

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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PEACE: A FACT AND A FEELING.

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## A Sermon

DELIVERED BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

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Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"—Romana v. 1.

WONDERFUL is the power of faith. In the Epistle to the Hebrews our apostle tells us of the marvellous exploits which it has wrought in subduing kingdoms and obtaining promises, in quenching the violence of fire and stopping the mouths of lions, in braving perils and doing deeds of prowess. Still, to us personally one of the most wonderful of its effects is that it brings us justification and consequent peace. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." If we know the justifying power of faith, and the way in which, like a hand, it puts upon us the matchless garment of the Saviour's righteousness, we shall value that faith as our first parents did the gracious hand of God which made for them coats of skins and therewith covered their nakedness. The little faith we have will make us crave for more; and every need we feel will make us long to prove its virtue in our own souls to meet our own personal case, by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Now, faith brings to the soul, according to the text, two blessings. It is not the creator of these things, but the conveyance, the channel, the conduit pipe through which these favours come to us. First, *it brings us a state of peace*—"being justified by faith"; and, secondly, *it brings us a sense of peace*—"we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"

I. Our first thoughts shall cluster about that most important of all matters—A STATE OF PEACE WITH GOD.

Naturally we have no peace. God is angry with us because we are sinful, and we are at variance with God because he is holy. God cannot agree with us—"Can two walk together except they be agreed?" And we cannot agree with God, for "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." There is a breach between the

rebellious creature and the righteous Creator. Sad that it should be so, but such is the case by nature with every man that is born of woman. We are set against the Lord. We kick against his providence, we rebel against his commands, we resist his Holy Spirit, we reject his love as manifested in the death of Christ, and we should live and die in this hostility if it were not for his almighty grace. Before ever we can enjoy peace within our hearts there must be a state of peace established between us and God. We must submit ourselves to the Lord, and he must forgive the past, and make with us a covenant of peace, or else there is no peace for us; for “there is no peace, saith my God, unto the wicked.”

Let me briefly explain to you the way in which we come to possess peace with God. We are criminals condemned, though we do not consider ourselves to be in such a critical condition. We persist that we are righteous, we decline to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the law, and we refuse to own the justice of its sentence. Therefore or ever we can have peace with God we must be brought into court, hear the indictment preferred against us, and be put on our trial. When thus arraigned we must put in our pleading. Dost thou say “Not guilty”? Then, man, thou challengest thine accuser to bring forward the evidence which will soon spoil thy conceit, and crush thee with its weight. But before there can be peace between us and God *we must with all our hearts plead “guilty.”* We must confess the truth, for God will never agree with liars, nor with those who indulge self-deception. He is a God of truth, and dissemblers can have no communion with him. Being guilty, we must take the place of the guilty: it is our proper position, and it is due to the judge of all the earth that we take it; to refuse to do so is contempt of court. There is mercy for a sinner, but there is no mercy for the man who will not own himself a sinner. “If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins”; but if any man say that he has no sin he is a liar, and the truth is not in him, and there cannot be peace between him and God while he is in that humour.

It seems a stern demand, and very galling for our pride, to have to stand in the dock, and in answer to the question, “Guilty or not guilty?” to reply, “Guilty, Lord, guilty. Whatever the consequences may be, guilty.” But to some of us it no longer seems to be hard, because we could not now plead otherwise. We are so conscious of our guilt that we cannot escape from a sense of it. “If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.” We cannot look upon a single day without being convinced of sin; and in reviewing our past lives from our childhood, we are over and over constrained to blush at the memory of our waywardness and our wilfulness, our perverseness and our provocation. The faults and the follies that have tracked our course haunt us, till our very looks would tell the truth though our

