

SPIRITUAL PEACE

NO. 300

A SERMON
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 AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.”
John 14:27.

OUR Lord was now about to die, to depart from this world, and to ascend to His Father; He therefore makes His will; and this is the blessed legacy which He leaves to the faithful—“peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.”

We may rest well assured that this testament of our Lord Jesus Christ is valid. You have here His own signature. It is signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of the 11 apostles, who are faithful and true witnesses. ‘Tis true a testament is not in force while the testator lives, but Jesus Christ has died, once and for all, and now none can dispute His legacy. The will is in force, because the testator has died. It may however, sometimes happen that a testator’s wishes in a will may be disregarded and *he*, powerless beneath the sod, is quite unable to rise and demand that his last will should be carried out. But our Lord Jesus Christ who died, and therefore made His will valid, rose again and now He lives to see every stipulation of it carried out! And this blessed codicil, “peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you,” is sure to all the blood-bought seed. Peace is theirs and must be theirs, because He died and put the will in force and lives to see the will fulfilled.

The donation, the blessed legacy which our Lord has here left, is His peace. This might be considered as being peace with all the creatures. God has made a league of peace between His people and the whole universe. “For you shall be in league with the stones of the field—and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you.” “All things work together for good to them who love God.” Providence that was once estranged, and seemed to work counter to our welfare, has now become at peace with us. The wheels revolve in happy order and bear us blessings as often as they turn. The words of our Lord may also refer to the peace which exists among the people of God toward one another. There is a peace of God which reigns in our hearts through Jesus Christ, by which we are bound in closest ties of unity and concord to every other child of God whom we may meet within our pilgrimage here below. Leaving, however, these two sorts of peace, which I believe to be comprehended in the legacy, let us proceed to consider two kinds of peace, which in our experience resolve themselves into one and which are surely the richest part of this benediction! Our Savior here means peace *with God*, and *peace with our own conscience*. There is first, peace with God, for He “has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ.” He has put away the wall which separated us from Jehovah and now there is “peace on earth” and “goodwill toward men.” When sin is put away, God has no cause of warfare against His creature—Christ has put *our sins* away and, therefore, there is a virtual substantial peace established between God and our souls. This, however, might exist without our clearly understanding and rejoicing in it. Christ has therefore left us peace in the conscience. Peace with God is the treaty; peace in the conscience is the publication of it. Peace with God is the fountain, and peace with conscience is the crystal stream which issues from it. There is a peace decreed in the court of divine justice in heaven; and then there follows as a necessary consequence, as soon as the news is known, a peace in the minor court of human judgment wherein conscience sits upon the throne to judge us according to our works.

The legacy, then, of Christ is a twofold peace—a peace of friendship, of agreement, of love, of everlasting union between the elect and God. It is next a peace of sweet enjoyment, of quiet rest of the understanding and the conscience. When there are no winds above, there will be no tempests below. When heaven is serene, earth is quiet. Conscience reflects the complacency of God. “Therefore being justified

by faith, we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom also we have received the atonement.”

I propose this morning, if God the Holy Spirit shall graciously assist, to speak of this peace thus—first, its *secret groundwork*; then its *noble nature*; thirdly, its *blessed effects*; fourthly, its *interruptions, and means of maintenance*. And then I shall close by some words of *solemn warning* to those of you who have never enjoyed peace with God and consequently never have had true peace with yourselves.

I. First, then, THE PEACE WHICH A TRUE CHRISTIAN ENJOYS WITH GOD AND HIS CONSCIENCE HAS A SOLID GROUNDWORK TO REST UPON. It is not built upon a pleasing fiction of his imagination—a delusive dream of his ignorance—but it is built on facts, on positive truths, on essential truths. It is founded upon a rock; and though the rains descend and the winds blow and the floods beat upon that house, it shall not fall, because its foundation is secure. When a man has faith *in the blood of Christ*, there is but little wonder that he has peace, for indeed he is fully warranted in enjoying the most profound calm which mortal heart can know. For thus he reasons with himself—God has said, “He who believes is justified from all things,” and, moreover, that, “he who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ *shall be saved*. Now, my faith is unfeignedly fixed in the great substitutionary sacrifice of Christ—therefore I am now justified from all things and stand accepted in Christ as a believer.” The necessary consequence of that is, that he possesses peace of mind. If God has punished Christ in my place, He will not punish me again. “Being once purged I have no more conscience of sin.” Under the Jewish ceremonial, mention was made of sin every year. The atoning lamb must be slaughtered a thousand times, but “This man, having made one atonement for sins, forever sat down at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens.” How, I ask, can the man tremble who believes himself forgiven? It were strange, indeed, if his faith did not breathe a holy calm into his bosom.

