

# Perfect Peace

AND

## Everlasting Strength.

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“Thou wilt keep him in *perfect peace* whose mind is stayed on Thee ; because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever ; for in the LORD JEHOVAH is *everlasting strength*” (Isa. xxvi. 3-4).

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**P**ERFECT peace in trouble, and everlasting strength in weakness from Jehovah, is the sure portion of the soul who trusts Him, for faithful is

the Promiser. It was not always so. Once we were restless like the ever troubled sea (Isa. lvii. 20). Once we built upon the crumbling sand (Matt. vi. 26). Once we were lost and guilty, but now how blessed the contrast ! Peace, Peace ! instead of the wild tossing and heaving of former days ; and the rock of ages set in Jah Jehovah, in place of the old house without foundation, resting on the crumbling, shifting sands of the sea shore !

It may be for our soul's profit to briefly consider some of the various aspects of "perfect peace," or, as in the margin of our text, "Peace, Peace."

1. **Peace of Conscience.** This was made between the rebellious sinner and God. We hated, He loved. We were His avowed enemies ; we declared open war against Him, and lifted up our proud hearts and puny arms in mad opposition to Him who in love to us, gave His Son to die. Who could make peace, and reconcile the sinner to God ? O the fruitless, weary, never-ending and impossible task of a sinner “making his peace with God.” Christ was the One great *Peace-maker*. The believing sinner is the *Peace-taker*. “Having made peace through the blood of His cross” (Col. i. 20). *Who*

made it? Christ. *Where* was it made? At Calvary. By *what* was it made? The blood of the cross. *When* was it made? Nigh 2000 years ago. It was this same perfect peace which the Lord bequeathed to us as a priceless legacy (John xiv. 27), the peace left, not that given. Peace was the first word with which *He* broke the stillness of the first Lord's-day evening and calmed and hushed the fears of His troubled disciples. "Peace unto you" (John xx. 19). It is peace with God and we have it (Rom. v. 1). Blessed be His adorable name. This perfect peace with God can never be disturbed, or broken, or inter-

rupted. It is enduring as the throne of the eternal God. It may not be ever consciously enjoyed, but it cannot be lost, for "*He is our peace*" (Eph. ii. 14). The memorials of that conflict in "the place called Calvary"—where Christ in the might of irresistible love grappled with the question of our sins and gloriously overcame Satan, were witnessed in the body of the conqueror (John xx. 20), and will yet be seen in the Lamb on the throne (Rev. v. 6). Where, then, is there room for doubt or fear? Peace, Perfect Peace, unbroken Peace is the present and blessed fruit of the cross, irrespective of the

strength or weakness of your faith, apart too from what you think, or feel. Peace with God is a *fact*; many confound it with experience, with enjoyment, with happy frames and feelings. But neither one nor all of these constitute "Peace with God:" *this* is God-given, *these* are its effects. We can scan our past life and look boldly forward—the past with all its guilt and utter ruin, the seething mass of iniquity; and the future with its possibilities of sinning—and rejoice and triumph in that soul-emancipating truth "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. The Peace of Christ. We have the perfect peace of Christ given us. "Peace I *leave* with you, My peace I *give* unto you" (John xiv. 27). The former is peace of *conscience*; the latter is peace of *heart*; the former is left as the fruit of the cross; the latter is given personally by Christ. Two practical illustrations from Scripture will show what the peace of Christ is, and how a believer learnt it.

#### IN THE SHIP.

In Matt. viii. 23-27 the Lord entered a ship. The wearied Master laid down His head on a pillow, lovingly provided by an unknown devoted heart and a

loving hand (Mark iv. 38). Satan knew that the Lord was there. Quickly the Galilean sea was lashed into fury ; the tempest raged, and wind and wave combined to engulf the ship with its sleeping freight. He who holds "the waters in the hollow of His hand," whether awake or asleep, was in calm profound slumber. *That* was the peace of Christ. The terrified disciples awoke their Master with the reproach : "Master, carest Thou not that *we* perish?" (Mark iv. 38). As if *He* could cease to care for His much-loved disciples ; as if their sorrows and distress could be a matter of indifference



to Him ! Ah ! they had to learn that the storm that would sink *them* would equally engulf *Him*. He is with us in the wildest storms of life, as we shall be with Him in the deep glories of heaven. Calmly opening His eyes and fixing a look of mingled love and sorrow upon them, He first hushed the storm in their troubled breasts. We have hung again and again with wonder, and worship, and delight over this exquisite picture ! Before ever the Master raised His head from His pillow ; before ever He quieted the storm without—while too the tempest was at its height—the calm, reproving voice of the Lord

first stilled the tempest and conflict in the hearts of His beloved. “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? *Then* He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea ; and there was a great calm.” He spread this “great calm ” in the souls of His own, and on the face of nature; first the one, and then the other. Believer, is this great calm keeping you amidst life’s troubles in perfect peace? The Lord of the Galilean sea is our own Saviour ; our own everlasting friend. It is His hand which wipes away the tear His tender word and love which assuages the deep, deep sorrows of life. He knows how to hush to

sleep and rest the tired and wearied.  
“My peace I give unto you.”

