

## "Peace in Believing"

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"Peace in believing." [Romans 15:13](#).

ON whatever subjects I may be called to preach, I feel it to be a duty which I dare not neglect to be continually going back to the Doctrine of the Cross—the fundamental Truth of God of justification by faith which is in Christ Jesus. This topic is essential to the life of the soul. Men are not saved but by faith in Jesus and, therefore, to this great central point we must return again and again and again, hoping that God will bless His own Word to those who hear it proclaimed. I notice that some of our friends, who are bakers, have in their shop windows divers articles of confectionery, and I suppose they have their set days for making their various kinds of cake and sweetmeats. But one thing I know they never forget to do and that is to bake, every day, a batch of bread because, if their customers do not need this or that confectionery, they always need bread—and what is the good of a baker if he has no bread? I wish that every preacher felt that, albeit there are certain things which are sweet and toothsome, which some mouths are always craving, yet the chief business of the minister, like that of the baker, is to have a constant supply of good bread. It may be a very ordinary kind of food.

Some may even call it commonplace and what a mercy it is when bread is a commonplace thing! I have known some people who would have been glad if they could place it in common upon their tables, but they have not been able to get it, and the necessity has grown into a luxury. And what a mercy it is when the Gospel is a commonplace thing—when you have so much of it that you really understand it, enjoy it and feed upon it! It is then as it ought always to be with the true ministry of the Gospel. So, preacher, whatever you choose to neglect, never neglect to preach Christ Crucified and the simple, soul-saving precept, "Look and live."

What if there are some prophetic passages which you cannot understand? The day shall declare them! What if there are certain deep Doctrines that are too profound for you? You and your people shall learn them in eternity, if you learn them not in time! But as for this Doctrine, that, "he that believes on the Son has everlasting life"—it must be learned now or never! And if it is not learned now, men will be shut out of Heaven eternally. Therefore, let this Truth of God be proclaimed again and again and again! Let it still be preached, even though some who have itching ears weary of it, for there is an urgent necessity that it should be made known whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. Better that the sun

should not rise than that Christ should not be preached! Better that the wheels of time should stand still than that the name of Jesus should not be sounded forth! Better that the dews be withheld and the rain fall not again upon the earth, than that the glorious Gospel of the blessed God be hidden from the sons of men!

So, then, this is my reason for coming to you, again, as I have come so many hundreds of times before, with the same old message, "Believe and live." I am comforted by the persuasion that all who are saved by believing are the most ready to hear this story over and over again. It is not what I do not know so much as what I do know that I delight to hear—and many others are of the same opinion as I am in that matter. It is a curious phase of human nature, but it is true. You may talk to a congregation about discoveries in the center of Africa and yet you may lose their attention. But if you speak about the village, or hamlet, or street in which one of them was born or lived, he will prick up his ears at once. The very thing that he knows best is that which, somehow, holds his attention the most. So have I often seen it in the highest affairs—they who understand the Gospel best are the most ready to hear of it again and yet again. If I were to take Luther on the Galatians, intending to give it as a present to someone who would be sure to appreciate it, I would not bestow it upon a man who was not a believer in Jesus Christ, or give it to one who did not understand the Doctrine of salvation by faith—I would hand it over to the man who has long believed in Christ and found rest in Him—for I would be certain that the strong and racy utterances of the great Reformer would be appreciated by him. They love the Gospel most who know it best!

Another thing comforts me, too, namely, that in such a congregation as this there are always some persons who are just ready to believe. I throw the fly with confidence because there are always fish rising to it. God is plowing the hearts of many and so preparing the soul for the good Seed of the Kingdom! Little children die. Aged mothers are carried away. There is sickness in the body, or loss in the business, or suffering of various kinds—all this is the passing of God's great plow up and down these furrows—and when I scatter the good Seed, I know that the furrows are gaping for it. They are hungry for it, so they gladly receive it! Here are many of those who are ordained unto eternal life to whom the Truth of God concerning "peace in believing" comes as the very message of God to their soul, the good news that they are most glad to hear! So they receive it and go on their way rejoicing. Doubtless, there are some hearers of that kind here right now—oh, that we may very soon hear of their conversion, for it would gladden our heart to have such good tidings! Therefore, by the help of God, let us at once get to our work.

I. And, first, having to talk about faith and one of its sweet results—for our subject is that faith brings peace to the soul, "peace in believing"—the first head shall be that IT IS A FILLING PEACE.