Again—the child of God receives his peace from another golden pipe—for a *sense of pardon has been shed abroad in his soul*. He not only believes his forgiveness from the testimony of God, but he has a sense of pardon. Do any of you know what this is? It is something more than a belief in Christ; it is the cream of faith, the full ripe fruit of believing. It is a high and special privilege which God gives after faith. If I have not that sense of pardon, I am still bound to believe and then, believing, I shall, by-and-by, advance to the seeing of that which I believed and hoped for. The Holy Spirit sometimes sheds abroad in the believer a consciousness that he is forgiven; by mysterious agency He fills the soul with the light of glory. If all the false witnesses on earth should rise up and tell the man at that time that God is not reconciled to him—that his sins remain unforgiven—he would be able to laugh them to scorn—“For,” he says, “the love of God is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit.” He *feels* that he is reconciled to God. He has come from faith up to enjoyment and every power of his soul feels the divine Dew as it gently distils from heaven. The understanding feels it, it is enlightened; the will feels it, it is subjected to the will of God; the heart feels it, it is fired with holy love; the hope feels it, for it looks forward to the day when the whole man shall be made like its covenant head, Jesus Christ. Every flower in the garden of humanity feels the sweet south wind of the Spirit, as it blows upon it and causes the sweet spices to send forth their perfume. What wonder, then, that man has peace with God when the Holy Spirit becomes a royal tenant of the heart, with all His glorious train of blessings! Ah, poor tried soul, what peace and unspeakable joy would reign in your soul if you did but believe on Christ! “Yes,” you say, “but I want God to manifest to me that I am forgiven.” Poor soul, He will not do that at once. He bids you believe Christ, first, and then He will make manifest to you the pardon of your sin. It is by *faith* we are saved, not by enjoyment! But when I believe Christ and take Him at His word, even when my feelings seem to contradict my faith, then, as a gracious reward, He will honor my faith by giving me to feel that which I once believed when I did not feel it.

The believer also enjoys, in favored seasons, such an *intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ* that he cannot but be at peace. Oh, there are sweet words which Christ whispers in the ears of His people! And there are love visits which He pays to them, which a man would not believe even though it should be told unto him. You must know for yourselves what it is to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. There is such a thing as Christ manifesting Himself to us as He does not unto the world; all black and frightful thoughts are banished. “I am my Beloved’s, and my Beloved is mine.”

This is the one all-absorbing feeling of the spirit. And what wonder is it, that the believer has peace when Christ thus dwells in his heart and reigns there without a rival, so that he knows no man, save Jesus only! It was a miracle of miracles if we did not have peace! And the strangest thing in Christian experience is that our peace is not more continued and the only explanation of our misery is that our communion is broken, that our fellowship is marred, else would our peace be like a river and our righteousness like the waves of the sea!

That venerable man of God, Joseph Irons, who but a little while ago ascended to our Father in heaven, says, “What wonder that a Christian has peace *when he carries the title-deeds of heaven in his bosom!*” This is another solid groundwork of confidence. We know that heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people and the Christian can sometimes cry with the apostles, “Thanks be unto the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Feeling that God has given him the meetness, he discovers that this preparation is a warrant for the hope that he shall enter into the dwelling place of the glorified! He can lift his eyes above and say, “Yon bright world is mine; my entailed inheritance; life keeps me from it, but death shall bring me to it. My sins cannot destroy the heaven-written indentures, heaven is mine! Satan himself cannot shut me out of it. I must, I shall be where Jesus is, for after Him my spirit longs and to Him my soul is knit.” Oh, brothers and sisters, it is not a marvel when all is blest within and all is calm above, that justified men possess, “a peace with God which passes all understanding.”