#### IN THE PRISON.

There was at least one in the ship who learned the profound lesson—one who so shared in the perfect peace of Christ that he had to be roused from sleep, not by a whisper, but by a stroke on the side by an angelic hand. A storm of persecution unto death has burst upon the Church at Jerusalem (Acts xii.) The sword has sent James to Paradise (verse 2). Now Herod and the Jews thirst for the blood of Peter, whose brave words and testimony with his fellow-apostles had turned Jeru-

saalem upside down (Acts v.) He is apprehended, lodged in prison, chained, and committed to the safe custody of sixteen soldiers, besides the prison keepers. Herod was about to bring forth *his* prisoner to gratify the cruel malice of the murderous Jews. But look at the *Lord's* prisoner. Calmly he sleeps, bound with two chains and lying between the wakeful soldiers, while warders kept guard outside. The Master slept in the ship. Peter slept in prison. He is a practical illustration of Psalm iv. 8, "I will both lay me down in *peace* and *sleep* ; for Thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety."

How deep the peace ! How profound the slumbers of the apostle may be gathered from the action of the delivering angel. “He *smote* Peter on the side and raised him up” (verse 7). The Christ who once slept in the almost sinking vessel had given His peace to Peter, and now oversees and guards His faithful servant as he slept in fearless peace. The master is unchanged. He giveth His beloved sleep as He did to Peter (Acts xii. 7), and songs in the night as He did to Paul (Acts xvi. 25). The peace and holy calm which never disturbed the heart or ruffled the brow of our Lord amidst

the wildest storms of life, He gives to us each one. "Why are ye troubled?" Why do the storms of life affright the soul? Is thy Lord not with you in the ship? Can He not say at the fitting moment to the proud waves of passion or sorrow "Peace, be still"? He will calm the loudest tempest at His own fitting moment.

**3. The Peace of God (Phil. iv. 7).** Many of the Lord's dear people embitter their lives and shorten their days from sheer neglect of the Word of God. They carry a load of care utterly beyond their strength, and sooner or later

they break down. They are consumed with an anxiety which leaves its certain impress upon soul and body. The government of the world, the Church, of individuals in all circumstances are borne on the shoulders of the blessed Lord (Isa. ix. 6-7; xxii. 20-25). The end is sure, and for the believer most glorious ; while the *way* and *means* to the grand consummation are clear and light to Him, if dark and unknown to us. He would carry both you and your burden. “ Casting *all* your care upon Him ; for He careth for you ” (1 Peter v. 7). Here is a blessed sentence of but four words

which have lightened many hearts and brightened many dull souls : “ *Be careful for nothing* ” (Phil. iv. 6). Do not be worried at the apparent wreck of the Church or ruin of the world. Do not distress yourself about anticipated or imagined evils ; they may never come. Stay the anxious mind upon God and He will keep you in perfect peace. Don't be anxious about the future of your family. Leave the issue as to the sickness in your household in His hands. Don't trouble about a coming winter, or the care and provision of the family. Don't be careless or indifferent as to all these and other



matters which ought rightly enough to exercise the soul and lead to diligence of heart and business activity too. But cast every weight and cause of anxiety on *Him* who careth for you. Turn everything as it comes into matter of prayer. Lift up the daily and hourly care and lay all down on the throne of the eternal with thanksgiving: "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds." Clouds, tempests, winds, and waves are all beneath the throne of God. No storm ever sweeps through the palace home of the King ; no cloud, or mist, or shadow ever rolls across the

eternal summer sky of heaven. The throne of God is undisturbed by the storms of earth. The holy calm of the eternal God — His unbroken peace which passeth the knowledge of man or angel—is the safeguard of the heart and mind which has *first* emptied itself and poured out its tale of sorrow and care into that mighty receptacle of human griefs and cares—the heart of God.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.” Peace amidst the thronging duties of life ! Peace in the hour of death, and near prospect of eternity ! Peace in

the wreck around and in the race of life ! Peace amid the strife and din of the ecclesiastical world ! Peace while surging billows roll around ! Peace amidst circumstances of trial, of poverty, of wealth, of sickness, of death ! Blessed Lord, keep thine own in perfect peace till we see Thy face in glory !

