



Helps to Holiness

Chapter 21 – PERFECT PEACE

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee because he trusteth in Thee" (Isaiah xxvi. 3).

A wonderful promise is that, and it ought to be the aim of every one of us to make it our experience. The way to do this is simple: it is to keep our minds stayed on our Lord. But while it is simple, I confess it is no easy matter for most men to do it. They would rather think about business, about pleasure, about the news of the day, about politics, education, music, or about the work of the Lord, than about the Lord Himself.

Now, business and other things must needs take some of our thought, and we must pay attention to the work of the Lord, if we love Him and the souls for whom He died; but, just as the maiden in all her work and pleasure thinks of her lover, and just as the young bride filled with new cares is in her heart communing with her husband, though he may be far from her, so we should in everything think of, and commune with, Jesus, and let our hearts fully trust His wisdom, love and power, and then we shall be kept in "perfect peace."

Just think of it! "All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid" in Him, and we, in our ignorance and foolishness, are "complete in Him." We may not understand, but He understands. We may not know, but He knows. We may be perplexed, but He is not perplexed. Then we ought to trust Him if we are His, and we shall be kept in "perfect peace."

Ten thousand times I have been at my wits' end, but, oh! how it comforted me to know that Jesus saw the end from the beginning and was making all things work together for my good because I loved and trusted Him! Jesus is never at His wits' end, and when we are most puzzled and confounded by our foolishness and short-sightedness, Jesus, in the fullness of His love and with all the infinity of His wisdom and power, is working out the desires of our hearts, if they be



holy desires; for does He not say, "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him" (Ps. cxlv. 19)?

Jesus not only has wisdom and love, but He assures us that "all power in Heaven and earth" is His, so that the counsels of His wisdom and the tender desire of His love cannot fail for lack of power to fulfill them. He can turn the hearts of kings, and make them do His will, and His faithful love will lead Him to do it, if we but trust Him. Nothing is more surprising to the children of God, who trust Him and watch His ways, than the marvelous and unexpected deliverances He works out for them, and the kind of people He uses to fulfill His will.

Our hearts long to see the glory of the Lord and the prosperity of Zion, and we pray to God and wonder how the desire of our hearts is to be obtained; but we trust and look unto God, and He sets to work, with the most unlikely people and in the most unheard-of way, to answer our prayers and reward our patient faith. And so, in all the little vexatious trials and delays of our everyday, plodding life, if we trust and keep on rejoicing right through all that bothers us, we will find God at work for us, for He says He is a "present help in trouble" – all trouble – and so He is to all who keep their minds stayed on Him. Only a short period has elapsed since the Lord has been allowing me to pass through a series of the most troublesome little times, just calculated to annoy me to the uttermost. But while waiting on Him in prayer, He showed me that if I had more confidence in Him in my difficulties, I would keep on rejoicing, and so get blessings out of my trials, as Samson got honey out of the carcass of the lion he slew, and so I proved it to be. Bless His holy name! I did rejoice, and one trial after the other vanished away, and only the sweetness of my Lord's presence and blessing remained, and my heart has been kept in perfect peace since.

Does not God do all this to hide pride from us, to humble us, and make us see that our character before Him is of more consequence than our service to Him; to teach us to walk by faith and not by sight, and to encourage us to trust and be at peace?

Now, let no honest soul whose faith is small, nor any of those big busybodies, who seem to think that if they did not worry and fret and rush about and make a great noise the universe would come to a standstill and go to ruin, suppose for an instant that there is any likeness whatever



between "perfect peace" and perfect indifference. Indifference is a child of sloth. Peace is the offspring of a faith that is ceaseless in its activity – an activity that is the most perfect, and the mightiest of which man is capable, for through it, poor unarmed men have "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, women received their dead raised to life again" (Heb. xi. 33-35).

To exercise this mighty faith which brings "perfect peace," we must receive the Holy Ghost into our hearts, and recognize Him, not as an influence or an attribute of God, but as God Himself. He is a Person, and He will make us know Jesus, and understand His mind and will, and realize His constant presence, if we trust Him. Jesus is ever present with us, and, if we long for Him, it will so please Him that He will always help us to stay our minds on Him.

It will require some effort on our part, however; for the world, business, the weakness of the flesh, the infirmities of our minds, the careless example of the people about us, and the devil with all his wiles, will so seek to turn our thoughts from our Lord and make us forget Him, that, maybe, not more than once or twice in twenty-four hours shall our thoughts and affections turn to Him, and then only by a strong and prolonged effort, and even in times of prayer we may not really find God.

Let us then cultivate the habit of communing with Jesus. When our thoughts wander from Him, let us turn them back again; but let us do this quietly and patiently, for any impatience, even with ourselves, is dangerous, disturbing our inward peace, drowning the still small voice of the Spirit, and hindering the grace of God from mastering us and subduing our hearts.

But if, in all meekness and lowliness of heart, we allow the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, and are obedient to His voice, He will keep our hearts in a holy calm in the midst of ten thousand cares and weaknesses and troubles.



"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep garrison your hearts and mind through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 6, 7).