In the verse from which our text is taken, the Apostle says, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing," so that the peace which arises from faith is a filling peace. There is, in the heart of an awakened man, a great vacuum caused by sin. He is like some of those great artificial harbors which I have seen, in various places, out of which they sometimes allow all the water to run and there remains a dreary expanse of mud. What is the use of it? What is needed in order to make it of service once more? Why, simply that the tide should come into it, fill it and cover up all that mud! As I look on some of you, dear Friends, I know that your heart is just like that great harbor full of mire. What is to be done for you? What is to be done with you? Well, the Grace of God can come in and cover all your transgressions and your iniquities till they shall never be mentioned against you ever again! What a blessed peace that is which quiets the conscience—which takes away the sense of guilt and puts in the place of it, consciousness of perfect pardon, of justification and of acceptance before God! This is "peace in believing." It fills the vacuum that sin has made.

Then this Divine flood, when it has covered that part of our distress, flows in over our sinfulness as well as our sins, for, in addition to our actual transgression, there is the defilement of our nature. And when a man is awakened, it is a cause of moaning and unrest to him that he not only has sin, but that he *is* sin—that his very nature is a fountain of evil containing much that is adverse to God and in alienation from Him. But, by believing, there flows into the heart a flood of life which removes our death—a purifying stream which takes away our corruption and we have peace with God, for "we which have believed do enter into rest" about that matter, too. And though we sometimes have to cry, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Yet we "thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord," that we are delivered from the dominion of sin and that we shall, by-and-by, be delivered from the very existence of it and shall be like unto God in purity and true holiness. That is, indeed, a blessed peace—a peace that comes of a changed nature, of a renewed heart and of reconciliation to God.

You will tell me that those blessings are enough to fill a man with peace and, truly, I think they are. But as when the tide comes in, it not only rolls up the main stream of the Thames, but it also flows into every creek and fills every tiny streamlet, so is it with the Grace of God. There is a black stream that sometimes runs into the river of a man's life and makes it turbid—that is the fear of death. But, oh, I have seen the great flood of eternal life come rolling up and drive the black stream back till all was pure, all was quiet and calm! Is it not so with the man who believes in Jesus? He loses the fear of death. Sometimes, instead of fearing it, he almost longs for it! As Mr. Flavel, when living in sweetest communion with Christ, said, "I never saw a face more beautiful than that of death when I saw the light from the face of Christ fall on it. Then I longed to die much more than to live." And good Dr. Watts sang—

"Oh, if my Lord would come and meet, My soul should stretch her wings in haste, Fly fearless through Death's iron gate, Nor feel the terrors as she passed!"

Yes, this "peace in believing" will fill your soul so as to drown the fear of death!

Perhaps another says, "The fear of life is that which is upon me, the fear of the troubles incident to my condition and my position among my fellow men, the fear which arises out of those three questions, 'What shall we eat? What shall we drink? And how shall we be clothed?'" Beloved, the peace which comes through believing will chase these fears away and fill your soul with perfect rest concerning them. Indeed, these things will seem to you to be only trifles after which the Gentiles seek—and you will scorn to be troubled by them, for you will remember that "your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things," and He will supply your need in His own good time and way.

Then, sometimes, will come upon us, to break our peace, the cravings of desire. A man is never perfectly at peace if he is ambitious and craving for this or that which, as yet, is beyond his reach. "Peace in believing" makes us say of Christ, "He is all my salvation and all my desire." He loves us to know that all things are ours and, therefore, that there is nothing left in the region of desire, for—

"All things are ours—the gift of God— The purchase of a Savior's blood! While the good Spirit shows us how To use and to improve them too." Oh, what a blessed, blessed rest it is when a man's desires are satisfied with the favor of God!

One very natural cause of disturbance of mind is solicitude about our families—anxiety as to how we shall bring them up in the fear of God, earnest longing that they may become believers in Christ, honorable Christian men and women, but Faith learns to bear even this without having her peace broken, for she pleads the promise, "Unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Faith falls back upon the Inspired Word—"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto the children's children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them." I know of no cause of disquietude which faith will not remove. I know of no groundswell disturbing the mind which faith cannot quiet. I know of nothing on earth, in Heaven, in Hell, in time, in eternity, in life, in death which is not fully met by the Covenant blessings which are within reach of faith and which faith learns to appropriate. This "peace in believing" is a sea that has no bottom nor shore—it is a peace of intense restfulness! Oh, that we were all plunged in it this very hour!

