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That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ—PETER.

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THE GOSPEL OF PEACE.

BY ELDER CHARLES J. ORAM.

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.—Romans 10, 15.

In the first verse of this chapter we may at once perceive the feelings which pervaded the soul of the inspired apostle. He addressed his brethren in Christ in a tender, affectionate manner, showing his solicitude for them, and his deep interest in their welfare. His language is, "Brethren, my hearts desire, and prayer to God, for Israel is that they might be saved." "One thing have I desired," says the Psalmist, "and that will I seek after." It was so with the apostle. He deemed it not enough to desire only the salvation of sinners, he would pray and labour for its accomplishment. There are many in the world, alas! that there should be so many—who occasionally speak of their good desires; they say they feel; yes, deeply feel, for a lost world. In word and in tongue, they are almost everything they should be; but in deed, and in truth, they are altogether deficient. They belong to that class that say, "be ye clothed and fed," and that is all. The case however, with the apostle, was far otherwise, and is, we may add with every genuine believer. The grace of God had done great things for him, and that was the source from which he drew all his consolation. But this was not all. He was the ambassador of heaven. God had not only reconciled him to himself by Jesus Christ, but had also given to him the ministry of reconciliation. In other words he was divinely called, divinely taught, and divinely authorised to preach the Gospel. "The Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." Hence he could say, when menaced by his enemies,—"when the storm of persecution raged fearfully around him, and when forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus—"none of these things move me, neither count my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."

We are aware that some are of opinion that the apostle in this chapter had his eye on the temporal calamities that were coming upon the Jews. But the scope of the whole chapter seems to require that we understand him as referring to salvation from the sin of unbelief, and the eternal wrath of God. The Jews were the natural descendants of Abraham, who by way of eminence, is called, "The father of the faithful, and the friend of God," and as God had promised him an inheritance—an heavenly one—they concluded as his children they could claim it. This was a great delusion, and one which is fully exposed by the apostle in the preceding chapter; they are not all Israel which are of Israel. "They which are the children of the flesh are not the children of God. That is, the descendants of Abraham are not of necessity the adopted children of God, or are not so in virtue of their descent merely. This was contrary to their deeply cherished opinions. But the apostle who was thoroughly acquainted with the nature of the case, knew they were sinners, by nature children of wrath even as others; and could not be saved unless they repented and believed in Christ. Like many however at the present time, they were not wanting in zeal, but it was not so commendable,—not according to knowledge. They knew nothing about God's method of saving sinners, were ignorant of his righteousness, and went about to establish their own. But their ignorance was voluntary and therefore criminal. Involuntary ignorance excuses from guilt; but when it is produced by sin or indolence, then there is no excuse for crime. This was not only true of the Jews, but is especially so of every impenitent sinner that lives in a land of Gospel light. The apostle then adverts to an objection that might be urged against what he had advanced. He had said "there was no difference between Jews and Greeks, that the same Lord over all is rich unto all them that call upon him," and that "whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." That the word was high them, even in their mouths, and in their hearts, that is the Gospel, or the word of faith which he preached. He moreover declares that faith in the Lord Jesus was essential to justification and salvation; that there was no difference between Jews and Gentiles, God had concluded all under sin, that he might have mercy upon all; and that without this faith men must perish. But how says the objector "shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed, and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach, except they be sent, as it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." To this he immediately replies, without denying the principle that the Gospel should be preached in order that men might be justly condemned for not believing it; that men could not believe in a being of whom they had not heard, and of whose existence they knew nothing; neither would he deny that before men could hear the Gospel, one must proclaim it, and that he who did proclaim it, must be commissioned of God for that purpose. This is a solemn truth, and one it is to be feared, which is overlooked by many that enter the sacred ministry. "I have not sent these Prophets, yet they ran, I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. The Prophets prophesied lies. I have not spoken to them, they prophesy a false vision—a thing of naught, and the

deceit of their own hearts." "Thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee; and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." (Jer. 23—21 ver. 1—7—14—14.) The apostle having admitted the principle contained in the objection immediately meets it as follows: "But I say have they not heard?" has not a proclamation of the Gospel been made?

