The Peace of God.

The peace which the Bible commends to us is the peace of God. It is God's own peace. I think, perhaps, we shall best realize that we fall away from our godly estate if we realize in what state God forever lives. Can you think of the plow-share of care running a furrow across God's brow? Can you think of anxiety brooding on God's heart? Can you think of perplexity entangling God in its meshes? Can you think of God hurrying and worrying and fretting and perplexed lest He shall not get this or that or the other thing done in time? Can you think of God as harassed, bearing a burden too great for Him to bear, and weighted down by the very armor He is carrying? O, no, no! we know that God lives and works in a perpetual peace. He is light. In Him there is no variableness or shadow of turning.

Did you ever think how the light works always in peace? For what is the most potent thing in nature? Not the earthquake? Not the lightning! Not the thunderbolt! Not the wind, with its vociferation and its noise! Light! All the forces of nature are born of light and are carried earthward in the sunbeam. It is light that gives the wind its wings. It is light that gives the waterfall its force. It is light that equips all machinery with its vast powers. It is light that is the element in you that makes you live. Wrap the world in eternal darkness, and it would be wrapped in eternal death and in eternal inactivity. But the light sounds no drum as it marches on its way; sends forth no clarion note of triumph or of defeat. The light marches noiselessly. Its sandals are of satin. No listening ear can catch the tread of its footstep. The wind howls against the sunbeam, and the sunbeam shines on undiverted by so much as the ten-millionth fraction of an inch. The cloud puts itself athwart the sunbeam, and the sunbeam shines through the cloud with a diffused instead of a radiant light, or turns it into golden glory by its magnificent shining. There is nothing that can divert it; nothing that can thwart it; nothing that can disturb it. It moves upon its way in eternal quietness and calmness. The greatest tempest that ever rocks the earth is but a few feet in height as compared with the eternal silence and the eternal ethereal substance of light in which the globe moves around in its appointed orbit. And so we live in God if we do but know it. God, who is a perpetual light and a perpetual peace. O, when anxiety plows into your heart, when perplexity entangles you, when troubles gather around you and upon you, think for a moment—for a moment; think for one half hour—of the eternal quietude and peace of your Father. Come into His presence, and from Him take peace.

For this peace that is of God belongs to God, is God's gift to us, when we are willing to take God's gift. We are continually trying to find peace by getting God to will as we will; but not so does the soul ever find peace. We do find peace when we bring ourselves to will as God wills. When we lift up our prayers to God to get Him to do what we think best, then we struggle, and are worried and worn. When we lift up our prayers to God that He will make us will as He wills, then we find the way to peace and quietness, and in quietness and in confidence we find strength.

If we reflect upon it for a moment we shall see that all cares come from the lower life. If we can rise into the higher experience and walk with God, we walk also in peace. You fear bankruptcy and sickness and pain and dishonor; but are not all these things that live only in the lower life and have no place in the higher one? O, if my only thoughts were, "How shall I best serve God?" then what odds to me to what service he calls me? If He says, "Show how with wealth a rich Christian lives," I will take that: and then if He says, "Show how in poverty a poor Christian can meet poverty," I will take that. If He gives me children, and says to me, "Show how a father can live and love and rejoice and bring his children up to the love of God," I will take that: and if He reaches down that hand of love from heaven and takes one child after another, and one life after another from my home, and says to me, "I want you to show how a Christian can live and love and sorrow, how he can resign to me the trust I had given to him," I will take that. I am not saying what I would do. I am only saying what I would do if I did what I wish I might do; for could I have this experience that my will is always God's will and my wish always God's wish, trouble could not trouble me, perplexity could not perplex me, care could not worry me. What difference whether I am to rot down in the earth where the worms crawl, or am up on the tree where the birds sing, if I am only helping make God's tree? What odds whether I am the stone down in the foundation where no eye ever sees me, or the cross on top where the sunlight never leaves me from sunrise to sunset, if I am helping make God's church?