II. Now, very briefly, let me remind you that, according to the text, IT IS FAITH'S PEACE that is such a filling peace as I have tried to describe.

I may be addressing some persons who are needing to find peace for their souls, but they have never sought faith's peace. There is a false peace that some get—the peace of carelessness—they do not even think about eternity. They "count it one of the wisest things

to drive dull care away." They scarcely think of what will happen even a month ahead, but they say that they are content to live by the day. This is the way in which the man protects himself when, after the thief has broken into his house, he covers up his head, lies in bed and thinks that he and his property must be safe because he cannot hear the burglar at work. This is the kind of philosophy of men who, when they are ready to fail in business, shut up their books and never take stock because they would be so disturbed if they knew their real condition! It is a beggarly, cowardly kind of peace that is fit for fools and madmen, but is not fit for you who are reasonable, responsible beings. Oh, I would scorn to have a peace in my heart which consisted in shutting my eyes! The truth ought to be faced and, the more dangerous the truth, the more urgently does it call upon us to look at it! And he is the wise man who can stand before the truth that frightens most men and, having looked it in the face, can say, "Now I am not afraid. I am, rather, the more established in my conviction of my safety, now that I have seen that which would have destroyed me if it had not been for faith in Christ." Shun, I pray you, the safety which is but in appearance, and does but thinly film the deadly ulcer that needs to be eradicated from your body!

Some others seek a peace which comes of hardihood. They not merely shut their eyes, but they lie against the Truth of God. "The fool has said in his heart, There is no God," and he gets peace out of that foolish and false declaration. Men deny the immortality of the soul. They deny the Divinity of Christ. They deny the Inspiration of the Bible and so they think that they shall sew pillows together that shall make it easy for their heads to rest! Let those do this who dare, but, as for some of you, you cannot do it, for you know too much and you have felt too much to ever be self-deceived in such a fashion as that! Can he ever be an infidel who has seen his mother die joyfully triumphant? Is it possible for me, for instance, to find a shelter from my sins by denying that there is any hereafter, when I have stood by the bedside of saints and seen their ecstasy, and have heard the strange things, scarcely lawful for a man to utter, which they have told concerning that which is within the veil? Some of us are spoiled for infidelity, for we have had familiar communion with the Eternal! We have spoken with Him, "as a man speaks with his friend" and, therefore, this escape from thought avails us not! Thank God that it does not avail us, for the abhorred of the Lord fall into this deep ditch and how seldom do they come up out of it! May God grant that we may never need to tell a lie and violate our conscience in order to give it peace! That is not the rest of faith which I commend to you!

Some have tried to get peace from self-confidence. They think they are as good as others, if not rather better. As they see those who are mere professors of religion, they thank God that they are not professors of religion, for they are not hypocritical and, therefore, they do not pretend to be what they are not. Yet there is often a worm at the root of that proud boasting and, in your sober moments, you who talk in this fashion do not really think thus of yourselves. You are not insane and you know that you are not doing that which is pleasing

to God, or living to His Glory. Self-righteousness is sometimes a delusion, but it generally begins by a man's attempting to delude himself. But there is no real peace to be obtained by any works that we can perform, or by the pretense that we have performed works which are meritorious in the sight of God. There is no promise of peace to come in this fashion.

But, perhaps, you have patched up your self-righteousness with a few ornaments stolen from the Church of God. Were you, as an infant, "baptized" and made "a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven"? Have you been confirmed, and taken the "sacrament"—as it is wrongly called—and is there not much efficacy in that? Sirs, listen to me! There is nothing in it! There is nothing whatever in it unless you have first believed in the Lord Jesus Christ! Or, if there is anything in it, you have participated in ordinances to which you had no right, for these things are only for Believers—and if you have not believed in Jesus, you are intruders into His Church and you have stolen from His altar that which He reserves for His own people—and little advantage will this be to you. Beware of trusting in your church-going, or your chapel-going, or your Tabernacle-going! Beware of trusting in your prayers, or your Bible reading, in your hymns and holy thoughts and almsgivings. They are all lighter than vanity and, as chaff from the fan of the winnower, shall they be blown away! There is no peace in them though you multiply them as the sand upon the seashore. Our text speaks of "peace in believing," and there is no peace worthy of the name that is to be found in any other way!