You will perhaps be saying, well, but the Christian has troubles like other men—losses in business, deaths in his family and sickness of body! Yes, but he has another groundwork for his peace—*an assurance of the faithfulness and covenant fidelity of his God and Father*. He believes that God is a faithful God—that whom He has loved, He will not cast away. All the dark Providences to him are but blessings in disguise. When his cup is bitter, he believes it is mixed by love and it must all end well, for God secures the ultimate result. Therefore come foul, come fair, come all weathers, his soul shelters itself beneath the twin wings of the faithfulness and power of his Covenant God! The sanctified spirit is so resigned to his Father’s will that he will not murmur. To him, as Madame Guyon was known to say—“It is equal whether love ordain his life or death, appoint him weal or woe.” He is content to take just what his Father sends him, knowing that his Father understands him better than he understands himself. He gives up the helm of his ship to the hand of a gracious God; and he is enabled to fall asleep softly in the cabin. He believes that his Captain has power over winds and waves; and when he sometimes feels his ship rocking in the storm, he cries with Herbert—

*“Though winds and waves assault my keel,
He does preserve it. He does steer,
Even when the boat seems most to reel!
Storms are the triumph of His art;
Sure, He may hide His face, but not His heart.”*

No wonder, then, that he has peace, when he can feel this and knows that He who has begun the good work, has both the will and the power to perfect it, unto the day of Christ!

II. Having hurriedly unveiled the secret groundwork of the Christian’s peace, we must dwell for a few minutes upon ITS NOBLE CHARACTER.

The peace of other men is ignoble and base. Their peace is born in the outskirts of sin. Self-conceit and ignorance are its parents. The man knows not what he is and, therefore, thinks himself to be something—when he is nothing. He says—“I am rich and increased in goods,” while he is naked and poor and miserable. Not such is the birth of the Christian’s peace. That is born of the Spirit. It is a peace which God the Father gives, for He is the God of all peace. It is a peace which Jesus Christ bought, for He has made peace with His blood and He is our peace. And it is a peace which the Holy Spirit works—He is its author and its founder in the soul.

Our peace then, is God’s own child and God-like is its character. His Spirit is its sire and it is like its Father. It is “*My peace,*” says Christ! Not man’s peace, but the unruffled calm—the profound peace of the eternal Son of God! Oh, if we had but this one thing within our bosoms, this divine peace, a Christian was a glorious thing, indeed! And even now kings and mighty men of this world are as nothing

when once compared with the Christian, for he wears a jewel in his heart which all the world could not buy—a jewel fashioned from old eternity and ordained by sovereign grace to be the high blessing, the right royal inheritance of the chosen sons of God!

This peace, then, is divine in its origin. And it is also divine in its nourishment. It is a peace which the world cannot give; and it cannot contribute towards its maintenance. The daintiest morsels that ever carnal sense fed upon would be bitter to the mouth of this sweet peace. You may bring your much fine corn, your sweet wine and your flowing oil; your dainties tempt us not, for this peace feeds upon angels' food and it cannot relish any food that grows on earth! If you should give a Christian 10 times as much riches as he has, you would not cause him 10 times as much peace; but probably, 10 times more distress. You might magnify him in honor, or strengthen him with health—yet neither would his honor or his health contribute to his peace, for that peace flows from a divine source, and there are no tributary streams from the hills of earth to feed that divine current! The stream flows from the throne of God and by God, alone, is it sustained.

