

GLAD TIDINGS, or

Believe And Live

by

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CHAPTER EIGHT

PEACE WITH GOD

THE most valuable blessing that man can enjoy on earth is peace with GOD. When the blessed Redeemer was about to bid his disciples farewell, and they stood around him in speechless sorrow, this was the gift which he singled out, above all others, to bestow upon them as his parting legacy.

He was Lord of all, and had the whole universe out of which to choose a gift for them in that hour of parting tenderness; and the gift which he fixed upon as the most precious to them in their hour of need, was peace with GOD.

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you.”

Observe, the Saviour does not say that he will give the believer a peace. The world can do that. The false hope, that maketh ashamed, can do that. But he promised to give his own peace the same untroubled calm that dwelt in his own bosom from all eternity.

Before you could make an animal happy with man's happiness, you would have to give it man's nature; and before the soul can be made happy with GOD's peace, it must first be made a partaker of GOD's nature. This is done when the soul believes in JESUS, and casts itself unreservedly upon his promises.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature"

Man lost his happiness when he lost the image of GOD upon his soul; and he can never be happy till that image is restored. No outward possession, and no outward surrounding can make him happy, while he has no peace with GOD.

Why was Adam unhappy after he became a sinner? He was still in paradise, with all its scenes of surpassing loveliness. The heavens were as bright above him, and the earth as beautiful around him as before, and yet he is now seen trembling with guilty terror, and seeking to hide himself from the presence of his GOD.

The reason is that sin has entered his soul, and instead of peace, there is misery and internal discord.

“There is no peace saith my God to the wicked.”

You might place a sinner in a palace, and ransack the four quarters of the globe, to find objects to administer to his pleasures. The voices of applauding thousands might shout his praise. A crowd of flatterers might bow at his nod; but sin reigning in his heart would convert all into the misery of hell. It would make his sweetest morsels bitter as gall. It would make his sweetest music harsh and discordant as the groans of the damned. It would make his soul turbulent as the heavings of the burning lake, and send out from the depths of his heart the cry:

"All is vanity and vexation of spirit."

Almost every good thing in this world has its counterfeit, and so is it with peace with GOD.

The prophet Jeremiah tells of some in his day who cried "**peace, peace, when there was no peace.**" The prophet was bitterly weeping over their lost condition, but they had not one tear to shed for themselves.

He saw all the extent of their tremendous peril, but no fear disturbed their deadly stupor.

Such persons fondly suppose that all is right with them, while all is wrong. They are spiritual bankrupts, while they think themselves "**rich and increased in goods.**" Perhaps there was a time when deep conviction of sin shook; their souls to their very center. The terrors of the Lord, and the powers of the world to come, made them afraid. Their feelings were excited to the highest pitch of human endurance. They longed for peace and comfort to come to them, from some quarter.

Now in the very nature of things the sinner will not remain long in this state. If he does not go at once to JESUS, and become possessor of true peace, he will go back into a callous indifference on the subject of religion, or else settle down upon some false hope.

It is a law of all nature that whatever is violent, cannot be lasting.

When we see a very violent storm, we know that it will not last long. The violent disease soon exhausts itself, or the patient. The grief that is furious and clamorous over the grave of a friend, seldom lasts long.

So when the mind is deeply moved to sorrow and alarm on the subject of religion, it is according to the philosophy of mind that there will be a reaction, that a calm will ensue, and the great danger is, unless the mind is faithfully dealt with, that this calm will be mistaken for the peace of GOD.

That this is the case with thousands of professing Christians, is evident from the fact that they can give no scriptural and intelligent reason, for the hope that is in them. That they felt very bad, and that after a time they feel better is about the sum total of their religious experience.

As to how a just and holy GOD can forgive them, without dishonoring his law, and compromising his truth, they can give you no scriptural account; and if they attempt to direct an anxious sinner, as to what he shall do to be saved, they at once exhibit the spectacle of "**the blind leading the blind.**"

Their religion being founded upon feeling not principle, soon settles down into a heartless form; and should the truth of GOD, at any time, startle their slumbering souls into alarm that all is not right with them, they immediately find comfort by falling back upon their religious experience, living in the remote past.

There is no class of a minister's hearers so hard to be reached by divine truth as those who have thus pillowed their head upon a false peace. He may preach the most faithful and powerful discourses, leaping warm from a heart filled with intense solicitude for the perishing. He may expose the danger of self-deceivers, with a clearness and fidelity that will sometimes alarm the true saints of GOD; for as an old writer says: "It is hard to drive the dogs out without making the children cry," but the deluded soul clutches with a tighter grasp the huge falsehood, with which it is descending to perdition.

Dear Reader, look well to the foundation of your peace.

