

PEACE BY THE CROSS

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put your hand on the places where most discoveries have been made. And while your hands are resting on those countries where men have done most in the work of mastering Nature and discovering her secrets and giving them to men, they are resting on the countries where the Gospel of Jesus Christ has prevailed most. Man remains out of harmony with Nature until he finds his way to God.

And how we long for peace. Oh, the restlessness of the present age! Oh, the friction! Sometimes one pauses to listen and it seems as though surging through the cities, coming up from the quieter country, beating upon the listening ear, from all the continents and the isles of the sea, there is the noise of strife and battle, man within himself hot and restless, feverish, lacking peace; man battling with his brother man for territory, for commerce, for advance. Peace seems absent, and yet how man longs for it, sighs after it, sings about it, courts it, and fails to find it.

But there are men and women who have peace; there are men and women living at the very center of it. There are men and women who know peace with God, within themselves, with their fellow-men, and with all the universe of God. And how has this peace come? We go back again to the first chapter of Colossians and let the great and stately argument of the apostle pass before us. Christ, Firstborn of creation, all things held together in Him; Christ bowed to death, to the awful and lonely tragedy of an earthly dying, in the midst of the lack of peace; and making peace through the blood of His Cross.

Let us take three phrases of the New Testament. "Justified by faith, we have peace with God." "Peace from God our Father." "And the peace of God shall garrison your heart." "Peace with God," "peace from God," "the peace of God." This is the experience of the soul that comes back to God from sin and from pollution by the way of the Cross of Jesus. No man can speak perfectly of this peace. It defies analysis, it transcends explanation. It may sing itself into snatches of song, but the great infinite experience can never be told; it must be known. Peace with God, that is, if you will have it so—judicial peace. I have sinned against Him, and I am afraid of Him. But I come to Him as He calls me by the way of the Cross, and my sin is put away, I am no longer afraid. The fear is gone, that which made me afraid to speak of Him, to think of Him, has all been put away, and small as I am in His great universe, and utterly unable as I know myself to be to comprehend the full meaning of His existence, this at least is true—fear has been banished, I am at peace with Him who holds the universe in the hollow of His hand. So the soul that comes to this Cross is first at peace with God.

This peace is also from God, the quietness that comes into the life when man knows that God is pleased. There is no language that can tell the deepest truth here, but as I am accepted in the Beloved, as I am complete in the Christ, the very blessedness of God rests upon me, because it rests upon Him, the Christ Himself, as I have been joined to Him, and "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." And as the good pleasure of God was declared with the Christ, it is declared also with all such as put their trust in Him: pardon for

the past, purity for the present, and peace of knowing—

"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear,
He owns me for His child,
I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And 'Father, Abba Father,' cry."

And yet once more and most wonderful of all in this connection, not merely peace with God, and peace from God, but "the peace of God." What is God's peace? It is the peace of His omniscience, the peace of His omnipotence, the peace of His omnipresence. Do you see how all these things must necessarily create peace in the very being of God? What robs me of peace in the small affairs of life? My limitations. I cannot see the end, and I am afraid. I cannot be where I would be, and my heart is hot and restless. I cannot do what ought to be done, and panic seizes me. God sees the end from the beginning, God is always where He is needed. God is always equal to the demand that is made upon Him, even though it be the redemption of a lost race; and, consequently, in the presence of the sin of the race, in the presence of the wrong of the centuries of pain, God's peace in its deepest was never disturbed, because He knew how out of it He would bring life and light and glory, until at last heaven would be reached over the mystery of evil, and its mastery, by the way of the Cross.

The perfect peace of God is the peace of the child of God. Not that I now can see the end from the beginning, but I know He can, and so I sing. Not that I now can be everywhere at the same moment, but He is, and so while I stand here, separated by miles from my friend in danger, I speak to Him, and in the act I am with my friend, for God is with my friend. Distance is annihilated in this life of fellowship, power is perpetual, and the things I cannot, I can in Him and through Him. The man that is at peace with God enters into the peace of God, for he has found his way, small atom though he be, little, infinitesimal part of the universe, into harmony with the order of the universe.

This means necessarily that the peace that comes to us is exactly what we need in other respects, not only in relationship to God, but in relationship to self. The whole being is balanced and quiet.

Look at these two men. What is that man? He is a spirit indwelling a body, having a mind. What is this man? He is a spirit indwelling a body, having a mind. What is the difference between them? This man is perturbed, he lacks peace, he is always full of fear, he is hot, restless, feverish. That man is quiet, calm, strong. What is the difference? This man is out of harmony within himself. The essential spirit is starved, dwarfed, driven out, consequently flesh is glorified, and worshipped and served. He lacks balance, harmony, there is no consistence in this man because he has not found God. That man has found God, his own spirit is taken out of the prison house and put on the throne. The flesh is not bruised, the flesh is not scourged, it is governed, kept under, made servant, instead of master. He has found the true proportion of things. He is consistent within himself, and his life is full of peace. Why? Because he found God, and finding peace with God and from God and of God, he gained peace within his own personality, and his life became

strong, free from friction, quiet, calm, powerful.

Watch that man still; that man knows what peace is with his fellow man. I know that Jesus said, "I have not come to send peace but a sword." That is perfectly true. That is the effect produced among godless men by the presence of godly men; so long as there are godless men they will hate the godly, and so will attempt to destroy their peace. The measure in which professing Christians fail to make peace is the measure in which they are not Christians. When once the peace of God possesses a human life, when once the peace of God dominates a human life, the influence of that life is peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God."

Man finds his way back into the place of peace with nature by this self-same work of Jesus Christ. As a side-light upon our subject read again the eighth chapter of Romans, and read it this time not so much in order to learn its marvelous teaching concerning personal relationship to God; listen for the larger thing in it. You will find groaning mentioned three times over. The apostle says: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now." "We also groan within ourselves waiting for the redemption." "The Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." The groaning of Nature is everywhere. The Spirit of God interprets the agony of Nature to the godly man, and the godly man groans in the midst of it, inspired by the Spirit into sympathy with it. "Preach the gospel," said Jesus, "to the whole creation," and the gospel of Jesus Christ has its application to all the sorrow and the evil that there is in nature. Before the Cross has won its last triumph man will be restored to Nature, and Nature will be restored to man. When the Lord of creation, who is Firstborn of creation, shall have won His perfect victory and reconciled all things to God, then man will have found peace with Nature.

Have you entered into peace with God? If not, you have never seen a flower yet:

"Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green;
Something lives in every hue
Christless eyes have never seen;
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
Flowers with deeper beauties shine,
Since I know, as now I know,
I am His and He is mine!"

Peace! It can only come to you, my brother, personal, social, with Nature, as it first comes with God. I beseech you "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace." The only place is at the Cross, where the Lord Jesus Christ made peace.

THE WAY OUT AND THROUGH

The only way out of the jungle of sin and unbelief and helplessness is to place personal faith in the Son of God.

And the only satisfactory, successful and fruitful way through the jungle of life's trials is putting faith in Him Who said: "I am with you always"—Matthew 28:20.—Now.

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

Easter Sunday, April 6, special offerings for Foreign Missions. Our African work is going forward. Funds are needed to support the advance. Money invested in this work bears interest through eternity. Give!!