

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

Rev. W. H. Poole, Canada.

"The angel song, that happy night,
When spirits stooped to mortal ken,
Warbled from lips and lyres of light,
Was peace on earth, good will to men."

Peace and love are said to be the cherubim that united their spread wings over the mercy-seat, as they gazed intently into the meaning of the sprinkled blood and its purchased blessings.

In a former article, on joy, I said that love, joy, and peace are a glorious trio in the human heart. Of the three, peace comes first in order, and never comes alone. Being always in such good company, it partakes more or less of the nature of the other two graces, so that much that has been said on love and joy is equally true and appropriate when speaking of the nature of peace.

It means a state of freedom from agitation, commotion, or disturbance, tranquillity, quiet, calm, rest. These terms, though often used as synonymous, have a different meaning. "Peace" means a cessation of trouble or freedom from disturbing elements. Quiet, from the Latin *quietas*, probably from a Greek word, to lie down, as that posture denotes a surrender, a giving up, and best promotes quiet; it is opposed to disturbance.

Tranquillity is opposed to agitation. "Calm" is the state of being after a storm. "Rest" means a cessation of weariness, or of labor, or motion. To the weary and heavy laden God offers rest. A good man ^{vices} finds tranquillity in himself, ^{peace} with others, quiet in his family, and calm after a storm.

We speak of national peace, when "no longer from its brazen portals the blast of war's great organ shakes the skies."

We speak of social peace, that source and soul of life, beneath whose calm, inspiring influence arts, science, and religion prospers.

We speak of ecclesiastical peace when in the Church of God,

"Sweet peace is ever found
In her eternal home on holy ground."

But the peace that is the fruit of the Spirit is a "peace with God," arising from a sense of our reconciliation to God,

"Is a pardon written with his blood,
The favor and the peace of God."

IS A DIVINE PEACE.

It comes from "the God of peace," purchased "by the Prince of Peace," and communicated by the Spirit of peace. "He it is that speaketh peace to His people." "He maketh peace." "He blesses His people with peace." "He came to send peace." "Peace from God the Father." "Peace of God rule in your hearts." "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give." The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

This peace is not the natural product of the human heart; it is not ours in our carnal state. The central idea of the sinner is self, and by a law of his unrenowned nature, his self-ism makes war on God, and

on all goodness. The internal and life-giving force of his nature is sinful, and all his thoughts, words, and actions are impure as the fountain from whence they flow. In this state he cannot have peace; there is an uneasiness and disquiet of soul, an unrest of spirit. The man opposes himself, opposes truth, and virtue, and holiness. How true it is, "He is like the troubled sea, which cannot rest." "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. And the way of peace have they not known."

But, apart from the natural enmity to God, there are the elements of strife and contention in the human heart. The intellect claims the ascendancy over the passions, and the understanding and the conscience aspire to govern the carnal mind and the unruly will. Evil passions, sinful propensities, and vicious appetites, too, make war upon each other, as each viperous feeling seeks indulgence at the expense of the other, and presses its claim until all the forces of the soul are marshaled and called into exercise, and fill the horizon of the mind with storm and tempest, driving the man almost to despair and death.

Blinded by sin, and indurated by unbelief, he may often cry, peace, peace; but it is a false peace, a calm that only forbodes the near approach of the ruinous earthquake or the pitiless storm; it is a stolid indifference, a carnal security, a sort of numbness of the soul, like the *coma after fever*, or the use of opiates. It is not the balmy sleep of nature's sweet restorer, but the paralysis of consciousness, the death stupor of one who has the fatal leprosy.

Where there is sin there will be fear, for they were twin-born into our world, and all the alchemy of hell cannot separate fear from sin. It is true,

"That God hath yoked to guilt
Her pale tormentor—misery."

Guilt is the source and fountain of sorrow; it is the avenging fiend that follows us with whips and stings, and wherever it exists there is distraction, disquiet, discomfort, and if guilt be not removed, there is remorse and everlasting woe.

To remove that fear and guilt by removing their cause is the office of the Spirit is peace. The first blessing our first parents lost by sin was peace, and peace is the first blessing received in answer to the penitent believing prayer. The Holy Spirit illuminates the mind, applies the word, draws the affections, subdues the will, prompts the prayer, encourages the heart, makes sin more and more hateful, makes holiness more and more desirable, helps our infirmities, increases our faith, and brings the happy tidings of "a pardon, written with His blood, the favor and the peace of God." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The peace enjoyed by the believer is the result of the testimony of that spirit, none but Jesus can say to that tempest-tossed spirit, "peace be still." When He speaks there is a calm—the warring passions are lulled to quiet, a heavenly peace fills the soul; there is rest from all the disturbing elements of sin and fear, of pride and anger; every fugitive desire and feeling is arrested; God becomes the grand centre of all his thoughts,

to whom they ever turn instinctively as the needle to the pole; the tide and current of their entire being is reversed; the polarity of the soul is changed, and now

"It finds in him the way of peace,
Peace unspeakable, unknown."

St Augustine, in one of his beautiful meditations, says, "O, God, Thou madest man for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find repose in Thee." A greater than he has said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace." The world has no such boon to bestow. It is all divine, "May the God of peace Himself give you peace, always by all means."

IS GREAT.

Among our blessings this peace is of greatest importance. Peace is joy in sweet and happy repose, but if our peace be disturbed, then our joy, and our love, and all our graces suffer. Peace is the queen of all our graces, "governing and protecting by her mild sway all our passions and affections." Paul says, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." And again, "And the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ." The Greek for keep means to guard, watch, garrison, keep, protect, as one keeps a citadel or palace, so this peace shall keep our hearts, the seat of all our affections, passions, hopes and fears. Let her sway be fully owned, and sacredly kept, and abiding happiness shall be thy portion. Then, "like a beautiful city at rest, calmly sleeping upon the waters, such will be the Christian's peace." As Salem or Jerusalem among the cities of Judah, so is peace among the graces of the Christian. As the calm sunset of a summer's Sabbath among the surrounding landscapes, so is peace among the fruits of the Spirit. The Psalmist said, "Great peace have they who love Thy law." But he did not attempt to describe it. The eloquent Paul says, it is a "peace which passeth all understanding." Neither David nor Paul could measure its altitude, nor sound its depths. Our sainted fathers used to say, as deep emotion swelled their bosoms, "It is better felt than told,"—it transcends all measurements and all utterance.

IS PERFECT.

It is remarkable how fastidious some good and wise men are in regard to the application of this word "perfect." They use it themselves when speaking of the perfection in nature and of art, as when applied to the "perfect child," "perfect man," "perfect animal," perfect plant, perfect flower, perfect fruit, perfect machine, perfect artist, and they show no squeamishness in quoting Scripture language, speaking of "perfect weights, perfect measures, perfect lots, perfect gold, perfect ways, perfect hatred, perfect day, perfect beauty, perfect understanding, perfect knowledge, perfect soundness, perfect will, perfect in weakness, perfect law, perfect gift, perfect work," and a thousand other things spoken of as "perfect." But the moment we quote the word

(Continued on page three)