

## **The True Ground of Peace.**

"When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Ex. 12: 13.

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*The blood on the lintel secured Israel's peace.* There was nothing more required in order to enjoy settled peace, in reference to the destroying angel, than the application of the blood of sprinkling. God did not add anything to the blood, because nothing more was necessary to obtain salvation from the sword of judgment. He did not say, "When I see the blood *and* the unleavened bread or bitter herbs, I will pass over." By no means. These things had their proper place and their proper value, but they never could be regarded as the ground of peace in the presence of God.

It is most needful to be simple and clear as to what it is which constitutes the groundwork of peace. So many things are mixed up with the work of Christ, that souls are plunged in darkness and uncertainty as to their acceptance. They know that there is no other way of being saved but by the blood of Christ; but the devils know this, and it avails them naught. What is needed is to know that *we are saved* — absolutely, perfectly, eternally saved. There is no such thing as being partly saved and partly lost, partly justified and partly guilty, partly alive and partly dead, partly born of God and partly not. There are but the two states, and we must be in either the one or the other.

The Israelite was not partly sheltered by the blood, and partly exposed to the sword of the destroyer. He knew he was safe. He did not hope so; he was not praying to be so he was perfectly safe. And Why? Because God had said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." He simply rested upon God's testimony about the shed blood. He set to his seal that God was true. He believed that God meant what He said, and that gave him peace. He was able to take his place at the paschal feast in confidence, quietness, and assurance, knowing that the destroyer could not touch him, when a spotless victim had died in his stead.

If an Israelite had been asked as to his enjoyment of peace, what would he have said? Would he have said, "I know there is no other way of escape but by the blood of the lamb; and I know that that is a divinely perfect way; and moreover, I know that that blood has been shed and sprinkled on my doorpost; but, somehow, I do not feel quite comfortable. I am not quite sure if I am safe. I fear I do not value the blood as I ought, nor love the God of my fathers as I ought"? Would such have been his answer? Assuredly not. And yet hundreds of professing Christians speak thus, when asked if they have peace. They put their thoughts about the blood in the place of the blood itself, and thus in result make salvation as much dependent upon themselves as if they were to be saved by works.

Now the Israelite was saved by the blood *alone*, and not by his thoughts about it. His thoughts might be deep or they might be shallow, but deep or shallow, they had nothing to do with his safety. He was not saved by his thoughts or feelings, but by the blood. God did not say, "When you see the blood, I will pass over you." No; but "When I see." What gave an Israelite peace was the fact that Jehovah's eye rested on the blood. This tranquillised his heart. The blood was outside and the Israelite inside, so that he could not possibly see it; but God saw it, and that was quite enough.

The application of this to the question of a sinner's peace is very plain. Christ, having shed His blood as a perfect atonement for sin, has taken it into the presence of God and sprinkled it there; and God's testimony assures the believer that everything is settled on his behalf.

All the claims of justice have been fully answered; sin has been perfectly put away, so that the

full tide of redeeming love may roll down from the heart of God, along the channel which the sacrifice of Christ has opened for it.

To this truth the Holy Ghost bears witness. He ever sets forth the fact of God's estimate of the blood of Christ. He points the sinner's eye to the accomplished work of the cross. He declares that all is done; that sin has been put far away, and righteousness brought nigh — so nigh, that it is "to all them that believe." Believe what? Believe what God says, believe because He says it, not because you feel it.

Now, we are constantly prone to look at something in ourselves as necessary to form the ground of peace. We are apt to regard the work of the Spirit in us, rather than the work of Christ *for us*, as the foundation of our peace. This is a mistake. We know that the operations of the Spirit of God have their proper place in Christianity, but His work is never set forth as that on which our peace depends. The Holy Ghost did not make peace; but Christ did. The Holy Ghost is not said to be our peace; but Christ is. God did not send "preaching peace" by the Holy Ghost, but by "Jesus Christ." (Comp, Acts 10: 36; Eph. 2: 14, 17, Col. 1: 20)

The Holy Ghost reveals Christ; He makes us to know, enjoy, and feed upon Christ. He bears witness to Christ; takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. He is the power of communion, the seal, the witness, the earnest, the unction. In short, His operations are essential. Without Him, we can neither see, hear, know, feel, experience, enjoy, nor exhibit aught of Christ. This is plain, and is understood and admitted by every true and rightly-instructed Christian.

Yet, notwithstanding all this the work of the Spirit is not the ground of peace, though He enables us to enjoy the peace. He is not our title, though He reveals our title and enables us to enjoy it. The Holy Ghost is still carrying on His work in the soul of the believer. He "maketh intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered." He labours to bring us into more entire conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ. His aim is "to present every man perfect in Christ." He is the Author of every right desire, every holy aspiration, every pure and heavenly affection, every divine experience; but His work in and with us will not be complete until we have left this present scene, and taken our place with Christ in the glory. Just as, in the case of Abraham's servant, his work was not complete until he presented Rebekah to Isaac.

Not so the work of Christ for us. That is absolutely and eternally complete. He could say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17: 4.) And, again, "It is finished." The blessed Spirit cannot yet say He has finished the work. He has been patiently and faithfully working for the last eighteen hundred years as the true, the divine Vicar of Christ on earth. He still works amid the various hostile influences which surround the sphere of His operations. He still works in the hearts of the people of God, in order to bring them up, practically and experimentally, to the divinely-appointed standard. But He never teaches a soul to lean on His work for peace in the presence of divine holiness. His office is to speak of Jesus. He does not speak of Himself "He," says Christ, "shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." He can only present Christ's work as the solid basis on which the soul must rest for ever. Yea, it is on the ground of Christ's perfect atonement that He takes up His abode and carries on His operations in the believer. "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." No power or energy of the Holy Ghost could cancel sin. The blood has done that. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

It is of the utmost importance to distinguish between the Spirit's work *in us*, and Christ's work *for us*. Where they are confounded, one rarely finds settled peace as to the question of sin. The type of the passover illustrates the distinction very simply. The Israelite's peace was not founded upon the unleavened bread or the bitter herbs, but upon the blood. Nor was it, by any means, a question of what

*he* thought about the blood, but what God thought about it. This gives immense relief and comfort to the heart. God has found a ransom, and He reveals that ransom to us sinners, in order that we might rest therein, on the authority of His word, and by the grace of His Spirit. And albeit our thoughts and feelings must ever fall far short of the infinite preciousness of that ransom, yet inasmuch as God tells us that He is perfectly satisfied about our sins, we may be satisfied also. Our conscience may well find settled rest where God's holiness finds rest.

Beloved reader, if you have not as yet found peace in Jesus, we pray you to ponder this deeply. See the simplicity of the ground on which your peace is to rest. God is well pleased in the finished work of Christ — "well pleased for his righteousness' sake." That righteousness is not founded upon your feelings or experience, but upon the shed blood of the Lamb of God; and hence your peace is not dependent upon your feelings or experience, but upon the same precious blood which is of changeless efficacy and changeless value in the judgment of God.

What, then, remains for the believer? To what is he called? To keep the feast of unleavened bread, by putting away everything contrary to the hallowed purity of his elevated position. It is his privilege to feed upon that precious Christ whose blood has cancelled all his guilt. Being assured that the sword of the destroyer cannot touch him, because it has fallen on Christ instead, it is for him to feast in holy repose within the blood-stricken door, under the perfect shelter which God's own love has provided in the blood of the cross.

May God the Holy Ghost lead every doubting, wavering heart to find rest in the divine testimony contained in those words, "WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD I WILL PASS OVER YOU."