The peace of God is the peace God gives to those who are trying to do God's service, and so a peace we come into by faith, not by that miserable pretense of faith which consists in believing that God will do what we want Him to do, but in that real faith which links us to God, and makes us one with Him in the purpose and desire of our living. We come into peace when we rise above above the tempest; we come into peace when we go down, following the figure of that beautiful poem of Mrs. Stowe—down beneath the storm-line where "the silver waves chime ever peacefully." O, it is possible so to live that that storm shall not, after all, disturb you, though you are in the midst of it. It is possible to rise above it in thought, in feeling, in aspiration, in power, in the experience of your heart and soul.

I have stood on the top of the mountain, and have seen the clouds gather around its top, and have seen them settle down upon the valley below, and have heard the thunder muttering there, and have seen the lightning flashes playing below my feet, and have seen the birds come flying up through the clouds singing on the mountain-top while the thunder was threatening and the lightning was playing havoc in the valley. So learn to fly above these lower earthly storms that are so low, and lie only in the hollows, and find that song always to be found in the mountain-top and in the sunlight. It is possible. We can do it. Men and women have done it.

This peace is not a peace *from* trouble; and when we try to find the peace from trouble we always fail. It is peace *in* trouble. It is hinted at in that word of Christ: "In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world." We would have God lead us through no dark valley and shadow of death. But He gives us no promise of that kind. What He says is this: "Though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, My rod and My staff they shall comfort you." We come to the deep water, and shrink back, saying, "Not into that river, not into that river!" We come to the furnace of fire, saying, "Not into that flame, not into that flame!" But the answer is this: "Though thou walkest through the deep waters, they shall not overflow thee; though thou walkest through the flame, it shall not consume thee." And so we are to find our peace, not by exemption from trouble, but by living in the midst of trouble. Yea, baring our breast to the trouble, yet rejoicing in trouble, for they that are exercised thereby are they that follow after peace and find it.

O, if I could only tell this story to you as it has been told me sometimes! yea, as it has been told to me this past week, by the radiant faces and the unclouded hearts that were filled with peace, and the home that was sweet with the note and song and radiance of peace in a time of great sorrow, you would go away saying, "I will seek this peace and pursue it."

Last August, as we sailed out of Queenstown Harbor in the steamer, we sailed into the teeth of a great gale. The wind was howling, the rain was beating upon the deck of our steamer, and the great waves were running, and every now and then sweeping over our lower decks. And we sat there under the awning, protected from the rain, looking out on the great waves and on the Mother Carey chickens riding on the crest of the waves in the midst of the tempest. Every now and then a great wave would dash over a little bird, and it would seem to be gone, and then in a moment there it was again, shaking its head and wings and flinging off the spray and riding in the storm and exulting in it. "O little bird, you have been a messenger of the good God. Teach me how, when the time of tempest and storm shall come to me, teach me how to ride on the waves, to be overwhelmed, and yet not be overwhelmed; to shake off the trouble and yet live in the trouble. Teach me that lesson, little bird. And I bring the message of the little bird to you. Will you not take a message from the little bird you cannot take from me?

"My peace I give unto you, said Christ." I think I see Him now standing in the midst of that howling multitude clamorous for His death; the blood is streaming from His back; the crown of thorns was upon Him, and the blood is streaming from those wounds also. But crueler and harder to be borne than wounds of scourge or wounds of thorns are the wounds that entered the heart of love when it felt the storm of hate and fury and passion let loose to work its worst. And yet He is at peace. And I see the far-away look in His deep blue eye and the heavenly calm on his placid countenance; for He is in the midst of the tempest, but unperturbed by it. Peaceful! peaceful! And this is the peace He gives to us, His disciples. Grant to us, O Thou that wert at peace in the tempest, Thine own spirit of faith and trust, that in our loneliness we, too, may not be alone, but in the companionship of God may have the peace of God, Thou givest to Thy followers.—*Dr. Lyman Abbott, in Christian Union.*

Looking Right On.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

A capital motto for the new year that has just opened, would be this: "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee." The departed year has been gathered to its fathers, and its record has been sealed up for the day of Judgment. It is too late to erase or to alter a single line. To many of my readers the past year may have brought sad losses and adversities or sore bereavements. There is a tendency with too many people to turn their eyes backward, and to brood over their sorrows. In a certain city it used to be the custom to "bow the wooden shutters" of the house, and tie them with a black ribbon, after there had been a death in the family. Some Christians keep the windows of their hearts "bowed" against the sunlight from heaven, and it is too dark in there even to read the promises. They think and talk of little else than their griefs; the wounds instead of healing, are kept bleeding.