tongues were silent. To plead guilty has now become a positive though a painful relief to us; it is the ending of a vain show which we found it hard to keep up; it is coming to the bottom of the matter, and knowing the worst of our case. Dear hearer, before thou canst have peace with heaven thou must take up thy true position, and plead guilty. I pray the Holy Spirit to lead thee to do so. It is his work to convince us of sin, and if he shall exercise his divine office upon any of us we shall no longer profess like the Pharisee that we are not as other men, but like the publican we shall heartily pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Supposing that with confusion of face, contrition of heart, and aroused conscience we own and acknowledge our inexcusable guilt, *the next thing requisite to our peace is that we should admit the justice of the divine sentence*, and reverence instead of reviling the Judge of all the earth, against whom we have so grossly revolted. There are men who will say, "Yes, I am guilty and sinful, but still the penalty is out of proportion to my criminality; I cannot believe that God will deal so severely with the offences of his creatures." Now, however rational such reflections may sound they certainly are not acceptable with God. Of this thing, my friend, I warrant thee: if the Holy Spirit has ever shown thee sin in its natural hideousness and deformity, thou wilt think nothing too bad for it. Thou wilt cry from the depths of thy soul, "Let it be condemned, let it be punished." I would not, if I could, lift a finger to prevent God from punishing sin. Whatsoever a man soweth, that must he reap: the result of sin must follow its commission. The foundations of society would be undermined and there would be no living in the world if there were no laws, or if laws might be violated with impunity. There would indeed be no proof that there was a great Judge of all the earth if he did not do right; and if he does right, he must punish sin, for it ought to be punished. Were I the judge of quick and dead the first thing that I would do would be to condemn myself, for I deserve condemnation and punishment. Neither would it yield my heart the least comfort to be told that God could wink at sin. I want not such a God, neither could I endure to think that the law of righteousness was thus relaxed. My conscience would not be relieved of a sense of obligations I could not deny, nor of impurities I could not cleanse, nor of wrongs I could not rectify, by a suspicion that the Majesty of heaven had threatened a damnation which did not exist. I pray the Spirit of God to bring you, my hearer, not only to be convinced of sin, but of righteousness and of judgment to come. God is righteous in fixing a day in which he will judge the world by the man Christ Jesus, according to our gospel.

This appears to be a painful process, to be bound to confess your guilt, and then to bare your neck to the sword of vengeance, and to say, "Thou wilt be justified when thou judgest, and wilt be clear when thou condemnest; for against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight;" yet,

there cannot be any peace with God till we come to it: because there can be no peace with the God of truth where there is any prevarication. Lasting peace must be founded upon everlasting truth. The fact is, we are guilty, and we deserve the punishment which God apportions to guilt, and we must agree with that truth, grim as it looks, or else we cannot be friends with God.

The next essential to our receiving justification is this: the prisoner is guilty, sentence is pronounced, and he admits the righteousness of it; he is asked if he has anything to say why the sentence should not be executed, and he stands speechless: and now comes in the abounding mercy of *God, who, in order to our peace, finds a substitute to bear our penalty, and reveals to us this gracious fact.* He puts his Son into the sinner's place. Voluntarily doth the divine Saviour take upon himself our nature, and come under the law, and by a sovereign act Jehovah lays upon him the iniquity of us all. That sin having been laid on Christ, he has borne it and carried it away. In his own body he bore it on the tree. The transgressions of his people were made to meet upon his devoted person: those five wounds tell what he suffered, that marred countenance bears the tokens of his inward grief, and that cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" indicates to us, as far as we are able to understand it, what he endured when he stood in the sinner's stead, the sin-bearer and the sacrifice.

When the Lord enables the soul to perceive that Christ stood in its stead, then the work of appropriating the justification is going on. Christ died "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;" for he "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." He was "made a curse for us: as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Christ hath once suffered for sin, and this is the foundation of our peace.

The point wherein faith comes into contact with pardon is when faith believes that the Son of God did come and stand in the sinner's stead, and when faith accepts that substitution as a glorious boon of grace, and rests in it, and says, "Now I see how God is just, and smites Christ in my stead. Seeing he condemned me before I had personally sinned, because of Adam's sin, I see how he can absolve me, though I have no righteousness, because of Christ's righteousness. In another did I fall, and in another do I rise. By one Adam I was destroyed: by another Adam am I restored. I see it. I leap for joy as I see it, and I accept it as from the Lord."