III. But now, thirdly, this "peace in believing" is A WELL-FOUNDED PEACE. But what is it?

It is, first, a peace which is the result of believing the Word of God, who cannot lie. God, the ever-blessed Father, says, "Listen to Me. I have given My Well-Beloved Son to be a Savior to you. Trust in Him and you shall be saved." I trust in Him and I am saved. How do I know that? Why, because God said so! And God cannot lie! Is there any better foundation for peace in this world than the Word of God? What God has spoken must be true. "Let God be true and every man a liar." And I, believing what He has said, have a right to all the peace that can come out of that sure Word which I have believed!

Remember, too, that this Word of God comes to us by the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit. If you do not believe that Book to be Inspired, I have nothing to say to you just now. But most of us do believe that every part of it is "God-breathed." Well, then, knowing that Book to be the Infallible Word of God, if we get peace through believing what is in that Book, we have sure ground to stand upon! Either the Book is a lie, or else our faith is fully warranted, and our peace is perfectly justified. Oh, what a blessed thing it is to feel that you have Scripture at your back! Many saints that I have read of have asked, when dying, to have their fingers laid upon some precious promise of the Word, and they have thus witnessed to their conviction that the passage was the very Truth of God to their souls. One said, "Guide me to that glorious Eighth of Romans." Another had his finger laid upon this text,

"Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." And another on this verse, "Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me, Your rod and Your staff they comfort me." You know how you take one another's word and trust to it. And when you get a note of hand in black and white from a good tradesman, you do not mistrust it. Then, shall we ever mistrust the black and white of God—the record of His dear Son which He has given us in Holy Scripture? No! Nor will we mistrust the peace that comes into our heart through believing it!

And then, my Brothers and Sisters, also mark that our peace is founded on God's testimony concerning His Son. He tells us, in this Book, that the Only-Begotten took upon Him human form and came down among men—that being here,

He lived the life of a servant and, at the last, taking upon Him man's sin and as the Substitute for guilty men, He went up to the Cross and there bore His Father's wrath, dying in the place of the guilty, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." I recollect how I grasped that Truth of God when I first understood it—it was that Doctrine of Substitution which brought peace to my troubled spirit. I saw that if Christ died for me, then I should not die! And that, if He paid my debt, it was paid and I was clear! And I knew that this was the case as soon as I believed in Him. So I did believe in Him and I was filled with "peace in believing." And that "peace in believing" meets every need of the heart. Are you troubled? "All things work together for good to them that love God." Are you afraid that you shall fall? Rest content about that, also, for, "He will keep the feet of His saints." Are you afraid that you shall ultimately perish? Has He not said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand"?

Our faith is, indeed, well-founded, and can be abundantly justified! Faith in Christ is nothing but common sense of sanctified of God. It may be common sense to trust some banker who has long maintained his credit and not to be always worrying about whether he is solvent or not, but it is infinitely greater common sense to trust God—to trust His Son—to trust His Spirit—to trust His Word! If you trust these, you shall enjoy a calmness of spirit which will not be the effect of a mistaken confidence, but the result of the most glorious facts—a peace which may be questioned and cross-questioned, examined and cross-examined, but the answer it shall give to all enquiries will be satisfactory. Faith's building may be searched, tried and tested from foundation to top stone, but no flaw shall be found in any part of it. It is a good, wise, true, just and proper thing to trust the Lord Jesus Christ—and so to have "peace in believing!"

IV. I have done when I have noticed just one more point, namely, that I believe this "peace in believing" to be A MOST FRUITFUL PEACE.

I wish you all knew it, for, first, it makes even this world a better and a happier place. It takes the sting out of all troubles to have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

There is no man who is so ready to cope with the troubles of life as the one who knows that all is right for eternity. Some of you often get worried in your daily calling and when you come home from business, you cannot rest. When you go to bed, you cannot sleep, for there is within you a fear of death and of a dreaded something after that. But suppose that a man can say, "That matter is all settled"—

"Tis done! The great transaction's done! I am my Lord's, and He is mine!—"I have trusted myself with Christ, and I know that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day"? He goes to his business feeling that he has a burden off his shoulders—the great burden he had so long carried—and he is ready for anybody and ready for anything! If you set a man to run up a hill and lay heavy weights on his back, he must make slow work of it. Take off those weights and now watch him! Why, he turns into a gazelle and he leaps from crag to crag when the burden is gone! Ah, dear Friends, if you were relieved of your burdens, your very office work would grow lighter! Your bargaining would be more wisely done! You would be able to deal better with your fellow men when you have come to your proper position before God and all is made right there.