Shall we forget the loved ones who have left us during the past year? No, surely; we could not if we would, we would not if we could; but that is no reason why we should forget the loving God who had a wise purpose in afflicting us, or forget our duties to the living. Instead of brooding forlornly over a tomb, afloat your eyes with Christ's precious eye-salve of hope, and then fix them on those who need your care, and whom your melted heart should flow out to in offices of love.

"When our loved ones are gone,
'Tis well our hands must still keep toiling on
For others' sake:
For strength to bear is found in *duty done*,
And she is blest indeed who learns to make
The joy of others cure her own heartache."

2. Nor is it a wise and healthy thing to be looking backward at the disappointments and failures of the past. It only weakens us. A retreating army gains no recruits. The way in which you treat a bad failure may determine your character and your future. You may either lie still in utter despondency under your broken hopes, and let them crush the life out of you; or you may put the fragments into a pedestal to build up something better and stronger. Let your eyes look right on, and determine that, with God's help, you will this year retrieve the losses and repair the failures of the past. Even Paul recognized the failures and imperfections of his own life when he exclaimed, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are *before*, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Don't brood over committed sins or neglected duties too much. Repentance though it be vital, is only a sub-soil process; it may clear out rubbish, but it does not rebuild. Faith, hope and love only can do that. Observe how the Master dealt with Peter when He met him by the lake-side. Instead of twitting him with that recent disgraceful performance in Pilate's court-yard, He inquires, "Simon, *lovest* thou Me?" That is enough; then go and shepherd the Master's flock. Peter's eyes were turned away from the black, wretched scene of cowardice and treason towards the bright scene of new and holy activities.

3. There is one class of professed Christians whom it is more difficult to deal with than with the bereaved, or with the desponding; they are the *self-satisfied*. Why should they strive to do any better this year? Have not they been converted, and have not they joined the church, and attended it quite regularly, and come to the communion table, and kept up about as respectable an appearance as the average of church members?

There is little hope for spiritual growth in a man whose eyes are sanded with self-conceit and blinded to his own deficiencies. "What makes you look so sad to-day?" inquired a visitor of an artist whose studio he had entered. "Because," replied the artist, "I am *satisfied* with that picture yonder; I have struck twelve, and I never expect to do anything better." It is a sad thing for a Christian to be trying to live on past experiences, and who has stopped growing. In God's sight such self-satisfied professors are actually declining. My friend, if you are in this condition, the wisest thing you can do is to *bury* your old and musty religion in the grave of the last year, and begin this year with striving to become a new man in Christ Jesus.

4. There is great significance in the expression "Let thine eye lids look *straight before thee*." No racer wins the prize when he is looking to the right or left, or halting to pick up the lures that are flung into his path. No Christian is safe for a moment when he gets his soul's eye off Jesus Christ. The side attractions of the world become too much for him. Here is the reason also why many who have been awakened in times past, and have been often "under conviction," are not Christians to-day. They did not fix the eye on the Saviour, and lay hold of Him. Their eyes were diverted by other objects; their serious thoughts were dissipated; their minds became divided, and the backward pull of sin and temptation became too strong for the forward thrust of conscience. They quenched the Holy Spirit. "Escape for thy life; *look not behind thee*" was the earnest appeal of God's messenger to Lot when the fire-shower was about to burst on Sodom. To every one whose heart is now seeking salvation, I would say, Look not backward lest old attachments and favorite sins ensare you; put your eye on the crucified Christ, and keep it there; and desire will strengthen, and your solemn promises will solidify into performances. Salvation lies before you; a new and strong and happy life lies before you; the voice of Jesus to you now is, "Let the dead bury their dead, but come thou and *follow Me*."