It is, then, a peace divinely born and divinely nourished. And let me again remark, it is a peace that *lives above circumstances*. The world has tried hard to put an end to the Christian's peace and it has never been able to accomplish it. I remember, in my early childhood, having heard an old man utter in prayer, a saying which stuck by me—"O Lord, give unto your servants that peace which the world can neither give nor take away." Ah, the whole might of our enemies cannot take it away! Poverty cannot destroy it! The Christian in his rags can have peace with God; sickness cannot mar it. Lying on his bed, the saint is joyful in the midst of the fires. Persecution cannot ruin it, for persecution cannot separate the believer from Christ—and while he is one with Christ, his soul is full of peace. "Put your hand here," said the martyr to his executioner, when he was led to the stake, "put your hand here and now put your hand on your own heart and feel which beats the hardest and which is the most troubled." Strangely was the executioner struck with awe, when he found the Christian man as calm as though he were going to a wedding feast, while he had all agitation at having to perform so desperate a deed. Oh, world! We *defy* you to rob us of our peace! We did not get it from you and you can not take it from us; it is set as a seal upon our arm; it is strong as death and invincible as the grave. Your stream, O Jordan, cannot drown it, black and deep though your depths may be. In the midst of your tremendous billows our soul is confident and rests still on Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. Frequently have I had to remark that Christians placed in the most unfavorable circumstances are, as a rule, better Christians than those who are placed in favorable positions. In the midst of a very large church of persons in all ranks, with the condition of most of whom I am as thoroughly conversant as man can well be, I have observed that the women who come from houses where they have ungodly husbands and trying children—that the young people who come from workshops where they are opposed and laughed at—that the people who come from the depths of poverty, from the dens and borders of our city, are the brightest jewels that are set in the crown of the church! It seems as if God would defeat nature—not only make the hyssop grow on the wall, but make the cedar grow there, too—He finds His brightest pearls in the darkest waters and brings up His most precious jewels from the filthiest dunghills—

*“Wonders of grace to God belong,
Repeat His mercies in your song.”*

And this I have found, too, that often the more disturbed a Christian is, the purer is his peace. The heavier the rolling swell his griefs and sorrow, the more still and calm and profound is the peace that reigns within his heart. So then, it is peace divinely born, divinely nourished and one which is quite above the influence of this poor whirling world!

Further, I must remark briefly upon the nature of this peace, that it *is profound and real*. "The peace of God," says an apostle, "that passes all understanding." This peace not only fills all the senses to the brim till every power is satiated with delight, but it fills the understanding which can take in the whole world and understand many things which are not within the range of vision—even the understanding cannot take in the length and the breadth of this peace! And not only will the understanding fail to compass it, but all understanding is outdone; when our judgment has exerted itself to the utmost, it cannot comprehend the heights and depths of this profound peace. Have you ever imagined what must be the

stillness of the caverns in the depth of the seas a thousand fathoms beneath the bosom of the floods, where the mariners' bones lie undisturbed? Where pearls are born and corals that never see the light—where the long lost gold and silver of the merchants lie sprinkled on the sandy floor? Down in the rock caves and the silent palaces of darkness where waves dash not and the intruding foot of the diver has never trodden? As clear, as calm as all this is the peace of God, the placid rest of the assured believer! Or lift up your eyes to the stars. Have you ever dreamed a sweet dream of the quietude of those noiseless orbs? Let us mount beyond the realm of noise and riot—let us tread the noiseless highway of the silent orbs. The thunders are far below us, the confused tumult of the crowd defiles not the sanctity of this wondrous quiet. See how the stars sleep on their golden couches, or only open their bright eyes to keep watch upon that stormless sea of ether and guard the solemn boundaries of the reign of peace. Such is the peace and calm that reigns in the Christian's bosom. "Sweet calm," one calls it. "Perfect peace," David styles it. Another one calls it, "Great peace." "Great peace have all they who love Your law, and nothing shall offend them." Last year—I tell you now a secret of my own heart—I had one text which thrust itself upon my remembrance many times a day. I dreamed of it when I slept. When I awoke it went with me and I verified it and rejoiced in it—"His soul shall dwell at ease." It is my promise now. There is such an ease—quite consistent with labor, with agony for the souls of men, with an earnest desire for yet greater attainments in the divine life. There is such an ease—it is not to be gained by all the appliances of luxury, by all the aggrandizement of wealth—an ease in which "not a wave of trouble rolls across the peaceful breast." All is calm and all is clear and all is joy and love. May we always dwell in that serene atmosphere and never lose our hold of this peace!

