as merely this, or merely that; and in like manner to speak with disparagement of “mere believing” is stupid nonsense! And yet, let me say it in my sense of the term—we are saved, we are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ by mere believing—by the simple act of trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ! And if I would get my peace made more full and perfect, having come to Christ by faith, I must continue to get peace from Him by meditation upon Him, for the more I go to Christ believingly, the deeper will my peace be! If I believe in Christ, and do not know much of Him, my faith will necessarily be somewhat slender, but if I continue “to comprehend with all saints what are the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge,” then my little faith will become strong faith; the bruised reed shall become a cedar, and the smoking flax shall become a beacon flaming to the very skies!

I must take care, above all, that I cultivate communion with Christ, for though that can never be the *basis* of my peace—mark that—yet it will be the *channel* of it! If I live near to Christ, I shall not know fear. What sheep is afraid of the wolf when it is close to the shepherd’s hands? What child fears when it hangs upon its mother’s breast? Who should know fear when he is covered with the eternal wings, and underneath him are the everlasting arms? “While His left hand is under my head, and His right hand does embrace me,” I cannot but be at peace, and that peace, if my communion is continued, will be like a river—deep and broad—my righteousness being like the waves of the sea! It is Christ, the substance of my salvation! Christ, the sum of all my hope! Christ who performs all things for me and Christ made of God all things to me! As Christ was the first means of giving us peace, so He must still be the golden conduit through which all peace with God must flow to our believing hearts, and all this through the act of merely believing, or merely trusting in Him! By looking to Him I drew all the faith which inspired me with confidence in His grace. And the word that first drew my soul—“Look unto Me”—still rings its clarion note in my ears. There I once found conversion, and there I shall often find refreshing and renewal!

Having thus glanced at the basis of our peace, and the channel through which it flows, let us pass on to notice its *certainty*. I like to read these rolling sentences of Paul, without an “if” or a “but” in them—“Therefore, being justified, we have peace with God.” He talks as logically as if he was a mathematician, and as positively as though he could see the thing written before his eyes! Oh, how different is this from the way in which some talk—“I hope,” “I trust,” “I sometimes hope my poor soul may have peace with God.” Now where this language is genuine, it deserves sympathy—but I believe in many cases it is insincere. There is a certain class of professors who think strong faith is pride, and doubts and fears are humility; therefore they look upon these base-born thorns as though they were choice flowers, and they will cull them together like a bouquet of nettles and noxious weeds—a fool’s bouquet of flowers! Have you ever seen it in the magazines? I have observed it very frequently, or they will dig up a nasty ugly thorn, put it in a flower pot, place it in an ornamental situation, display it outside the window, and call you all to admire it, as being a special, a wonderful piece of Christian experience! Well, one likes to see a thorn when it is developed to the highest degree, but as soon as seen, one likes to see it burned—and so with these doubts and fears—it is very well for us to know how far doubting and fearing may go, but we think we would like to have them plucked up by the roots and destroyed as soon as possible. Let those who are the subjects of these doubts be sympathized and cheered, but let their doubts and fears be utterly rooted out! O Christian brothers and sisters, it is not impudence, it is not presumption to believe what God tells you! If he says “You *are* justified,” do not say “I *hope* I am.” If I should say to some poor man—one terribly poor—“I will pay your rent for you tomorrow,” and he should say, “Well, well, I hope you will,” I would not be pleased with him. If you should say to your child tomorrow morning, “Well, William, I shall buy you a new suit of clothes today,” and he should say, “Well, Father, I sometimes hope you will, I humbly trust, I hope I may say, though I sometimes doubt and fear, yet I hope I may say I believe you,” you would not encourage such a child as that in his uncomely suspicions! Why should we talk thus to our dear Father who is in heaven? He says to us, “I give unto you eternal life, and you shall never perish, neither shall any pluck you out of My hand.” Is it humility for us to reply, “Fa-

ther, I do not believe You, I do not think it is possible”? Oh, no! That is true humility which sits at the feet of the Promiser because he is humble—looks up into the face of the Promiser because He is trustful—and dotes on the word of the promise, because it is sincere! He *will* perform it! Away with you, you fiends that make me doubt! His honor is engaged to the carrying out of His covenant; He *will* perform it! He says by faith in Christ I am justified, therefore I say, I am justified, and have peace with God, nor shall anyone stop me of this glory—I have peace with God through Jesus Christ! I would like to hear you all talking in this way, and getting rid of that old Babylonian jargon of “ifs” and “buts” and doubts and fears! Be fully persuaded that what He has promised, He will fulfill, as those who *do* believe what God has said, just because He has said it. Here is the certainty of justification by faith!