Having made these remarks, which we hope will not be uninteresting to the reader, he shall now notice some ideas that present themselves in the words of the text. First, the Gospel is a message of love and mercy, a proclamation of peace—literally "good news." "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." * * * Thus sang the angelic throng when they announced the birth of Jesus—"Emmanuel God with us." This is the sweetest song that angels ever sung, and the most joyful news that ever reached the ears of mortals; and how interesting it is to know that angels take such deep interest in our welfare, that they were the first to make known to the world that "the wonderful, the counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the prince of peace," was born. Nor should we overlook the sentiments and disposition manifested by these celestial beings—sentiments and dispositions perfectly holy. "Glory to God—ON EARTH PEACE." This is no doubt the very essence of heaven, the atmosphere that fills the world of blessedness. And if this is the temper of heaven, the spirit manifested by angels, and that doubtless which pervades, and actuates the whole company of the redeemed in glory; it is the very spirit which should be predominant among men on earth, especially the disciples of Christ. The should all rejoice in the glory of God, and breathe "peace and good will to men." The wisdom of God is wonderfully displayed, as well as gloriously illustrated in the incarnation of Christ; but in giving him to die for our sins,—in subjecting him to such extreme sufferings, his love and mercy stand out in bold relief. It was love that moved the mind of deity to conceive the grand scheme of redemption; and his wisdom and power are exerted to open a way in which divine mercy may be exercised. Here too the depths of divine wisdom are manifested, for what created being in heaven, or in earth would even have thought of the mysterious, yet glorious plan of redemption by Jesus Christ, as revealed in the word of God. He was begotten by the Holy Ghost. "The word was made flesh, God was manifested in the flesh," united in personal substance with humanity, and yet this union (so to speak) was a separate one. They were so united that the same who was the son of God, was also the son of man—God—man. And yet they were so separate that none of the perfections of deity were communicated to the human soul; nor the properties of the human soul transferred to the divine nature. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." But why was the Godhead veiled in flesh? clothed in a body like our own, why in this way must he seize our guilt and sustain the dreadful load; why in his own body bear our sins upon the tree of the cross,—why was his spotless soul made an offering for sin; and why must he shed the last drop of his precious blood? It was because the inexorable demands of stern justice stood in the way of man's salvation, and could not be set aside without satisfaction, or an adequate atonement, so by this wise constitution of the Saviour being perfect God, and perfect Man, and dying to put away sin, a foundation is laid for the sinner's hope, consistent with the honor of God's law. Here justice and mercy meet and kiss each other, and are reconciled in our salvation. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Again, the Gospel is called "the Gospel of peace." How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." The term peace, so often used by the inspired writers, like grace, is rich in import. Jesus says, "my peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." One of the fruits of the spirit is peace. And when the apostle speaks of our being justified by faith, he also speaks of its effects, which is peace; true religion—the religion of Jesus Christ is often represented as peace with God. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel preaching peace by Jesus Christ. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effects of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever." Jesus is called "our peace," and God grant that the reader may be diligent that he may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. But whilst the sinner is unconquered to God, dead in trespasses and in sin, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart and an enemy to him by wicked works—whilst he is in a state of rebellion—of open hostility against the government of heaven, he is an entire stranger to peace. He is like the troubled sea which never can rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace saith the Lord unto the wicked, and how can it be otherwise. "He is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth upon him. In this state he regards God as his enemy, believing his law to be holy, and that it cannot be broken with impunity. He believes God has power and will punish him for his sin, and when he thinks of it he trembles. He hears of death, judgement, and the misery of the damned, and fears. His agitated bosom is a stranger to peace. This has been felt in all lands—under all dispensations. It is the effect of an alarmed and troubled conscience, and were it not for the Gospel—"The Gospel of peace" the billows of despair would overwhelm his soul forever. But he hears

of the plan of salvation by Jesus Christ; that if he repents of his sins, God is willing to be reconciled, is ready to pardon, and to be at peace. He also hears that the obstacles that stood in the way of his salvation are removed, and that "God can be just and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus."