What may be in store for us all during this year of grace 1889, is known only to the Omniscient. A few evenings ago I was a guest in a magnificent mansion, where a superb Goblin tapestry hung suspended across the entrance to the grand hall, and a servant raised it with a pulley for each guest to enter. So across the future swings that mighty vail which the Divine hand only lifts for each successive footstep in life. Let us not ask to seek the distant scenes; "one step's enough for me." The wealth and health of to-day may turn into sickness and poverty to-morrow; the bright plans of to-day may be shattered, and the bright faces may turn to paleness and ashes; but God lives and reigns behind the tapestry, and it is woven with the glorious records of His providences and His promises. Jesus Christ will be with you and me every day and every hour this year, if we will only let Him. He offers to come and abide with us. Do not take your eye from Him. Sir Joshua Reynolds used to say "I only look at the best pictures. A bad one spoils my eye." The more we look at Christ the more shall we look like Christ. Duties will come to us, one by one; opportunities to help others, and to save souls, are coming to us this year; *strength* and grace will come with them if we pray aright. Then with calm trust "let our eyes look *right on*, and our eyelids look straight before us."

Things that kill Prayer Meetings.

It is not a very difficult matter to kill a prayer-meeting outright, if the work is only done scientifically—and the devil may be left to attend to that. It is easier to put one into a state of suspended animation, which will answer all the purposes of death. For obvious reasons this is what the adversary generally first tries to do when he wishes to get an offensive prayer-meeting out of his way. A mention of some of the agencies by which he produces this suspended animation may sometimes aid in heading him off, temporarily at least. One of these is what may be called a back-seat prayer-meeting, one in which the people are so "backward in coming forward," that two thirds of the seats are between them and the pastor, who cannot make the connection to save his life. The people seem to be afraid he may. What poets call a "dim religious light" may befit some places. It has never been found a success in a prayer-meeting. It is a very successful contributor to a deepening gloom, which may be safely warranted to take all the visible life out of a prayer-meeting in six months. What a prayer-meeting much needs is to be as pleasantly lighted and as cheerful as a home. If it is not, under ordinary circumstances it soon gets where it can give no signs of life. And because it is generally a very difficult matter to make a spiritual thermometer indicate more warmth than exists in the natural atmosphere, a cold room is very sure to soon lay a prayer-meeting out stiff and cold, and as good as dead. Yes, we remember that grand prayer-meetings have been held in caves and dens and prisons, but that is no reason why the place where such meetings are held in these days, should seem like a cave, a den, or a prison.—*N. Y. Evangelist.*

The Problem of Church Support.

Public attention has been called to this subject by Dr. Parkhurst recently; but the hearts of many Christians have been troubled about it for years. The financial management of churches is very closely interwoven with their spiritual success, for faithfulness in the unrighteous mammon opens the door to the treasury of true riches.

Three things are essential to the best financial system. 1st. It must be scriptural in spirit. 2nd. It must be educational. 3rd. It must be business-like.

The pew-renting system is not scriptural, for it not only assigns men's places in the house of God upon a financial basis, thus violating James ii. 2-5, but publicly advertises to the world the fact of men's poverty or riches. It is not educational in the true sense. It allows some men to get as good a pew as possible for as little money, and with an unawakened conscience. While it appeals to the pride of others, and induces them to take pews beyond their ability to pay. It is not business-like. It seldom succeeds unless supplemented by some system which appeals to the Christian's love of the church, either by the envelope system or by auction premiums for choice of pews. Further, it creates a species of ill feeling on the part of those who are not able to pay for a pew. It is not good business management to support a store from outside income; nor to irritate and annoy customers. Pew renting, pure and simple, is, therefore, neither good business nor good religion. It has been saved from ignominious death these many years by the infusion of Christian blood, and saved from universal abhorrence by such Christian modification of its workings as have concealed its unsightliness.