And now, as to the effect produced. When a man can say he has peace with God—what then? Why, the first effect is JOY. Who can be at peace with God, and have Him for a Father, and yet be miserable? I think I told you one night that, years ago, I was waited upon by a woman who wished to convert me to a novel sect that had come up with a false prophet at its head. She talked much and talked long, and talked all to no purpose. At last I told her I thought it best that she should tell me her way in which she wished to be saved, on condition that she would let me tell her mine. I need not tell you what *she* said, but I said, “This is how I hope to be saved—it is said in God’s Word, ‘This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.’ And it is also written, ‘He who believes on Him shall be saved.’ Now, I do trust in Him, and I believe that, therefore, I shall be saved; no, more, I *am* saved and my sins are all forgiven! A perfect righteousness, namely, that of Christ, is cast about me, and I am so saved today that nothing by any possibility shall ever destroy me; I am saved forever.” The woman said, “If I believed that that were true, I would very gladly give up my faith for anything so bright as that. But you,” she said, “you ought to be the happiest man in the world.” And I said, “I thank you for that word and so will I be, God helping me, for I ought to be; I have the utmost cause.” And so should every believer feel he ought to be, because this great salvation, this solid hope, this rocky foundation for our everlasting peace should give us quiet, and calm, and security, till our joy should overflow and become anticipation and a foretaste of the joy of heaven! This peace should give the believer, beyond, and in addition to his joy, a calm resignation, no, a delightful acquiescence in his Father’s will. Now smite me if You will, my Father, for I am Your friend, and You are mine; now send the flames, for it shall only chasten, but cannot kill; now take away my goods, for You are my All, and I cannot lose You; now let the floods of trouble come, for You are my ark, and though the floods come around me higher and higher, still I shall abide in You, secure from reach of harm, while You shut me in! Thus with calm composure the believer walks along over life’s hills and dales; and when he comes to the valley of the shadow of death, he fears no evil, for his God is with him, His rod and His staff do comfort him. What fear is there to the man that is at peace with God? Life?—God provides for it. Death?—Christ has destroyed it. The grave?—Christ has rolled away the stone and broken the seal. Affliction, tribulation, famine, peril, or the sword? “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who has loved us.” To have peace with God, beloved, I cannot tell you what innumerable streams of good shall flow to you from this ocean of pleasure, and these rivers of delight! I have but skimmed over one of these placid streams. There are hundreds of blessed practical results that are sure to follow from a certain conviction of our peace with God through Jesus Christ.

II. In drawing to a close, I want to address myself to THREE CHARACTERS THAT I HAVE NO DOUBT ARE REPRESENTED HERE IN THIS LARGE CONGREGATION.

There is a man here tonight—I know he is here, though I do not know his name—a man who many years ago was a professor of religion. He has never been easy in his conscience since he forsook the ways of God. There has been some trembling hope sometimes in him that there was a little life, not quite extinct, and since he has come in here, he feels quite like a stranger in the house of prayer, where once faces were so familiar, and there is, perhaps, a groaning in his spirit as he says, “O, that I knew the way of peace, and the sense of peace for which in happier days I once inquired; I have lost my roll, if I ever had it; I have lost my character, and with my character, my faith—and with my faith my hope! Can I ever be at peace with God?” Backslider, if you have ever been called by divine grace, let me ask you this question. Do you remember the time when you had a hope? Say, did not memory revive before you that

time, when on your knees in agony, you did cry unto Him who hears prayer, and the mercy came, and your spirit rejoiced in pardon bought with blood? Man, do you remember it? The tears are on your cheeks now. You were not a hypocrite—let us hope that it was not all hypocrisy—not all a lie and a delusion. You did feel, then, that Christ could save, and you did trust yourself with Him. Now then, man, do the same tonight—and the dew of your youth will be restored unto you! Your leprosy is white upon your brow, but wash in Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall come again unto you, even as a little child! Jehovah seeks you; He cries unto you tonight, and by the lips of His ambassador says, “Return, O backsliding children, return unto Me, for I am married unto you, says the Lord. You have wearied Me with your sins, you have made Me to serve with your iniquities, but I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My name’s sake, and will not remember your sins.”—

*“To your Father’s bosom pressed,
Once again a child confessed!
From His house no more to roam.
Come, and welcome, sinner come!”*

“Oh, but I have forsaken Him.” Lay aside your “buts” and “ifs.” He bids you come. Away with you, you doubts and fears, and black despairing thoughts! The sinner comes, and Jesus meets him; there is the kiss of His love. “Take off his rags, clothe him, put shoes upon his feet, bring forth the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry, for this, My son, which was dead, is alive again, he was lost and is found.” O, I wish I could persuade you—though you are growing old now—I wish I could persuade you to fling yourself at the foot of His dear cross again! His hands are still nailed—He has not moved them yet; His feet are still fast—He has not stirred from the place where He waits for you—His arms still open wide. O, believe Him! He is still love, and the blood is still mighty, and the plea in heaven is still all-prevailing. “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved.”