Lest there should be any of you who do not understand what I have said, I will try and say it over again briefly in an example. Do you see that man? He has been taken up before a cruel tribunal. He is condemned to die. The hour draws near—he is taken to prison and placed there with two soldiers to guard him and four soldiers outside the door. The night comes on—he lies down, but in how uncomfortable a position! Chained between two soldiers! He lies down and he falls asleep—not the sleep of the guilty criminal, whose very sense of dread makes his eyelids heavy; but a calm sleep which is given by God and which ends in an angelic vision, by which he is delivered. Peter sleeps, when the death sentence is above his head and the sword is ready to penetrate his soul! See another picture? There are Paul and Silas yonder—they have been preaching and their feet are thrust in the stocks for it. They will die on the morrow. But in the midnight they sing praises unto God and the prisoners hear them. One would have thought in such a loathsome dungeon as that, they would have groaned and moaned all night long, or that at best they might have slept; but no, they sang praises to God and the prisoners heard them! There is the peace—the calm, the quietude of the heir of heaven! I might give you another picture—of our ancient Non-conformists, in the days of that most persecuting Queen Elizabeth. She cast into prison among very many others, two of our forefathers, of the name of Greenwood and Barrow. They were caused to lie in that loathsome stinking dungeon—the Clink Prison—shut in one huge room with maniacs, murderers, felons and the like—compelled to listen to their frightful conversation. One day there came a warrant that they must die. The two men were led out and tied to the cart and were about to be taken away to death. But they were no sooner outside the gate than a messenger rode up. The Queen had sent a reprieve! They were taken back; calmly and quietly they returned to their prison. And the next day they were taken to Newgate and, just as suddenly, there come a second messenger, to say they must be taken away to Tyburn to die. They were again tied to the cart. They ascended the scaffold; the ropes were put round their necks, and they were allowed to stand in that position and address the assembled multitude and bear witness to the liberty of Christ's church and to the right of private judgment among men. They concluded their speech and a second time that wretched Queen sent them a reprieve, and they were taken back a second time to the dungeon, and there they lay in Newgate. But only for few days more and then a third time they were taken out and this time they were hanged in reality. But they went as cheerfully to the scaffold on each occasion as men go to their beds and seemed as joyous, as though they were going to a crown, rather than to a halter! Such specimens all the churches of Christ can show! Wherever there has been a true Christian, the world has tried its best to put out his peace; but it is a peace that never can be quenched—it will live on! With halter about its neck, with the hot pincers tear-

ing away its flesh, with the sword in its very bones, it will live, till, mounting from the burning bush of earth, this bird of paradise shall wear its glittering plumage in the midst of the garden of paradise!

III. Having detained you longer on this point than I thought I should do, I hasten to the third point, **THE EFFECTS OF THIS DIVINE PEACE.**

The blessed effects of this divine peace are, first of all, *joy*. You will notice that the words, “joy,” and, “peace,” are continually put together; for joy without peace were an unhallowed and an unhappy joy—the crackling of thorns under a pot; unsound, mere flames of joy, but not the red glowing coals of bliss. Now, divine peace gives joy to the Christian. And such joy! Have you ever seen the first gleam of joy when it has come into the eyes of the penitent? It has been my happy lot to pray with many a convicted sinner; to witness the deep agony of spirit and deeply sympathize with the poor creature in his trouble for sin. I have prayed and have exhorted to faith and I have seen that flash of joy, when at last the hopeful word was spoken, “I do believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart.” Oh, that look of joy! It is as if the gates of heaven had been opened for a moment and some flash of glory had blazed upon the eyes and had been reflected from there! I remember my own joy, when I first had peace with God. I thought I could dance all the way home! I could understand what John Bunyan said, when he declared he wanted to tell the crows on the plowed land all about it. He was too full to hold, he felt he must tell someone! Oh, there was joy in the household that day, when all heard that the eldest son had found a Savior and knew himself to be forgiven—bliss compared with which all earth’s joys are less than nothing and vanity! As the counterfeit to the real coin, so are the base joys of earth to the real joy which springs from peace with God! Young man! Young woman! If you would have bliss such as you never knew before, you must be reconciled to God through the blood of Christ; for till then, real joy and lasting pleasure you will never know.

