

But is for him a needful one. His view of Scripture is so frightfully opposed to our Saviour's view that to avoid absolute separation from our Saviour he is compelled to resort to the limitation of knowledge theory, that is, that our Saviour was so ignorant that his views of Scripture is worthless as a guide to us. The question is, is he justified in holding the theory?

(To be continued.)

### The Alphabet of Peace.\*

Scripture Psalm. 37 : 1-12.

Some of the most beautiful verses in the Bible are those which promise Peace to the Christian. Such are Christ's words in John 14-17. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. And John 16-33. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

But not only is Peace *promised*, but positively commanded, as in Colossians 3:15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

Paul tells us in Romans 14-17. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And in Galatians 5:22 that the fruit of the indwelling Spirit is peace, 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. Isaiah tells us in chapter 54:13 that thus peace shall be universal, 13 And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

Peace then is not only a *privilege*, but a *duty*; a positive command. "The chastisement of our peace was upon *Him*," and we grieve *Him*, as long as we are without this gift of peace.

Yet how very few Christians seem to possess this promised peace: how many sing "Of peace I only know the name, nor found my soul its rest." Like Owen Meredith's Lucile they cry—"My life is like a storm beaten ark, wildly hurled on the whirlpool of time, mid the wreck of a world; the dove from my bosom has flown far away." Someone has said, "Should a census be taken of the Christians who are really kept in this promised peace, we should be appalled at the smallness of the number." Very many have not even noticed that peace is our legacy, and that we are thus commanded to let it rule in our hearts.

Yet we all realize that Peace is one of the most precious things the soul can enjoy. Amid this world of turmoil, sorrow and sin, no possession can equal the peace of a mind stayed on God.

In studying this subject of peace we find *two-sides* to it—God's part and ours—a Divine and human side.

#### 1st God's Part.

The Bible speaks of a threefold gift of peace. Peace *with* God—The peace of God—and peace *from* God. In Romans 5:1 peace with God—Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This is Christ's finished work—the peace of the Cross, also spoken of in Ephesians 2:13-17. This peace is already made; was made 2000 years ago, and the Gospel is the proclamation of it to the ends of the earth; of it the angels sang at Christ's birth.

\*The Superintendent of evangelistic work or some other member should be prepared, Bible in hand, to read all references.

But again we read in the Philippians 4-7 of the peace of God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. This is peace of the heart communicated to us by the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is the peace to which Christ referred when he said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace give I unto you." The former peace was the legacy of the dying Jesus; this is the gift of the living Christ. The first has to do with our past sins; the second with our present experience.

The third peace mentioned is peace from God, referred to at the beginning of nearly all the Epistles, as Romans 1-7, Cor. 1-3, Galatians 1-3. "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." The word in this connection means grace and mercy, and includes the blessings we need for time and eternity.

On the Divine side then we have this threefold gift of peace. Peace as to the past with its sin and failure; peace in the present through the Divine Spirit, and mercy and grace for all time, in the blessings of peace.

#### 2nd. The Human Side of Life.

We have seen God's part, but what is *our* part? How shall we learn the secret of peace?

In Psalm 37 we have the human side, or alphabet of peace. Let us study this Psalm a little. It is David's philosophy of life written in old age. He did not write as a Stoic, taking a gloomy view of life, nor as an Epicurean seeking only the pleasure of life; nor as a hermit shunning its temptation and duties, but as a man of the world, king, citizen, soldier, father—as a child of God in the world, sorrowing, sinning, serving. The Psalm has therefore been entitled—The course of this world seen in the light of faith; over it we may write "Say to the righteous it shall be well with him," but "woe to the wicked it shall be ill with him." Tertullian called this 37th Psalm—"Providential Speculum" or Glass of Providence, Isidore called it "Potio, contra murmur," a portion against murmuring, and Luther called it Vestis Piorum, the Dress of Piety.