And he now begins to feel what he never felt before that the Gospel is "good tidings of good things." The sound falls upon his ears in sweet and melting tones—his heart is emboldened, his eyes run down with tears, he receives Christ as he is offered in the Gospel. The scene is changed, the peace of God flows into his soul like a river. It is a peace which the world giveth not the terror and alarm which he felt subsides—his fears are all gone—the darkness is past—he is a new creature. The true light shines like the sun beams that break through the opening clouds after a tempest. His agitated soul is at rest. He knows what it is to have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Reader, time is short—its moments fly apace. Our days are as the days of an hireling, they will soon be numbered, and the wheel of life perform its last revolution, and death sign our release. Are you prepared? Could you meet death with a smile?—welcome the friendly foe, and shelter in his hospitable gloom? In other words,—Is your peace made with God? If not, delay no longer. "Stay not for the morrow's sun." Death is on your track, though restless in his tread as are the footsteps of angels. Therefore, what your hands find to do, do it not only with your might, but with every possible expedition. Say not, go thy way for this time, when I have a more convenient season I will attend to these things. "Thou canst not tell what another day may bring forth." But even admitting a convenient season should come, a disposition to attend to these things may be wanting. God may say—"why should he be stricken any more, he will revolt more and more." He is "joined to his idols, let him alone." Remember him who said, "Soul take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." But did he live many years? No! nor even many hours. God said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." He had made the world his own, and had just got ready to live and enjoy it. But in a moment his hopes were blasted, and he summoned before the bar of his long-forgotten God. His riches could not prolong his life, or avert for a moment the awful sentence. The soul is precious—What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Its redemption also is precious, and costeth (after death) forever. When we obtain an article for which we pay a large amount of money, we conclude it is valuable; in a certain sense, precious. Now, when we for a moment look at the vast sum that was paid for man's redemption, we are at once led to the conclusion that his soul is valuable. The Apostle Peter, in referring to this subject says, that "we are not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus as a lamb without blemish and without spot." This is the ransom—"The price of pardon was his blood." And who can "cast the mighty sun," "It's value vast, ungraped by minds create—forever hides, and glows in the Supreme." We may look at man's redemption, as we would look at a mountain of sand a million times larger than our globe, the grains of which, being infinitesimal in their nature, and as it would be impossible to count these—so it would be impossible to reckon the sum of man's redemption—a sum so large as to drain the "fund of heaven." God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. This was all heaven could give. And it was all paid down—the very last farthing, when Jesus bowed his head, cried it is finished, and gave up the ghost. Then nature stood aghast. The sun withdrew his light, and "midnight veiled his face." The earth was clothed in sackcloth. The rocks were rent asunder, and the graves were opened. "Heaven wept that man might smile; heaven bled that man might never die." Dear reader, thy soul is immortal—it will live when "lower worlds dissolve and die." If thou shouldst die unpardoned, it is lost, and lost forever. Think of that dreadful word, forever. The mercy of God has its bounds; thou canst not sin with impunity. "His lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire." "Seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him whilst he is near." "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

DENNIS AND THE PRIEST.

A DIALOGUE.

"Good morning! Dennis."

"Good morning! your Reverence."

"What is it they say of you, Dennis! I am told you have been to hear the preaching of the sowers."

"You have been told the truth, your Reverence."

"And how could you dare to listen to heretics?"

"Please your Reverence, God is not a heretic; and it is the Word of God, the Bible, that they read."

"Aye,—the Bible explained by a minister?"

"No, your Reverence; the Bible explained by itself; for when it is allowed to speak, it explains itself without any assistance from any other quarter; and in the very act of reading it, we allow it to speak."

"But, after all, the minister preaches; and he insists on your believing what he preaches?"

"No, your Reverence; the preacher tells us not to believe on his word, but when we go home to take the Bible and examine whether it contradicts or confirms what he has delivered from the pulpit."

"But, don't you see this is a mere sham; and that you, the common people, cannot examine the Holy Scriptures, so as to judge whether they confirm or contradict what the preacher says?"