If you make a mistake in your daily business, it may be corrected and no great harm done. If in the erection of a house, the construction of a machine, or the solving of a difficult problem, you make a mistake, the ground may be gone over again, and all be made right; but if you die wrong, it is an eternal mistake!

There is no coming back from, the land of despair, to correct mistakes made in reference to salvation; but with the day of grace ended, every rill of mercy dried up, the light of hope quenched in darkness, and insulted justice inflicting upon the soul its avenging strokes, eternity will be filled up with the doleful lamentation, "**the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved!**"

This peace is the only real support amid the trials and sorrows of life.. Earth has no ill, for which JESUS has not a cure. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and we are sometimes called to pass through afflictions in which the tenderest human sympathy can do us no good. Human comforters may administer a temporary relief, like a stupefying opiate given to the pain-racked sufferer, but JESUS can give a peace lasting all eternity.

Many are the remedies proposed for the sorrows of life.

Here is one who under the deep afflictions of his lot, frets, and murmurs, and complains and makes himself and all around him miserable, by pouring out his unavailable complaints.

Here is another who sits down under his trials with a hardened indifference, submitting to the lashes of a something that he calls fate, and sullenly declaring that he must bear what he cannot help. Of such ways of finding comfort, it may be said, as of Job's friends, "**miserable comforters are ye all.**"

When trouble comes to the believer he has far different comfort. He may be placed in the most trying circumstances, and every door of outward enjoyment may be shut, but then it is that JESUS comes into his soul, and in his own mild accents of love says, "**Peace be unto you.**"

See Paul and Silas in yonder gloomy prison. Their persecutors have scourged them till blood trickles down upon the floor of their cell, their feet are made fast in the stocks, and locked up there in darkness and gloom, we might suppose that their state of mind would be one of unmingled misery.

But in their hearts the imperishable principle of peace with GOD reigned, and so happy were they, that they broke out into a song of such gushing gladness, that the old prison walls for once reverberated to the very melody of heaven.

The man who has this peace can meet earthly trials, not only calm and undaunted, but rejoicing in all the appointments of his Heavenly Father.

A shower of afflictions may fall upon him, like the stones upon the head of the dying Stephen, yet like him he can see the heavens opened and the face of his Lord beaming with a smile of approval.

Like the three Hebrews, he may be cast into the fiery furnace, but like them, one walks with him there, like to the Son of GOD.

Like Peter, Satan may desire to have him that he may sift him as wheat, but like him he can hear his Lord say, "**I have prayed for you that your faith fail not.**"

His frail bark may be launched upon a turbulent sea of troubles, but across the billows he sees JESUS coming to comfort him in the dark night of his sorrow; and

"with CHRIST in the vessel
he smiles at the storm."

Dear reader, to convince you that all this is not mere empty theory, or a mere flourish of rhetoric, come along with me in one of my pastoral visits.

We will enter this humble dwelling, and as we enter the sick room tread softly, for you are upon holy ground. Angels are there, and the Lord of angels is there.

Upon that bed lies a kind Christian wife and mother, about to close her eyes upon earthly objects. By the bed-side stands her husband in deepest distress, bidding her farewell as she sinks down into the cold river of death. There too, are the little children, soon to be motherless, listening to her parting counsels, and imprinting their last kiss upon those cold lips, that first taught them to say, "**Our Father who art in heaven.**"

She presses her babe to that loving heart, already struck with the chill of death, and lifting up her eyes to heaven offers for it her last prayer.

And then with a countenance beaming with peace, she says,

"My blessed Saviour has come; I hear him say I have loved thee with an everlasting love; I have engraved thy name upon the palms of my hands."

She speaks to her weeping friends of a bright world where parting is unknown, where death never shows his ghastly visage, and where all that is pure becomes permanent.

It is thus that peace with GOD gives complete victory over death.

John Lambert, who was burned to death for CHRIST's sake, in Smithfield, when his legs were consumed away by the fire, lifted up his hand, his fingers blazing like torches, and cried with his last breath,

"None but CHRIST!
None but CHRIST!"

That great and good man Samuel Rutherford, said to some ministers who came to see him on his death-bed:

"Brethren, do all for CHRIST,
pray for CHRIST,
preach for CHRIST,
feed the flock for CHRIST,
visit the sick for CHRIST,
do all for CHRIST."

The dying words of John Knox were, "Come, Lord JESUS; sweet JESUS, unto thy hands I commend my spirit."

The biographer of John Elliot the missionary among the Indians, tells us that on his death bed, "He was full of peace, of hope, of a calm and full trust in JESUS, that nothing could shake; yet his humility, like a guardian angel, ever hovered around his heart, and kept it in safety."

Reader! Prepare to meet thy GOD.

Get by faith in JESUS that peace that maketh not ashamed, and death to you will be great gain.

"Is that a death-bed
where the Christian lies?
Yes: but not his,
'Tis death himself there dies."

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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