This is not quite all, for now here stands the guilty one, who has owned the sentence, and he has seen the sentence executed upon another. What then? *He takes his place as no longer liable to that sentence.* The penalty cannot be exacted twice. It were neither in accord with human or divine righteousness that two individuals should be punished for the same offence unless both were guilty. When God devised the plan of substitution the full penalty

demand of the guiltless surety was clearly intended to bring exemption to the guilty sinners. That Jesus should suffer vicariously and yet those for whom he paid the quittance in drops of blood should obtain no acquittal could not be. When God laid sin upon Christ it must have been in the intent of his heart that he would never lay it on those for whom Christ died. So then there standeth the man who was once guilty, but he is no more condemned, because another has taken upon him the condemnation to which he was exposed. Still more, inasmuch as the Lord Jesus Christ came voluntarily under the law, obeyed the law, fulfilled the law, and made it honourable, according to the infinite purpose and will of God, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer. While Christ stands in the sinner's place, the believing sinner stands in Christ's place. As the Lord looked upon Christ as though he had been a sinner, though he was no sinner, and dealt with him as such, so now the Lord looks upon the believing sinner as though he were righteous, though indeed he has no righteousness of his own; and he loves him, and delights in his perfect comeliness, regarding him as covered with the mantle of his Redeemer's righteousness, and as having neither spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing.

This is wonderful doctrine, but it is the doctrine of the word of God. It is the doctrine whereon faith can feed and rest; and when faith receives it she says to the soul, "Soul, thou art free from sin, for Christ has borne thy sin in his own body on the tree. Soul, thou art righteous before God, for the righteousness of Christ is thine by imputation." Without any works of thine own thou art yet justified according to the righteousness of faith, even as faithful Abraham, of whom it is written, "He believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." This is a wonderful exchange, the putting of Christ where the sinner was, and of the sinner where Christ was. And, now, what does the court say? The court says, "Not guilty; absolved; acquitted." And what is the condition of the man towards God? Why, he can say—

"Now freed from sin, I walk at large;  
My Saviour's blood's my full discharge.  
At his dear feet my soul I lay,  
A sinner saved I'll homage pay."

Now do I love the Lord, and I know that the Lord loveth me."

By this process we have come to the truth before God, and we have dealt with each other on the line of truth. There has been no fabrication or falsehood. Justice has been vindicated, mercy has been magnified, and we are justly forgiven. Strange fusion of vehement grace and vindictive wrath! Behold how judgment and mercy have linked hands together in the person of the dying, bleeding, rising Son of God. This is the way by which we obtain justification.

The soul may well have a settled peace when it has realized and received such a justification as this, seeing it is a peace consistent with justice. The Lord has not winked at sin; he has not treated sin as if it were a trifle; the Lord has punished transgression and iniquity. The rod has been made to fall, and the blessed shoulders of our Lord have been made to smart under the infliction. If justice had never been satisfied the human conscience would not have been content. The proclamation of unconditional mercy would never have satisfied a human mind. If we had to preach to you that God forgave you irrespectively of an atonement, no awakened conscience would welcome the tidings; we should still have to confront the question, "Where is justice, then?" We should be unable to see how the law could be vindicated, or the moral government of God maintained. We are quite at rest, when we see that there is as much justice as there is mercy in the forgiveness of a believing soul, and that God is as glorious in holiness when he passes by sin as he would have been if he had cast the whole race into the abyss of unfathomable woe.

Nor need there be any morbid apprehension as to whether all the evidence that could be produced against us at our trial has been brought forward. Nobody can come in and say "Though you have been exonerated upon a partial trial, upon a more searching investigation your guilt could have been proved." We can reply, "But it was proved." There was the best of evidence to prove it, for we confessed it. There was no other evidence wanted, and nothing further could have been brought, since we pleaded guilty to every charge. If you bring any further accusation, we can only say that we pleaded guilty without reserve. It was all in the indictment; we did not attempt for a moment to cloak or conceal any guilt we had incurred. We confessed it all before the Lord, and owned to it; and since the Lord Jesus Christ took it all there is no cause for reopening the proceedings. There cannot be a second trial through a writ of error: the case is thoroughly disposed of; the prisoner has pleaded guilty to the capital charge, and has borne the utmost penalty of the law by his Substitute, which penalty God himself has accepted. His acquittal is such as he can rest upon with implicit reliance.