"At that rate, your Reverence, St. Luke made fools of the common people; for the preacher pointed out to us a passage in the Bible which mentions that the Bereans compared the preaching of the Apostle Paul with the Holy Scriptures; and more than that, St. Luke commends them for doing so."—Acts 17: 11.

"Admirable, Master Dennis! you are quite a Doctor of Divinity! You know as much as a whole Synod of Bishops! Your decisions will be equal to those of a General Council!"

"No, your Reverence; I make no pretensions to judge for other persons; but I take the liberty of judging for myself. God inspired the Bible; I read his inspired word, and that is all."

"But you are not able to understand it."

"The proof that I can, is, that I really do understand it. I understand very well an almanac made by an ordinary man. Why should I not understand the Bible, which has God for its author? Cannot God express what he means as well as a mere mortal? Besides, the Bible speaking of itself, says it is 'a light.'—Psa. 119: 105.

"Dennis, you are obstinate and conceited."

"Your Reverence, if he is obstinate who never changes his opinion, it is you who are obstinate; but as for me, I found myself in a bad road and changed for a better, that is all. I have never pretended to be infallible."

"You are very conceited to think that you know so much more than others."

"Others are not very humble in thinking they know more than God; but it is to God and not to any fellow-men that I hold myself responsible."

"I must tell you that if you go on reasoning in this way, I shall not admit you to confession."

"I confess myself."

"Not to me, at all events."

"No; but to God."

"To God?"

"Yes; to God, who declares in the Bible that, 'if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins.'—1 John 1: 9.

"The Church will not marry you."

"I will get married elsewhere."

"The Church will not bury you."

"I shall not trouble myself about my dead body, if I save my soul."

"You will be excommunicated!"

"No matter, if I am received by God."

"No prayers shall be offered for you."

"I shall pray for myself."

"No masses will be said for you to release you from Purgatory!"

"They would be of no use; for I reckon on going to Paradise."

"To Paradise, do you!"

"Yes; to Paradise."

"How do you know that?"

"Why, thus: I read in the Bible that the thief when hanging on the cross at the right hand of Jesus, after having confessed his sins to Jesus Christ, who is God, said to him, 'Lord remember me!' And Jesus said unto him, 'Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.'—Luke 23: 41—43. If, then, a penitent malefactor could be pardoned by believing on Jesus Christ, I cannot see why, if I repent and trust in the same Saviour, I may not equally obtain salvation; and the proof that my hope is well founded lies in that I have read in the same blessed book, that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'—John 3: 16. But as I make a part of the world here spoken of, it follows, that if I believe, I shall be saved."

"But while you are waiting to go to Paradise, you must live in this world, and I tell you plainly, that you will lose your livelihood by joining these heretics. No one will have anything to do with you."

"I trust in Him who gives us 'day by day our daily bread'; and if God be for me, what can all those do who are against me?"

"You will be a laughing-stock to everybody."

"And what will that signify? Was not Jesus mocked and set at naught?"

"Everybody will shut their doors against you!"

"Jesus Christ had not where to lay his head."

"You will be called an apostate!"

"Was not St. Paul the greatest of apostates a his conversion?"

"Everybody will take pleasure in refusing to do you a kindness!"

"The world persecuted the Master, and therefore may well persecute his disciples; and the more I am persecuted for my faith, the more I shall feel that I am truly a disciple of Christ."

"Well! we shall see how long you will hold out! First of all, no one will give you any work."

"And what next?"

"No one will admit you under their roof!"

"And what next?"

"No one will have anything to do with you either in buying or selling."

"And what next?"

"No one will receive you into their society."

"So then the whole world will conspire against me?"

"Certainly!"

"And who will be at the head of the conspiracy?"

"Who! who! what does that signify?"

"At all events, whoever he may be, you may tell him that he is not a Christian, for Christ commands us to forgive offences, while this man indulges in revenge. Jesus commands men to love

one another, and this man appears quite disposed to hate me. Should he happen to be a priest, you may tell him that his prototypes were members of the Sanhedrim, who, through hatred, condemned Jesus to death. Should he be an Ultramontane, you may tell him that I am astonished at nothing done by him and by those who invented the Inquisition. Lastly, should it be yourself, be assured that your vengeful spirit is to me the best proof that you are not in the truth. Christ said, 'Forgive,' and you take vengeance. Christ said, 'Teach all nations,' and you refuse even to let them read the Bible. Christ said, 'Freely ye have received, freely give.' (Matt. 10: 8); and you sell,—not indeed the Gospel, for that you conceal,—but you sell your masses, your prayers, your dispensations, your rosaries, your tapers, your indulgences, your baptisms, your interments; but as for me, I can make shift to do without your wares, while I apply to that God who gives heaven gratuitously."