The Psalm is addressed to a soul confused and alarmed at the problems and evils of the world; the success of the wicked, and suffering of the good—doubt arises, and this Psalm gives us the experience by which he spells his way back to God and peace.

1st. Fret Not. Nothing is more sure to disturb peace than fretting and worry. The word means literally to kindle a flame—flames of anger, envy, jealousy. Ahab had a shining palace in Samaria, yet was fretted and envious over the little vineyard of Naboth, and his envy leads to a terrible sin. Queen Elizabeth worried when in prison, and envied her milk maid, yet God was training her for 44 years of splendid achievement.

How almost universally is peace destroyed by worry. We fret because of the past, with its failures and mistakes, over present environment and limitation, because of the uncertainty of the future for ourselves and for our loved ones. Fretting does no good, and dishonors God. If you can improve your circumstances God would have you do so, but if not, your limitations and circumstances are doubtless His best will for you; but you *can* cultivate a calm, quiet, controlled spirit; you *can* by faith lay hold of God's peace, and stop fretting, and this alone is a great step towards peace.

But advance a step further in the Psalm; verse 5 reads "Commit thy way unto the Lord," or in the original "Roll thy way upon Jehovah"—*All* thy way; the whole

burden of life, "Casting all your care upon Him." All anxieties: all the mystery of God's prudence. God reigns! trust Him and fret not; society, lawless as it appears, is in God's hand, hence rest in Him and sing with Mrs. Browning, "I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our incompleteness; round our restlessness His rest," or with Robert Browning, "God's in his heaven; all's right with the world."—Ah! what peace we should have, could we roll all our way upon the Lord; not only the great but the little cares; trouble with the servants, all the crisscross, attrition, bother; all the burden of our sins, and cares, and limitations; and regrets for the past, care for the present and anxiety for the future. Roll thy way upon Jehovah, and it is sure that thou shalt have this peace of God ruling in thy heart.

But learn another lesson of this alphabet of peace. Verse 7 reads—"Rest in the Lord," or as in the original "Be silent before Jehovah." Do not dare to judge God, or question His providence in the world. When Cowper wrote his beautiful hymn, as the cloud of mental darkness was again falling upon him, and rolled all his burden upon Jehovah—

God moves in a mysterious way,

His duty to perform:

He plants His footsteps in the sea,

And rides upon the storm.

Ye fearful saints fresh courage take,

The clouds ye so much dread

Are big with mercy, and shall break

In blessings on your head.

But finally, verse 7 bids us "Wait patiently for him"—for Jehovah. This past faithfulness is a sure guarantee for the future—Wait, trust, fret not; roll all thy way upon Him. He makes no mistakes; sing as did the crusaders.—

Give to the winds thy fears,

Hope and be undismayed,

God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears,

God shall lift up thy head.

Through waves and clouds and storms,

He gently clears thy way,

Wait then His time, so shall this night,

Soon end in joyous day.

"For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" Heb. 10:36. Learn a lesson from your canary; for selfish pleasure you have deprived it of liberty; caged it, trained it to idleness; yet it does not chafe at its limitations, or bruise its wings against the bars of its cage, but it sings joyously. You may cage the canary, but you cannot cage its song. You may imprison the child of God by limitations and sorrows, but you cannot destroy his peace, rest, hope. "Wait on the Lord"; by not waiting Saul lost his kingdom; David his temper; the Disciples the sight of the risen Lord, whom the waiting Mary saw. In the waiting is service, as well as in the working: Milton said, "They also serve who only stand and wait"—They said to Mr. Lincoln in the dark crisis of the rebellion—"It will be a great thing if we have God on our side." "That is not so much matter," he answered; "what we want is to be on God's side."

Thus we have seen the secret of peace. God's side, a finished work, giving us a threefold peace with God—of God—from God. Our part to accept this gift by faith, and to fret not—roll our way upon Jehovah; be silent before him; wait patiently for him. What are the hindrances to this peace? First, Sin—Isa. 57:21. 21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. Second, Unbelief, Romans—15:13. 13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.