Moreover we know that, being justified, we are now at peace with God, because there cannot be any more demands made against us. All that was against us Christ took away. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." The death of our great Redeemer has abounding merit in it, seeing that he was the Son of God. All the transgressions and iniquities that could ever be raked up against us were all laid to his charge, and his atonement by one offering has put an end to them all. We are not afraid, therefore, that anything fresh will be raised against us.

Again, our acquittal is certified beyond all question, and the certificate is always producible. Somebody might say to a prisoner "How do you know

that you were acquitted?" He cannot produce any writing. On the record of the court it stands; and yet, mayhap, he has no means of access to the court record. But, beloved, you and I have a writ of acquittal which is always visible. Faith can see it tonight. "What is that?" say you. It is the risen Christ, for Jesus Christ" died for our sins, and rose again for our justification." You all know how that was. He was cast into the prison of the grave until it had been certified that our liabilities were fully discharged, and

"If Jesus ne'er had paid the debt  
He ne'er had been at freedom set."

He was our hostage, and his body was held in durance till it was certified that there was no further claim against any one of his people. That done, he rose again from the dead for our justification. He is at the Father's right hand, and he could not be there if any of our iniquity remained on him. He took our sin, but he has our sin no longer, for on the cross he discharged and annihilated it all so that it ceased to be, and he has gone into the glory as the representative and the substitute of his people, cleared from their imputed liabilities—clean delivered from anything that could be brought against him on their account. So long as we see the Lord Jesus sitting in the throne of glory, we may boldly ask, "Who is he that condemneth? Christ has died, yea rather, hath risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." We know our justification to be for ever complete, and beyond challenge, for Jesus keeps the place of acceptance for us.

And lastly, on this point, it was a justification from the very highest court. You know how it is in law: a matter may be decided in your favour, but there is an appeal to a higher court; and such are the glorious uncertainties of law that a sentence which has been confirmed in several courts may after all be reversed when it comes before the highest authorities. But you and I pleaded guilty *before God*. There is no higher authority than that of God himself. When Jesus stood in our stead *we* did not put him there; nor did he put himself there; it was the act and deed of the Eternal Father. Is it not written—"The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." It is not only true as a matter of personal faith that

"I lay my sins on Jesus,"

but as a matter of fact of a far earlier date the Lord laid them on him. There is no higher authority than the Lord's; and therefore do we cry, "it is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" We have been taken into the highest court of all, and there we have been cleared through Jesus's blood; have we not cause to be fully at peace with God, "being justified by faith"?

Precious doctrine! Oh to rest in it with a childlike confidence henceforth and for evermore!

II. I now come to the second part of the subject, which is this. Faith brings us into the state of peace which I have explained, and afterwards FAITH GIVES US THE SENSE OF PEACE. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.”

Will you please to notice that the sense of peace follows upon the state of peace. We do not get peace before we are justified, neither is peace a means of justification. No, brethren, we are justified first. “While we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” God justifies the ungodly. We have no peace till that is done. At least there may seem to be peace, a horrible peace—the peace of death and of daring presumption—when a man says, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace, and talks about rest when he has a conscience seared as with a hot iron—and a mind dragged with presumption, so that he sleeps that awful sleep which is the presage of waking up in hell. From such peace may God deliver us! But real peace—the peace of God—and peace with God must spring out of our being justified in the way which I have been trying to describe. The man who is justified, according to the text, at this moment has a sense of peace with God, but this is only true of those who by faith are justified.

Here I want you to observe—for every word is instructive—that we have peace with God “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Many children of God lose their peace in a measure, and part of the reason of it is because they begin to deal with God absolutely. None of us will ever experience true peace with God except through Jesus Christ. I like that strong expression of Luther, bald and bare as it is, when, in commenting on the Epistle to the Galatians, he says, “I will have nothing to do with an absolute God.” If you have anything to do with God absolutely, you will be destroyed. There cannot be any point of contact between absolute deity and fallen humanity except through Jesus Christ, the appointed Mediator. That is God’s door; all else is a wall of fire. You can by Christ approach the Lord, but this is the sole bridge across the gulf.