"Gratuitously!"

"Yes, gratuitously! and this it is that vexes you! For when a blessing is bestowed gratuitously, the concurrence of those who sell is not wanted. Yes, gratuitously! this one word is ruinous to all your schemes. God gives, and you sell. God pardons, and you punish. God loves, and you hate. How can you expect that we should not go to God, or wonder that we not come to you! But act toward me just as you please; I have learnt not to fear those who can kill the body; but only to fear those who can destroy the soul; in other words, I stand in no awe of you."

"You are an insolent fellow."

"I am not; but I have the courage to speak the truth."

"You are impious."

"I have been so, while bending the knee before images of wood or stone; but I have ceased to be so, since I have believed in the living God, and trusted only in my Saviour."

"You are a miserable wretch."

"Yes, a miserable sinner; but a penitent and humble sinner, I trust, whom God has pardoned."

"You will always be a—"

"What I shall be, I do not know, but I know what I wish to be. I wish for the future to live in purity, because it was precisely my sins that crucified the Saviour. I wish to be sincere, just, and charitable, because Jesus has been so good as to give me everything. Allow me to tell you what kind of person I am. When persons love me I love them in return; when they do me a favor I wish to return it two-fold; the more generous others are towards me the more grateful I feel. Well! and has not God been generous to me more than I have words to express? He has granted me pardon, and heaven, and eternity. Thus my heart bounds with joy, and I am ready to do all that God requires of me; but what he requires of me is most delightful. It is to love him and love my brethren,—to love even you Reverend Sir."

"I do not want your love."

"I shall not the less pray for you."

"I do not want your prayers."

"See the difference between us, your Reverence. I love you, and you hate me. I offer you my prayers, and you refuse me yours. But Jesus Christ has said, 'By their fruits ye shall know them: do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?'—Matt. 6: 16. Judge now, Reverend Sir, which of us, you or I, is the disciple of Jesus Christ!"

PEEJEE ISLANDS.

The Feejees Islands is the first Melanesian group west of the Society Islands. The natives are reported to be at once the most sanguinary and ferocious, and the most susceptible of a high state of attainment in civilization, of all the Indians of the Pacific. It is to be hoped that the obscurity which now prevails among them may be the darkness that precedes the dawn; for never were the ruthless barbarities of savage life so rife there as now. There are three hundred thousand of these Feejeans. Zealous missionaries are labouring among them without ceasing, and with brightening prospects in the midst of trying discouragements. Among the latter is mentioned the following. A little girl, daughter of the King of Opo, who was taken into a missionary family as nurse-maid, eventually murdered the infant, by habitually crushing its frame together in her arms, whenever the child was restless.

The Feejeans suffer the most horrible tyranny from their chiefs and native priests. Among instances in illustration of this, it is stated that the great war-canoes are dragged up the beach over the living bodies of the common people, thus used as rollers—a species of barbarity that used to be practised on corpses in Otaheite. In a particular district called Drakete, we are told by one author, the people are actually kept for human sacrifices and for food upon any public occasion. Aged and decrepit persons are customarily buried alive, to relieve their relations of the burden of their support. One or more of the widows of a deceased husband are sacrificed at his death, that he may have some one to cook and administer to him in another world. These people exceed all known races in the practice of cannibalism. When Captain Erskine reproved Thakambau for participating at so revolting a feast, that warrior replied: "It is all very well for you, who have plenty of beef, to remonstrate, but we have no beef but men."

These heathen practices are in vogue now, at this very day, in these and other of the Melanesian groups, but to no greater extent than most of them were in New Zealand forty years ago. And it is probable that a much shorter period will