

faction in the exercise of grace, or when the Spirit shines upon it in the performance of duty. And thus it is that the more a Christian keeps the divine commandments and perceives an agreement between the law of his mind, and the law of God, the greater is his peace. "Great peace have they who love thy law. In the keeping of the commandments there is this by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus; and it is no less than the effect of victorious grace, great reward." Peace in short is obtained, operating within the man, and reducing to a conformity with the divine will all the powers of the soul. It is the kingdom of God within us; righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. How happy the man thus changed! At peace with God, he is at peace with himself; at peace with all men; with all creatures. His soul is in harmony with the order of the universe. Earth, sea, and sky, he finds in all materials where-with to serve God, and helps in praising Him. Whatever he enjoys of the creature has now a double zest, because enjoyed in God. Earth looks greener to his sight and every flower fairer. The sun shines the emblem of a better light—the light now within him. The rains fall, remembrancers of the showers of the Spirit. The rainbow spans the heaven, the token of an everlasting covenant. In the very thunder he hears the whisper of his reconciled father. The most terrible of nature's elements are but the hiding of his power, whose right hand is underneath him and around him. "The very stones of the field are in league with him; the very beasts of the field are at peace with him."

II. We are therefore prepared, secondly, to speak of some of the distinguished excellencies of this peace. It is the "peace of God," it passes understanding—it is independent of the world and its changes.

1. It is the peace of God: so the Apostle calls it. It is of God in its production—

it is of God in its maintenance, it is worthy of God; warranted by him, as resting on grounds he approves. How truly is that the peace of God in whose production all the divine persons are concerned. Here it is attributed to the Holy Ghost; but elsewhere it is traced to the Father. He is the God of peace; the very God of peace; (1 Thess v.). And need I remind you that Christ bestows it, as what is his by right of purchase. "My peace, I give unto you;" John xiv. How truly, not only in respect of its source, but its excellence, is it denominated "the peace of God?" Hence,

2. It passes all understanding—It is like the joy with which a stranger cannot intermeddle. None knoweth it but they who receive it—nor is it without a mysterious character even to them. Flowing from transcendent love, the effect of a transcendent sacrifice—it is itself transcendent—and carries its own evidence of being divine, to the Christian's sense or feeling.—To that we add,

3. It contrasts with mere created good: It is independent of the world and its changes—often enjoyed in its abundance in the absence of all earthly good, or in the seasons when earthly comforters prove most valueless; "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

III. This happy state of mind is not always possessed. It has indeed certain elements of stability and permanency; hence called perfect as compared with the world's peace. And we may perhaps best explain the fact of what is called perfect in one place, appearing from the confessions of the saints in other places to be variable or fluctuating, by recurring to what has been set forth under our first head, of the relation of peace to sanctification and adoption, as well as to justification. The righteousness on which the primary privilege