Then I wanted to have said a word to some here who are not exactly backsliders, but they have lost their peace for a little time. Many young Christians are subject to these little fits in which their evidence gets dark, and they lose their peace. I have no need to say more to you, brothers and sisters, while you are walking in darkness and see no light. “Let him trust,” is a prophetic admonition—it shall be mine tonight. When you cannot see a single reason why you should be saved except that God says you shall, let that be enough for you! When you have nothing here, or there, or anywhere to look to; when there is no hope for you except in that Man whose wounds are bleeding, always think that is enough—because it is—and come to Christ just as you came at first. I find it very convenient to come every day to Christ as a sinner—as I came at first. “You are no saint,” says the devil. Well, if I am not, I am a sinner—and Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Sink or swim, there I go— I have no other hope—

*“And when your eyes of faith are dim,
Still trust in Jesus, sink or swim!
And at His footstool bow your knee,
For Israel’s God your peace shall be.”*

On Christ with all my weight I lean; and as I throw myself upon my bed to sleep, so on Christ will I stretch myself full length to rest—for He is able and He is willing; and if He can fail, then He fails me and fails all His Church; but if He cannot, then I shall see His face in glory everlasting!

By your leave, I must have two or three words with those who never had peace. I shall be brief. I have no doubt I address many here who never had faith, and you want it. I ask you, first of all, not to seek peace at all as the first object, for if you want peace before you get divine grace, you want the flower before you get the root—and you will be apt to be like little children who, when they have a piece of garden given them, will go and pluck up the flowers out of their father’s bed, and put the flowers into their own ground, and then say, “What a nice garden I have!” But to their dismay, on the morrow all is withered. Better put the roots in, and wait a week or two till they sprout—and then the flowers will be living ones, not borrowed ones! Do not seek after peace first. Seek after CHRIST first! Peace will come next. Still, I pray you, do not think that peace is a qualification for divine grace. If you fancy this, you will be in error, indeed; you are to come to Christ as Nicodemus did, by night, that is, in the night of your ignorance, in the night of your fear and trouble. You must come just as you are, bringing nothing to Christ, but coming empty-handed—no money, no price, no fee, “nothing to pay”—He asks of

you nothing but that you would take all gratis from His liberal hand. And will you please remember that if you put your eyes on anything *but* Christ, or anything *with* Christ—so as to disturb your whole thought and attention from being directed exclusively to Him—then peace will be an impossibility to you! If your eye is single, your whole body shall be full of the light of God, but if you mix another trust, and so your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness! Do not trust your *repentance!* Do not trust your *faith!* Do not rely upon your *feelings!* Do not depend upon your *knowledge!*—above all do not depend upon your sense of *need!* Do not come to Christ as a *sensible sinner!*—do not come trusting Christ, feeling that you are a man who has a *right* to come—that you answer to a certain character that *may* come, but come because you are a *sinner;* because you have *nothing* to recommend you; because if God should search you through and through, He could not find a point in you, a spot in you large enough to put the point of a pin upon that which was good! Come because you are vile, to be pardoned. Come because you are black in sin, to be washed. Come because you are penniless, to be made rich. Look for nothing else except Christ. Write this for your motto—“None but Jesus.” Oh, men and women, and brothers and sisters, if those Israelites of old, who were inside their houses that night, had gone outside to the lintel of their doorpost and said, “Now here is this lintel made of very common wood, we will paint and grain it.” And if they had then gone inside and trusted to the painting and graining of the lintel, the destroying angel would have found them out and destroyed them! If, again, they had said, “We will write up our name over the door—it is a respectable name—we will record the list of our charities and good works over the door,” the plague-angel would have smitten through the whole, and there would have been a wailing through the house as through the houses of the Egyptians. But what did they do? They took the *blood.* They marked the lintel and the two side posts and smeared them with a crimsoned stain. Then in they went, and sat contentedly down—or stood at last in peace—and ate the passover with joy. And, while the shrieks of Egypt went up in the cold midnight air, the sons of Israel went up also into heaven, for the angel of death, when He spread His wings on the blast, had seen the blood and by that mark He knew that He must pass by that habitation and smite none that were there. The word of the Lord was not, “When I see your *faith,*” but, “When I see the *blood,* I will pass over you.”

Oh, soul, if you trust Christ, the blood is on your brow tonight, and before the eyes of God no condemnation! Why, then, need you fear? You are safe, for the blood secures every soul that once is sheltered thereby. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved; but if you believe not, trust where you may, you shall be damned! God help you to believe in Christ for His name’s sake. Amen.

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