This peace with God is fruitful in the growth of all other Graces. Have you a garden? If so, have you some fruit trees in it? Do you dig them up every year? Do you take them out of the ground two or three times in a season, and carry them about the garden and then plant them in a fresh spot? If so, I would not give you a penny for all your fruit! But when you plant your tree in good soil and it is well-watered and fertilized, when the fruit-bearing season comes, there is your fruit. It is a blessed thing to get the very roots of your being entwined around Christ—now you can grow, now you can bring forth fruit! Now you will get patience. Now you will get hope. Now you will get love and soon you will get full assurance! You will have the work of sanctification going on, you will be more and more consecrated and devoted to Christ—and you will become "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." God give you "peace in believing," that you may grow in every other Grace!

And this, I know, will help you to serve others. A man who is enjoying the blessings of true religion, living in it and living on it, wants other people to know about it and to share it with him. I think that nobody would give a recommendation to a new kind of food which he did not like, himself, and which did him no good. He would say, "Well, if this is intended to keep me from being ill, I would rather be ill than eat it! I certainly shall not recommend it to others." But he that has eaten it, loves the flavor of it and finds that nourishment comes from it, says to his friend, "You are getting emaciated, and thin, and debilitated as I was—you should try what I have tried." He is sure to commend it because it has done so much for him. And when we enjoy the Gospel, we are sure to recommend it to others. God's happy people are God's working people! Those who fear and tremble and never have any joy in the Lord are generally a barren generation. But they who delight themselves in the Lord are sure to speak of Him to others and to bring others to Christ!

Lastly, I believe that "peace in believing" is one of the best instrumentalities for bringing others to Christ. If you are soon to be very happy in a time of trial—if you are known to be very patient in great pain—and especially if the Lord helps you to be triumphant in the solemn article of death, you will be a soul-winner! Those who come round your bed will never forget the joyous look on your face—it will be a life-long sermon to them. I do not advise you to sit up like Addison and make a show of it, and say, "Come see how a Christian can die!" No, that is a style of thing I do not admire. But when you can honestly, straightforwardly, without any parade, sweetly fall asleep in Jesus Christ, triumphantly entering into Glory and let those around you hear your shout of victory as you enter in to be "forever with the Lord"—if you can do that, the memory of it will abide—and those who were unconvinced, before, are most likely to be decided! While those who never hesitated will be more than ever confirmed in the faith!

In conclusion, to gather up all in a word, you who have no peace may have it even now. Believe! That is, trust! Trust Jesus with your souls and you shall have "peace in believing." And you who have it, though it is somewhat broken, may have it to the fullest! Where you obtained your first peace, you can get more! Where peace has only trickled in, it can come pouring in, it can rush in like a Heavenly deluge and flood your entire nature, to the praise and glory of your gracious God! May He make it to be so, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ROMANS 8:14-39.

Verse 14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Leading implies following and those who are enabled to follow the guidance of the Divine Spirit are most assuredly children of God, for the Lord always leads His own children. If, then, you are following the lead of God's Spirit, you have one of the evidences of sonship!

15. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit of bondage is the spirit of servants, not of sons—but that servitude is ended for us who are made free in Christ Jesus. We are no longer afraid of being called the children of God. We are not afraid of our own Father—we have a filial fear of Him, but it is so mixed with love that there is no torment in it. Whether Jew or Gentile, we cry, "Abba, Father."

16. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. Our spirit knows that we are God's children and then God's Spirit adds His testimony to the witness of our spirit that we are the children of God.

17. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. This would not necessarily be true of any man's family, for he might have children who were not his heirs. But in God's family, all who are born into it are born "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." We must take our part of Christ's portion—His portion here, and His portion hereafter—the rule for

us who are in Him shall be, "share and share alike." He Himself has said, "Where I am, there shall also My servant be." And all that He has, He will divide with us. Are you willing, dear Brothers and Sisters, to take shares with Christ? If not, then I question whether you can be rightly reckoned among His saints.

18. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 'Light afflictions' are contrasted with "an exceeding weight of glory." Temporary afflictions, but for a moment, are to be followed by everlasting crowns that fade not away. What a contrast!

19. For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. All creation is, as it were, watching and waiting on tiptoe for the day when God shall manifest His sons and daughter, who, at present, are hidden. In due time, they shall come forth, acknowledged of God, and then shall the whole creation rejoice!

20-23. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves, also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. We have already obtained salvation for our souls, but our body is still under bondage—subject to weariness—to pain, to infirmity—to death. But, by-and-by, with the new creation, our newly-molded bodies shall be fit to live in the new world and fit for our newborn souls to inhabit. This is the full redemption for which we are waiting!

24-28. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered. And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." That is a wonderfully positive statement, Paul! There are certain persons, nowadays, who say that we know nothing, yet the Apostles constantly say, "We know this" and, "We know that." These people tell us that there is a great distinction between believing and knowing—but, evidently it is a distinction of which the Inspired Apostles knew nothing at all! Read the Epistles of John and note how he continually says, "We know, we know, we know," and how frequently he adds, "We believe," as though believing and knowing were the same thing! Agnostics may declare that they know nothing, if they please, but, as for us who do know, because we believe what we are taught of God in

this Book, we will speak! He who has something to say has a right to say it! We know and therefore we speak!

Mark, Brothers and Sisters, how the Apostle speaks here. He does not say that all things shall work together for good. No, but that they do work together. They are now working for your present good. This is not merely something which shall eventually turn out right—right now it is all right! "We know that all things are working together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." No sooner does the Apostle mention that word, "purpose," than he must begin a long discourse upon it. He was not afraid or ashamed to speak of the purposes of God! There are some preachers who say nothing about God's purposes, or God's decrees—they seem to be afraid of them—they say it is "Calvinistic doctrine." Why, it was here, in the Scriptures, long before Calvin was born! So what right have they to call it by his name? Listen to what the Apostle has to say—

29, 30. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified. There is no separating these golden links of love and mercy! That foreknowledge, to which all future things are open and present, begins the deed of love. Predestination comes in and chooses a people for God who shall be eternally His. Upon this, in due time, follows effectual calling by which the chosen ones are brought out, from the impure mass of mankind, and set apart unto God. Then follows justification by faith, through the precious blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ! And where this is, glory will certainly come, for "whom He justified, them He also glorified."

31, 32. What shall we say, then, to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things? Notice, it is not simply "freely give us all things," but, "with Him, also freely give us all things." You shall get all things with Christ, but you shall get nothing without Christ, for all the other gifts come in this one! God first gave us His Son and He gives us everything in Him.

33. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifies. Ring out the challenge in Heaven itself! Trumpet it through all the caverns of Hell! Let the whole universe hear it! "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" None can, for "it is God who justifies," and His justification blocks every charge that is brought against His people—

"Who shall the Lord's elect condemn? 'Tis God that justifies their souls And mercy, like a mighty stream, O'er all their sins divinely rolls."

34. Who is he that condemns? None will answer to that challenge, for

34, 35. It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Oh, this blessed question—this touching question! It seems to come at the end of all the others—a rear-guard which effectually prevents our treasures from being taken from us. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

35. Shall tribulation? That has been tried. Have not the saints been beaten like wheat upon the threshing-floor? Has not affliction been to them a stern test of the reality of their faith? But Christ has loved them none the less for all the suffering that He has permitted to fall upon them.

35. Or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? When they have been in famine or poverty, has Christ ever forsaken His saints? Ah, no—He has loved them all the more! Have any of these things separated us from our Savior? No, but they have, to our own consciousness, knitted us even more closely to our Divine Lord. Cruel men have tried every form of persecuting the saints of God. They have been more inventive in the torments which they have applied to Christians than in almost anything else! Yet no torture, no rack, no imprisonment has ever divided them from Christ. They have clung to Him after the manner of John Bunyan, who, when they said that he might go free if he would promise not to preach the Gospel, said, "I will lie in prison till the moss grows on my eyelids rather than I will ever make such a promise as that! If you let me out of prison today, I will preach tomorrow, by the Grace of God."

36. As it is written, For your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter But there has been no triumph over the saints in this case.

37-39. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord—

"Not all that men on earth can do, Nor powers on high, nor powers below, Shall cause His mercy to remove, Or wean our hearts from Christ our love." Glory be unto His holy name! Amen.