We have not only, however, perfect peace assured us by Jehovah amidst life's circumstances of sin, of sorrow, of trial ; but in Him, in the very heart of its source, we have EVERLASTING STRENGTH. “*In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength,*” or, as in the

margin, "the rock of ages." Luther was more than a match for the combined forces of the civil and ecclesiastical powers of Christendom. His strength was in God and Jah Jehovah fought the forces of evil through the simple monk of Wittemberg, and won for all succeeding generations the ever glorious Reformation. The truth is that in human history it is no question whatever of difficulty. Circumstances and occasions of utter wreck and ruin are grand opportunities for God to display Himself. Impossible, is not the language for a man of prayer and faith.

The moment you bring the power of

God into the most desperate circumstances, there is an end of fear and doubt; questioning ceases, and the case is settled. Jehovah shall do it, and faith says, "it is done." Again and again has the Living God lifted up His glory out of the ashes of a ruined corporate and individual testimony. There is just one thing God cannot do. He cannot deny Himself. This then is faith's confidence and stronghold. Utter weakness grips the throne of the Eternal God; faith clings to the Living God and laughs at the word *impossibility*.

In Jehovah—the Self-existing One—

“whose Being none can know,” is everlasting strength. Jehovah was Israel’s memorial name (Exod. vi. 3); the import of which is taught us in Rev. i. 8, “which *is*, and which *was*, and which is to *come*.” The public mention of the dread and sacred name JEHOVAH is strictly forbidden by Jewish law. Sabbathai Sevi, an impostor, falsely claiming to be the Messiah, dared to pronounce the awful name, and was at once deemed worthy of death by the Rabbins; this was 260 years ago. Veneration for the name is unchanged. This sublime title is Israel’s stronghold through centuries of national degra-

dition, and in the darkest moment of their sorrowful and chequered history, with strength broken, hope perished, persecuted in every land, crushed in spirit, and without home and country. Yet the seeds of future national glory are laid deep in this magnificent title.—Jehovah. Is He not as much to us as He is to Israel? Is not His name and what it signifies enough for Gentile need as for Jewish want?

Be strong in the Lord, ye weak. Confide in God Himself, ye fearful and timid. Build your ruined hopes, your desperate circumstances on this rock of ages. Is health failing, friends for-

saking, and poverty about to encircle and gird you tight with its attendant evils? Lay you down on everlasting strength. Is Church division and strife working havoc in your heart and household, and amongst your friends, casting you into a heartless isolation? Stay yourself on everlasting strength. If fellowship with friends and brethren is denied you, see that you increasingly cultivate "fellowship with the Father and the Son;" that will more than compensate for the loss. This is a day of weakness and of small things, but we have made it so. Talk of blessing in the Church and in the world? De-



fine the limits of what God may not do in both spheres of His grace? What is needed to stay the cruel and utterly heartless strifes which are tearing the Church to pieces, and making her the sport of an unbelieving world is an energy of soul which will storm the throne of God, and faith which will build its confidence alone on the rock of ages. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" is a twice repeated question (Gen. xviii. 14 and Jer. xxxii. 27). What is the need of the day amongst the Lord's beloved people? It is to be brought into a condition of such utter helplessness as to beget absolute con-

fidence in the Living God. Has weakness brought us to this point, that we cannot do without God ? “ Without Me ye can do nothing ” (John xv. 5) is the lesson of ages, and of both Testaments ; but the converse is equally true, *with Him* we can do anything.

“ Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ? There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint ; and to them that have no might He giveth strength ” (Isa. xl. 28, 29).

Make the God of heaven and earth your resource, your confidence, your strength. Don't measure difficulties by your ability, or wisdom, or capacity to meet them, but measure the world, the power of Satan, and the evil of your own heart by what God is and what He has done. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Faith confidently answers: "There is nothing too hard for Thee" (Jer. xxxii. 17).



## PEACE ! PERFECT PEACE !

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"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee ; because he trusteth in Thee."

(ISAIAH xxvi. 3).

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PEACE ! perfect peace ! in this dark world  
of sin ?

The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.

Peace ! perfect peace ! by thronging duties  
To do the will of Jesus, this is rest. [press'd?

Peace ! perfect peace ! with sorrows surging  
round ?

On Jesus' bosom nought but calm is found.

Peace ! perfect peace ! with loved ones far  
away ?

In Jesus' keeping we are safe, and they.

Peace ! perfect peace ! our future all un-  
known ?

Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.

Peace ! perfect peace ! death shadowing us  
and ours ?

Jesushas vanquish'd death and all its powers.

It is enough : earth's struggles soon shall  
cease,

And Jesus call to heaven's perfect peace.