



Love-Slaves

Chapter 5 – The Angels Song Of Peace

Heavenly beings always put the things of Heaven first. Our Lord Jesus placed ever the thought of unseen and eternal glory before the trifles of earth.

I have been much impressed with the order of the prayer which Jesus gave His disciples. Before teaching them to ask for daily bread, or the forgiveness of sins, or deliverance from evil, or protection in time of temptation, He taught them to pray that the Father's name should be hallowed; that the Kingdom of God might come, and that His will might be done on earth as it is in Heaven. He put heavenly things first. God was the center of His thought and desire, and God's glory His chief concern; and it was this that He would teach His disciples.

What Jesus taught His disciples, that He himself practiced, as we learn from His prayer in John xvii. Alone, deserted, on the eve of the denial of Peter and the great betrayal, His thought was for the glory of the Father. He asked that while men put Him to utter shame, the Father would glorify Him, but only that He might in turn glorify the Father.

When the Captain of God's Host appeared to Joshua, his first and only word was not the outlining of an attack upon the enemy, but this: 'Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy.' He would impress Joshua with the importance of holy and heavenly things.

And so with the heavenly host which appeared over the plain of Bethlehem. The first note of their song was, 'Glory to God in the highest.' They put heavenly things first. God was foremost in their thought, then His glory; afterwards they sang, 'Peace on earth and goodwill toward men.'

The law and the Gospel are but the law and the spirit of Heaven projecting themselves into this world. They are introduced among men for their Salvation, for their guidance, and for the direction of their lives, their desires, their aspirations. All who seek to keep God's law and who



embrace the Gospel are introduced into the life and spirit of Heaven and become citizens of Heaven. As heavenly beings therefore they must put heavenly things first; they must live the life of Heaven upon earth. In the light of these truths, the Christmas song of the angels, sung over the sleepy little town of Bethlehem, becomes a guide to us in these days. Our chief business is to give glory to God, to put Him first in our lives, to have a divine jealousy for His honor.

This spirit of seeking God's glory first will make us fight sin. We shall hate sin, because it robs God of His own – of His right and His glory in man. One who has this spirit would rather die than commit sin because He loves to honor God. God is supreme in his thought. God is first in his love. All his affections embrace God, and his heart mourns, and sobs, and breaks, or waxes hot with holy indignation when he sees God dishonored, rejected, and unloved.

This spirit will lead us out to warfare for God. He who possesses it cannot sit still while the Devil has his own way and while God is robbed and wronged. It leads him to go out and plead with men, exhort men, command men, compel men to turn from their evil ways, to give up sin, to yield their hearts to God, and to love and serve Him.

This Spirit also leads us to meditate, to plan, to take counsel with our own hearts, and in every way possible to find out the best means by which we can win men over to God's side, save them from their sins for God's glory, and turn them into warriors for His Army.

This spirit makes sacrifice a joy and service a delight. Everything that man with this spirit has is at God's disposal; he gives his whole life for the glory of his Lord. He only wishes that he had a thousand lives and could live a thousand years to fight God's battles. Oh, blessed is the man that is so filled with this spirit of Heaven that he puts heavenly things first, and sings on earth while the angels sing in Heaven: 'Glory to God in the highest!

It is only in proportion as this spirit possesses men and takes possession of the earth that the second note of the Christmas song of the angels becomes possible – 'Peace on earth and goodwill toward men.'



We live in an age when the brotherhood of man is much spoken about, both in exhortation and in literature; but there can be no brotherhood where there is no fatherhood. Brothers must have a common father; and brothers who disown or neglect their father, have not the spirit which will make it possible long to live at peace with, or show goodwill towards each other. We shall have peace on earth and good will among men, and we shall have it universally, when everywhere men recognize God's Fatherhood and give God the glory which is His due.

Oh, how peacefully men live together, and how they love one another when they get right with God! How a revival in which souls get truly converted settles old grudges, and local quarrels, and family disputes, and other wranglings and strivings of men! Love to God will beget tender love to men; true love; love that is patient, longsuffering, forbearing, and unsuspicious; love that leads to just and righteous dealings, to truth and reliability in word and action – and these are essential to true peace and goodwill amongst men.