But it is much easier to find fault with a country than to discover a better one and emigrate to it. The writer has seen two colonies make the voyage with safety and satisfaction, and gladly bears testimony to their success. This is the system:

First. All prices upon pews are cancelled, and the whole burden of expense laid upon the hearts and consciences of the congregation, with the understanding that the coat will be no bigger than the cloth furnished will make.

Second. Every member of the church and congregation having an income is personally requested, and generally expected, to subscribe according to ability toward the support of the church. Payment to be made either monthly or weekly, as may be decided upon.

Third. A committee of wise men assign seats to every family of the church. Those who have been occupying pews hold them unless they wish to change, and others are given their choice of any unassigned pews with these limitations: That a few seats be kept for new comers; and those families that are regular in attendance be given by preference seats in the centre and front of the church.

This system is scriptural, for it calls for subscriptions "according as God hath prospered." It is educational, for the whole membership is expected to join in the support. The yearly subscription gives opportunity and suggestion for increase or decrease according to one's financial prosperity or adversity. It is business like, for it is simple and all-inclusive. It puts people in a just light, does not hurt their pride, and appeals not only to the best motives but to all good motives.

The churches to which reference is made are the Mt. Auburn church, Cincinnati, and the First church, Toledo, both of which had been for twenty years or more under the old system, always supplemented by something different. In both places the success of the change was complete. No better testimony can be given than the following extract from a statement written by the chairman of the trustees at the Toledo church, and signed by the entire board. This chairman is one of the most prominent lawyers there, and has been a member of the board since the organization of the church. He was also one who doubted the wisdom of the change when it was first proposed.

"Our experience shows the change to have been a wise one, by the increase of revenue and the facility of collecting it. The system reaches a larger number of individual members, and the appeal it makes to the individual conscience to do all one can and ought to do is more direct and efficient than any other form of church support. We have not had the slightest friction in the matter of seating. The old occupants retain their old pews, and to new parties assignments are made which are satisfactory and permanent."

These changes were made after time had been taken to consider the matter, and its leading features were well digested and assimilated by the minds of the leading members. The trustees formulated the plan and proposed it to the congregation, by whom it was heartily adopted. Proper committees followed up the adoption, and in both cases secured subscriptions for a greater amount and from more persons than had been secured by any former system.—*A. S. H., in Examiner.*

The True Gentleness.

The dew of one summer night will accomplish more good than fifty Caribbean whirlwinds. How important it is that in going forth to serve Christ, we have something of his gentleness! Is that the way we bear ourselves when we are assaulted? The rule is an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, retort for retort, sarcasm for sarcasm. Give him as much as he sends. After a while you look up into the face of Christ, and you see His gentleness and you say, "Well, now, I must do differently." Then your proud heart says, "Now you have him in a corner, you will never get him in a corner again; chastise him and then let him go." So we postpone the gentleness of Christ. Did you ever know any difficulty to be healed by acerbity or hypercriticism? Many years ago the Presbyterian church was split into the new school and the old school. The chasm got wider and wider. The most outrageous personalities were indulged in. Good men on one side anathematized good men on the other side. Wider and wider the chasm got until after a while some good people tried another tack, and they began to explain away the difficulties, and soon all the differences were healed, and at Pittsburg they shook hands and are one now, to be one forever.

You say to a man with whom you have had a falling out, "I despise you." He says, "I can't bear the sight of you." You say to him, "I never want you to come to my house again." He says, "If you come to my house again I'll kick you out." You say, "I'll put you down." "Oh, no," he says, "I'll put you down." But some day the spirit of Christ comes unto you, and you go over and say, "My brother, give me your hand; time is short and eternity is near, and we can't afford to quarrel. Now let bygones be bygones, and let us act like Christians." It is all settled. How? By the gentleness of Christ.—*Dr. Talmage, in the Observer.*

A Substitutionary Sacrifice.