Whenever you, dear soul, begin to deal with God according to your own experience, according to your own frames and feelings, or even according to the exercises of your own faith, unless that faith keeps its eye on Christ, you will lose your peace. Stand out of Christ, and what a wretched creature you are! Have you attempted to approach the Eternal King without his chosen ambassador? How presumptuous is your attempt! The throne of divine sovereignty is terrible apart from the redeeming blood. Peace with God must come to us by the way of the cross. Through our Lord Jesus Christ we gain it, and through him we keep it.



There be some among you who, I trust, are really believers in Christ, who are constantly prone to fret and say, "I have no lasting peace. I am a believer in Jesus, and I have a measure of peace at times, but I do not enjoy fulness of peace." Well, now we must look at this a little, and the more closely we inspect it the more convinced we shall be that peace is the right of every believer. What is there now between him and God? Sin is forgiven. What is more, righteousness is imputed. He is the object of eternal love; he is more than that; he is the object of divine complacency. God sees him in his Son, and loves him. Why should he not be at peace? "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God," said Jesus, "believe also in me." Christian, there is no ground of quarrel between you and your heavenly Father. God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. To you the Lord virtually says, "Come now and let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, I have made them as wool. Though they be red like crimson, I have already made them as snow." When he says, "They shall be," he is speaking to the sinner; but to you they *are* so. You are justified. Why have you not peace, then? You have a claim to it, and you ought to enjoy it. What is the reason why you do not possess it? I will tell you. It is your unbelief. You are justified by faith, remember; and it is by faith that you obtain peace with God; and when you are doubting and fearing instead of simply believing—when you are questioning and grumbling, then it is that you lose your peace; but in proportion as your faith stands so will your peace with God abide.

I feel certain that the text tells us that every justified man has peace with God; and if so how is it that I hear poor souls crying, "I do believe, but I do not enjoy peace." I think I can tell you how it is. You make a mistake as to what this peace is. You say, "I am so dreadfully tempted. Sometimes I am drawn this way, and sometimes the other, and the devil never lets me alone." Listen. Did you ever read in the Bible that you were to have peace with the devil? Look at the text—"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace *with God*." That is a very different thing from having peace with Satan. If the devil were to let you alone and never to tempt you I should begin to think that you belonged to him; for he is kind to his own in his own way, for a while. He has a way of whispering soft things into their ears, and with dulcet notes and siren songs he lures them to eternal destruction. But he worries with a malicious joy those whom he cannot destroy; for in their case he hath great wrath, knowing that his time is short. He expects to see you soon in heaven out of gunshot of him; and so he makes the best of his opportunities to try if he can distress and injure you while you are here. You will soon be so far above him that you will not be able to hear the hell-dog bark, and so he snaps at you now to see if he can hurt you, as once he did your Master when he wounded his heel. You never had a promise of being at peace with the prince of darkness, but there is another promise which is far better: it is

this—"The Lord shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." A bruise it shall be when we have him under our feet; we will triumph like our Master in the breaking of his head. Till then depend upon it the enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman will continue, and there will be no truce to the war.

Do I hear another tried one saying, "Alas, it is not the devil; it is myself that I fear. I feel the flesh revolting and rebelling. Lusts that I thought were slain have a terrible resurrection. When I would do good, evil is present with me. Sin assails me with an awful power by reason of the weakness of my spirit and the strength of my flesh, and I cry, 'O wretched man that I am!'" Hearken again. Did the Lord ever promise that you should have peace with the flesh? Oh no, the moment you were converted there began a battle between the flesh and the spirit, and that battle will last till that flesh of yours shall lie low in the dust from whence it came, and your spirit, delivered from its bondage, shall ascend to God. You must not suppose that as long as you are in this body the flesh will help you. Ah no, you will cry with Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" You are harassed and hampered by the rising corruption of your nature, and it will still rise. Your brethren will still say of you, "What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies." The flesh is striving against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and though the lion shall one day lie down with the lamb, the flesh will never agree with the spirit. As the Lord hath war with Amalek for ever and ever, so there is war between the spirit and the flesh so long as the two are in the same man. There is no promise of peace with the flesh, then; but we have peace with God.

