

of the believer rests is perfect—it has no flaw—no change—no defect. Hence you may account for the fact that the Christian has constantly, to a certain extent, a satisfaction of mind, a feeling of peace with God, which neither earthly calamities can unsettle, nor sin and temptation dispossess him of: at the same time that being imperfectly sanctified, and imperfectly possessed of the spirit of adoption, he is sometimes heard to sigh as one burdened with a body of death, and to lament after the Lord as one who is cast down, forsaken, walking in darkness, having no light. The fact is undeniable, that the believer while here is militant: his conflict is not ended, nor his full victory won.

It is an important question, how he shall best cherish the peace he has tasted—how regain it, when interrupted, or diminished, or apparently lost. Were we to answer the question summarily in one word, we might say, Invite and cherish the Spirit. The text implies this suggestion—whatever is a fruit of the Spirit must owe its maintenance and perfecting to the same heavenly agent who is concerned in its production. But these subsidiary rules may aid us:—1. Faith, exercised anew and often, may be expected to cherish the happy feeling of security, which it, instrumentally, brought to us at first. Faith, in every view of it, is calculated to recover a soul to spiritual health: since there is no ground or source of peace to which faith has not an important relation.—How, but by believing, are we to renew our access to the peace-speaking blood of Christ? How, but by a believing appropriation of the promises, are we to taste their sweetness? Is it not as receiving the good that is in them—nay, in cleaving to God himself as given in these to be the portion of the soul, that the Christian finds every obstruction to his peace, every temptation to despondency, counteracted, and disarmed of its

power? To faith, in short, the Spirit is promised. Faith is the bond of union and communion with his living Head. Faith, realising things unseen, strips the things seen both of their seducing, and their discouraging influences.

2. Repentance is needful also—repentance, in its frequently renewed exercises. He, that confesseth, and forsaketh sin, shall have mercy. Peace rests on righteousness; and the same eternal law which only justifies on the footing of a righteousness that is perfect, still claims, even when become the law of a reconciled Father, that the child of grace shall walk in love, to walk in joy; shall, while still liable to sin, at least not live in peace with it; while encompassed by the flesh, shall be led by the Spirit. Such is the test of safety given in the context. “If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law,” (the condemning law). But assuredly he, who is “led” by the Spirit, will be longing after the perfection he has not reached, and feels it a congenial employ to mourn over his short-comings—and to confess and bewail them with ingenuous sorrow. And God is near to the contrite. A broken spirit is a pleasing sacrifice. (See the experience of Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18.)

3. In connection with this, and as a consequence of it, practical reformation, and holy, watchful living, is a remedy in the case supposed. “As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them.” “To him, says the Saviour, will I manifest myself, who loveth me and keepeth my commandments.” Gal. vi. 16; Jno. xiv. 21.

4. Are we to forget prayer as having so sure a bearing on the Christian’s calm of mind, and contentment of Spirit? “Be careful for nothing, (says Paul), but 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 your