The first effect of this peace, then, is joy. Then follows another—*love*. He who is at peace with God through the blood of Christ is compelled to love Him who died for him. “Precious Jesus!” he cries, “help me to serve You! Take me as I am and make me something. Use me in Your cause. Send me to the farthest part of the green earth, if You will, to tell sinners the way of salvation. I will cheerfully go, for my peace fans the flame of love, that all that I am and all I have shall be, *must* be, forever Yours.”

Then next, there comes an anxiety after *holiness*. He who is at peace with God does not wish to go into sin; for he is careful lest he should lose that peace. He is like a woman that has escaped from a burning house. He is afraid of every candle afterwards—lest he should come again into the like danger. He walks humbly with his God, constrained by grace, this sweet fruit of the Spirit, peace, leads him to endeavor to keep all the commandments of God, and to serve his Lord with all his might.

Then again, this peace will help us *to bear affliction*. Paul describes it as a shoe. As he says, “Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” It enables us to tread on the sharpest flints of sorrow, yes, on adders and on serpents, also. It gives us power to walk over the briars of this world and our feet are not wounded. We tread the fires and we are not burned. This divine shoe of peace makes us walk without weariness and run without fainting. I can do all things when my soul is at peace with God! There are no sufferings that shall move my soul to pain—no terrors that shall blanch my cheek—there are no wounds that shall compel me to a humiliating fear when my spirit is at peace with God! It makes a man a giant—swells the dwarf to a Goliath size; he becomes mightiest of the mighty. And while the weaklings creep about this little earth, bowed down to the very dust, he strides it like a Colossus! God has made him great and mighty, because He has filled his soul with peace and with overflowing joy!

More might I tell you of the blessed effects of this peace, but I shall be content, after I have simply noticed that this peace gives boldness at the throne and access to a Father’s mercy seat. We feel we are reconciled and, therefore, we stand no longer at a distance—but we come up to Him—even to His knees! We spread our needs before Him; plead our cause, and rest satisfied of success—because there is no enmity in our Father’s heart to us, and none in ours to Him. We are one with God and He is one with us, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

IV. And now I have a practical duty to perform and with this I shall close after having said a few words to those who know nothing of this peace. The practical remarks I have to make are upon the subject of **INTERRUPTIONS OF PEACE.**

All Christians have a right to perfect peace, but they have not all the possession of it. There are times when gloomy doubts prevail and we fear to say that God is ours. We lose a consciousness of pardon and we grope in the noonday as in the night. How is this? I think these interruptions may be owing to one of four causes.

Sometimes they are due to the *ferocious temptations of Satan*. There are periods when with unexampled cruelty Satan assaults the children of God. It is not to be expected that they will maintain perfect peace while they are fighting with Apollyon! When poor Christian was wounded in his head and in his hands and in his feet, no wonder that he groaned exceedingly and as Bunyan has it, "I never saw him all the while give so much as one pleasant look, till he perceived he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged sword. Then, indeed, he did smile and look upward. But it was the most dreadful fight that ever I saw." Mark, there is no such thing as a disturbance of the reality of the peace between God and the soul; for God is always at peace with those who are reconciled to Him by Christ. But there is a disturbance of the *enjoyment* of that peace, and that is often effected by the howling of that great dog of hell. He comes against us with all his might, with his mouth open ready to swallow us up; and were it not for divine mercy he would do so! It is but little marvel that sometimes our peace is affected, when Satan is fierce in his temptations.