The Bible declares that there is a good time coming when men will learn war no more, when they will be ashamed to attack one another in war, when war colleges will be done away with. May that day hasten! But it will hasten only as heavenly things are put first. We may talk about the brutalities of war, about the widows and orphans that mourn their beloved slain, – about the young men that are shattered and torn by shot and shell, and about the utter waste of property; but it is only as holy men prevail over unholy men, by winning the world to love God, that the glad time foretold by the prophet will be brought about.

Solomon said: 'Only by pride cometh contention.' At the heart of every quarrel, in the confusion of every brawl, and in the hate and fury of every war, pride will be found – pride of opinion, of wit or wisdom, of physical strength, of position, of reputation, or of power. Truly humble men never begin strife. They speak softly; they are willing to make concessions; they are 'swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath'; they 'seek peace, and pursue it.' As far as in them lies, they live peaceably with all men.

If such people do get mixed up in a contention, they may fight manfully, but it is for the sake of



righteous and ordered peace, and not from pride of self. They are peacemakers, not strife-makers. They follow peace with all men, and they do this because their lives, their desires, their affections, their ambitions and activities are all guided and ruled by one glad, glorious purpose – the glory of God. That purpose consumes pride. Human pride and pomp, and the glory which man can give look utterly contemptible to the one whose eye is single to the glory of God.

And this desire for God's glory makes peacemakers of men. They love their fellows because they are dear to the heart of God. A tender feeling of sympathy, and love, and brotherhood steals into their hearts, takes captive all their affections, fills them with love of God's will, banishes hatred, disarms suspicion, and establishes within them God's Kingdom of 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.'

It is this spirit that has made our Slum Officers mightier than police officials in the dark alleys and fetid cellars and garrets of London and New York. It was this that gave William Penn and David Brainerd such heavenly power over the wild Indians of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and that enabled John Gibson Paton to work such miracles of Salvation in the southern islands of the Pacific Ocean.

Unless influenced by this spirit, the nations will go on building dreadnoughts while their proud hearts are quaking with nameless dread: they will cast great guns and invent submarines and airships for the destruction of men. But let every humble lover of Jesus Christ catch the spirit and sing the Christmas song of the angels, assured that God is on the side of the men of peace who love Him and seek His glory, and have hearts which brim over with good will.

Our God is 'the God of peace.' Let us wait on Him in fervent prayer and faith for the fulfillment of the angels' song, and put away hate and suspicion and strife for ever from our hearts, that, as far as in us lies, His will may be done on earth as it is done in Heaven. He has made the nations of one blood. May they become of one spirit! It is our mission to make them so.

How shall we do this? How can I, a poor, weak, short-sighted, single-handed man, help to fill the



world with peace and goodwill?

In the first place by keeping my own heart with all diligence, and letting the peace of God rule in it. To this end, if any one wrongs me, I must beware of harboring ill will toward him and of thinking how I can get even with him. I must remember how much worse Jesus was treated, and how He prayed for His enemies – for the men who were doing Him to death and mocking Him in His agony. I must be filled with His blessed, loving, meek, forgiving spirit. It is no sin to be tempted to be angry and revengeful; but it is a sin if I yield in my heart to this temptation.

I must also be a man of peace in my own family and community, in my Corps or Church. I must seek to soothe instead of irritate the people about me, remembering that, 'A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger.'

Also, and greatest, most important work of all, though I cannot enter into the councils of kings, and presidents, and war lords, and in such high places work for peace among the nations, I can enter into my closet and pray for these great men with their heavy burdens of care and perplexity and responsibility, asking God to guide and help them to rule the world in peace.

Indeed, we are exhorted to do this. Here is blessed and important knee-work for every humble Salvation Soldier, in which he may mightily help to prevent war and maintain the peace of the world. Listen to Paul: 'I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.'

God does not set us to pray in vain, and if Salvationists in the States, and Britain, and Germany, and France, and other countries, will pray in love and faith, they can help to establish the peace of Europe and of the world. Blessed be God! Let us exalt our calling to be men of peace, peacemakers, and let us pray with faith and great gladness, and God will hear and give us peace. And, 'When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?'