"Ah," says another, "I have little peace, for I am surrounded by those that vex me. When I serve the Lord they malign and misrepresent me with scoff and slander. They take up an evil report against me. Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar. My soul is among lions, even amongst them that are set on fire of hell. They give me no rest." Yes, but I smile as I think of it. Did you ever dream of having peace with the wicked, peace with such as turn aside to their crooked ways, peace with the workers of iniquity? Vain thought! Peace in this world where your Lord was crucified—peace with those that hate you for his sake? Why, did he not say to you at the first, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." What! do you expect to wear a crown of gold where he wore a crown of thorns? The confessors and martyrs of ancient times never reckoned upon peace with the world. Nor did the apostle Paul, for he said, "The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." You have no promise of the world's love, but you have a promise of this sort, "These things have

I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” “And this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith.” I pray you, then, do not misconstrue the text. It does not say that you shall either have peace with the devil, or peace with the flesh, or peace with the world; but it does say that you have peace with God, which is infinitely better.

“Still,” says one, “I find every day that I sin, and I hate myself for sinning. I cannot get to my bed at night but I feel grieved in my soul that I am not more like Christ, and that I cannot grow in grace as I desire. I do not seem to make the advance in the divine life that I hoped I should, and I am full of sin. Whatever I do is stained with defilement. Wherever I go I seem to fell one way or another into something that wounds my conscience and hurts me.” Yes; and the Lord never said that you should have peace with sin. I am delighted to find that sin stings you, and that you hate it. The more hatred of sin the better. A sin-hating soul is a God-loving soul. If sin never distresses you, then God has never favoured you. Unless you hate sin you do not love holiness; and if you hate sin you cannot have any peace with it. You will never be satisfied till you are perfect, and when will you be perfect? Why, when you wake up in your Lord’s likeness. That will be the hour of your perfection, but till then sin will vex you. Then shall you have no Canaanite to harass you, and there shall be war with Amalek no more, when the last enemy is slain, when sin is extirpated, and you shall be near and like your God. You have no promise of peace with sin, nor need you wish for one, but you have peace with God.

To come back again to what is promised, and indeed to what is not only promised but really bestowed and communicated to us—“Being justified by faith, *we have peace with God*”

Most assuredly we do enjoy peace with God in this respect—that *we know he loves us*. He would not have given his Son to die for us if he had not. He would not have devised this matchless plan of justification if he had not loved us. Moreover, we feel a fervent love to him in return. We do not love him as we wish to do, nor as we hope to do, but we do love him for all that. We can say, “Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.”

“Yes, I love thee and adore,  
Oh for grace to love thee more.”

Of the excellence and virtue of this peace we make daily, hourly proof; for now *we are not afraid to go to our covenant God* for all necessary things, and to seek his face for help in time of trouble. Why, to some of us this resorting to God has become so habitual, that we speak with him every hour of the day. Nothing happens but we fly to him for counsel or for succour. We

no longer ask leave to do so, for he has given to us the private key and the perpetual permit of access. We have not always such settled peace with our fellow creatures, for at times we so much lack confidence in them that we could not divulge to them our troubles; but we have peace with God; such an amity that we can always have recourse to him, assured of his sympathy and his readiness to come to our relief in every time of need. Our habitude of prayer proves that we have peace with God; we should not think of praying to him if we believed that he was our adversary, or if we doubted his goodwill. If we felt any enmity in our hearts to him we should not go to him as we do, with a childlike hope, in time of distress.