At another time a lack of peace may arise from *ignorance*. I do not wonder that a man who believes Arminian doctrine, for instance, has little peace. There is nothing in the doctrine to give him any! It is a bone without marrow; it is a religion that seems to me to be cold, sapless, with no marrow, fruitless—bitter and not sweet. There is nothing about it but the whip of the law. There are no grand certainties—no glorious facts of covenant Love, of discriminating grace, of Almighty faithfulness and suretyship engagements. I will never quarrel with the man who can live on such stones and scorpions as conditional election, haphazard redemption, questionable perseverance and unavailing regeneration! There may be some, I suppose, who can live on this dry meat; if they can live on it, be it so. But I believe many of our doubts and fears arise from doctrinal ignorance. You have not, perhaps, a clear view of that covenant made between the Father and His glorious Son, Jesus Christ. You do not know how to spell the word, "gospel," without mixing up the word, "law," in it. Perhaps you have not learned fully to look out of self to Christ for everything; you do not know how to distinguish between Sanctification, which varies, and Justification, which is permanent. Many believers have not come to discern between the work of the Spirit and the work of the Son. And what marvel, if you are ignorant, that you sometimes lack peace? Learn more of that precious Book and your peace shall be more continual.

Then again, this peace is usually marred by *sin*. God hides His face behind the clouds of dust which His own flock makes as they travel along the road of this world. We sin and then we sorrow for it. God still loves His child, even when he sins, but He will not let the child know it. That child's name is in the family register, but the Father clasps up the book and will not let him read it till he thoroughly repents again and comes back once more to Jesus Christ. If you can have peace and yet live in sin, mark this—you are unrenewed! If you can live in iniquity and yet have peace in your conscience—your conscience is seared and dead! But the Christian—when he sins—he begins to smart. If not at the very moment he falls, it is not long before his Father's rod is on his back and he begins to cry—

*"Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and His Word?"*

Once more—our peace may be interrupted also by *unbelief*. Indeed, this is the sharpest knife of the four, and will most readily cut the golden thread of our enjoyments!

And now, if you would maintain unbroken peace, take advice from God's minister this morning, young though he is in years. Take advice, which he can warrant to be good, for it is Scriptural. If you would keep your peace continual and unbroken, look always to the sacrifice of Christ. Never permit your eyes to turn to anything but Jesus. When you repent, my hearer, still keep your eyes on the cross; when you labor, labor in the strength of the Crucified One. Everything you do, whether it is self-examination, fasting, meditation, or prayer, do all under the shadow of Jesus' cross; or otherwise, live as

you will, your peace will be but a sorry thing; you shall be full of disquiet and of sore trouble. Live near the cross and your peace shall be continual!

Another piece of advice. Walk humbly with your God. Peace is a jewel. God puts it on your finger—be *proud* of it—and He will take it off again. Peace is a noble garment—*boast* of your clothes—and God will take them away from you! Remember the hole of the pit from where you were dug and the quarry of manure from where you were hewn! And when you have the bright crown of peace on your head, remember your sin-black feet! No, even when that crown is there, cover it and your face with those two wings, the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ! In this way shall your peace be maintained.

And again—walk in boldness, avoid every appearance of evil. “Be not conformed to this world.” Stand up for truth of God and morality. Suffer not the maxims of men to sway your judgment. Seek the Holy Spirit that you may live like Christ, and live near to Christ, and your peace shall not be interrupted.

As for those of you who have never had peace with God, I can entertain but one sentiment towards you, namely, that of pity. Poor souls! Poor souls! Poor souls, who never knew the peace which Jesus Christ gives to His people! And my pity is all the more needed, because you do not pity yourselves. Ah, souls, the day is coming when that God to whom you are now an enemy, shall stare you in the face. You must see Him! And He is “a consuming fire.” You must look into that blazing furnace and sink and despair. And die. Die, did I say? Worse than that! You must be cast into the pit of damnation, where dying were a blessing that can never be granted! Oh, may God give you peace through His Son! If you are now convicted of sin, the exhortation is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Just as you are, you are bid to put your trust in Him who did die upon the cross. And if you do this, your sins shall all be forgiven, now, and you shall have peace with God; and, before long, you shall know it in your own conscience and rejoice! Oh, seek this peace and pursue it! And above all, seek the Peacemaker, Christ Jesus, and you shall be saved. God bless you for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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