The sacrifice of our Lord was, in the highest sense, substitutionary. The penalty of sin is death; and Jesus died. All through the old law there is no atonement except by the death of a victim. Indeed, this is what God hath said from the beginning, even in the garden. Still is this the sentence of the law, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Sin necessitates death. The Lord Jesus Christ did not come to earth to make a reconciliation by the holiness of His life, or by the earnestness of His teaching, but by His death. The text saith, "By His own blood He entered in." He must die in the room, and place, and stead of guilty men, before He could enter heaven on their behalf. Just as the calves and the bullocks in the type were slain, and their blood poured out before God, so must Jesus be slain in the sinner's place. Oh, beloved, let us cling to the great truth of the vicarious sacrifice, which is the chief teaching of this sacred Book. Take this away, and I do not see anything left in the Bible at all which can be called good news. The very soul of the doctrine of Christ is atonement by His death.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

— The hand that beckons us to glory waves us out of inpenetrable clouds. We walk in a way that we know not. We labor for our Master, but never know beforehand which shall prosper, whether this or that. We lay wise plans, and they miscarry. We commit gross blunders, and they are overruled for good. We run towards the light, and it goes out in darkness. We sink shivering in the darkness, and find it light. We pray for joys, and they mildew into griefs. We accept the griefs, and they blossom into joys. To-day, the apple turns to ashes, and to-morrow the stones to bread. We exult in some prosperity, and get leanness with it. We murmur at some adversity, and find it big with blessings. We run toward open doors, and dash our heads against a granite wall. We move against the wall at the call of duty, and it opens to let us through. The lines of our lives are all in God's hands. What shall befall us we cannot know. What is expedient we cannot tell. Only this we know, that God would shape us to Himself, whether it be by the discipline of joy or the discipline of sorrow. To make us perfect as He is perfect, this is the choice of our Heavenly Father, this the end of all His revelations; while every thing not helpful to this He hides away out of sight.—*Dr. Boswell D. Hitchcock.*

There is a place no love can reach,
There is a time no voice can teach,
There is a chain no power can break,
There is a sleep no sound can wake.

Sooner or later that time will arrive, that place will wait for your coming, that chain must bind you in helpless death, that sleep must fall on your senses. But thousands every year go untimely to their fate, and thousands more lengthen out their days by heedful, timely care. For the failing strength, the weakening organs, the wasting blood, Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery is a wonderful restorative and a prolonger of strength and life. It purifies the blood and invigorates the system, thereby fortifying it against disease. Of druggists.

— Nothing is more remarkable in the Bible than to see how God, as if to teach us to trust in nothing and in none but Himself, selects means that seem the worst fitted to accomplish His ends. Does He choose an ambassador to Pharaoh?—it is a man of stammering tongue. Are the streams of Jericho to be sweetened?—salt is cast into the spring. Are the eyes of the blind to be opened?—they are rubbed with clay. Are the battlements of the city to be thrown down?—the means employed is, not the blast of a mine, but the breath of a trumpet. Is a rock to be riven?—the lightning is left to sleep above and the earthquake with its throes to sleep below, while a rod is used which is more likely to be shivered on the rock than to shiver it. Are men to be converted by preaching, and won from sensual delights to a faith whose symbol is the cross, and whose crown is to be won among the fires of martyrdom?—leaving schools and halls and colleges, God summons His preachers from the shores of Galilee, the helm of Church is intrusted to hands that had never steered aught but a fishing boat, and by the mouth of one who had been its bitterest persecutor, Christ pleaded His cause before the philosophers of Athens and in the palaces of Rome.—*Dr. Guthrie.*

Famous Women.

It is a significant fact that most of the women who have achieved fame in art, literature, or "affairs," have enjoyed vigorous health. This shows that the mind is never capable of the severe and continued application necessary to creative work, unless the body is at its best. The woman who aspires to fill an exalted place among her associates, must be free from nervous debility and female weaknesses. Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription will banish these, and it is warranted to restore those functional harmonies which are indispensable to health. As a specific for all those chronic weaknesses and ailments peculiar to women, it is unequaled.

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