This peace with God makes us *delight in him*. I am sure that every soul here that has been justified by faith delights in God. You do not always feel him equally near, but when he is near it is the joy of your spirit. What are the best and happiest moments you ever know? Are they not those in which you have communion with God? What days can you reflect upon with the greatest satisfaction and ardently wish to have repeated? Are they not those in which his majesty and mercy have been so revealed to your spirit that with mingled awe and sweetness you have realized intensely his power and his presence? Oh, what a good God he is! Bad as we are, how good he is! Now, take care that you indulge this delight very often. If you delight in anything else you will be an idolater, but he has said, "Delight thyself in the Lord, and he will give thee the desire of thy heart" You cannot be too delighted with your God. Is he not perfection itself? Are we not, in all respects, rejoiced to have such a God? We would not have one attribute changed; nor one appointment of his sovereign will in the least degree moved from its order. Let him be as he is, and do as he pleases, and our souls shall delight in him. "Yea, though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Now, when you can delight in God, though you cannot delight in yourself, it shows that you have peace with him, and are justified.

Then, brethren, this peace also shows itself in our *acquiescing in all that he does in his rough providences*. You know that a hypocrite is like a strange dog that will follow a man as long as he casts him a bone or a bit of meat; but a true believer is like a man's own dog that will follow him when he gives him nothing, and even when he deals him a cuff or a blow. A true believer says, "Shall I receive good from the hand of the Lord, and shall I not also receive evil? If he chasten me, I would sooner be chastened by my Father than I would be caressed by Satan." It were better to smart till one were black and blue under the rod of God, than to be set upon a high throne by the world or the devil. When he offers thee the kingdoms of this world be sure that thou say to the foul fiend, "Get thee behind me"; but when the Lord hands thee the bitter cup be sure to say, "Thy will be done," and take it cheerfully at his

hands, if we feel an agreement with our Lord's will it shows that we are at peace with him.

One more evidence of being at peace with God is when you can *with confidence look forward to the time of your departure* out of this world and say, "I can die, if thou, O Lord, be with me." When you can fall in with the words of the hymn we were singing just now—

"Bold shall I stand in that great day,  
For who aught to my charge shall lay?  
While through thy blood absolved I am,  
From sin's tremendous curse and shame,"

We are not afraid of the day of judgment because we have peace with God, and hence we are not afraid to die.

There is concord and harmony between the righteous God and his redeemed people, and hence fear is banished. He has given to us his Spirit to dwell in our hearts, and now we desire that each rising wish may be prompted by his will. Our mind is agreed with the mind of God. He wishes us to be holy, and we wish to be holy. He would kill sin in us, and we long to have it killed. He wishes us to obey, and we desire to obey. He would have us seek his glory, and we desire that he should be glorified in us, in our whole spirit, soul and body. The lines of our life run parallel with the life of God, though upon a lower level: we can never be as he is in the glory of his nature, but still we desire to be holy as he is holy. The life within us is divine, for we have been begotten again by himself, and henceforth we are in Christ, and Christ in us, and so we are at peace with God.

Go your way, my brethren, and swim in this peace. Bathe your weary souls in seas of heavenly rest until you come to the place where not a wave of trouble shall ever roll across your peaceful breasts; and the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and preserve you blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. Amen.

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PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans v.

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HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—775, 897, 708.

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LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON.

MENTONE.

DEAR FRIENDS,—The sermon is so long that only a line or so is left for me. I will say the less of myself. The warm sunny days which I have spent in this retreat are, by God's blessing, bringing back to me health and strength. I shall be happy indeed if my mental and

spiritual vigour should also be renewed by the removal of the daily care which pressed upon me; if it be so my hearers shall be the gainers, for all my strength has been and ever shall be laid out in my ministry.

I am right glad to hear that special services are commencing at the Tabernacle, and I entreat all the brethren there to throw all their energies into them. Pray that the Holy Spirit may work mightily and glorify the Lord Jesus in the midst of the congregations; and then set to work to fetch in the people from the outside. Gather them! Gather them from hedge and highway, and crowd the gospel feast. The preachers are among you whom God has widely blest, but how can they benefit the people if they do not come to hear them. Make the services known and press those to come who do not usually attend public worship. We long to see souls saved,—do we not? My heart cannot be content while men are being lost I cannot be among the crowds to preach, but my inmost soul prays for those who are indulged with that privilege, and for you also who have the joy of helping on the work of the Lord.

I am bound to thank those generous friends who continue to send aid to the various works under my care: the Lord reward them. To each and all my hearers and readers I send my hearty Christian salutations.

C. II. SPURGEON.