

CHRISTIANITY TODAY



||| A PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL DEVOTED TO STATING, DEFENDING
AND FURTHERING THE GOSPEL IN THE MODERN WORLD |||

SAMUEL G. CRAIG, Editor

ETHEL WALLACE, Assistant Editor

Published monthly by
THE PRESBYTERIAN AND
REFORMED PUBLISHING CO., Inc.
525 Locust Street, Phila., Pa.

FEBRUARY, 1938
Vol. 8 No. 10

\$1.00 A YEAR EVERYWHERE
Entered as second-class matter May 11,
1931, at the Post Office at Philadelphia,
Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Editorial Notes and Comments

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THE FUTURE

AS WE entered the new year our thoughts involuntarily projected themselves into the future. No doubt we contemplated the past with mingled feelings of satisfaction and regret and yet, for the most part, our thoughts had to do not with that which has been but with that which shall be. Are we moving on, whether we will or not, to a time of darkness and gloom when existence shall be a terror and life a burden? Or are we traveling toward a land of peace and plenty such as we have never known? When we envisage the future, do we see a figure, fierce and terrible of countenance, from whose gaze we shrink and whom we would fain avoid? Or do we see a figure, fair of form and comely of countenance, on whose kindly face there is a smile of welcome?

If our viewpoint is that of Christian faith, then, appearances be what they may, it becomes us to cherish high hopes and expectation concerning the future. Whether we have in mind our individual selves or mankind as a whole, it becomes us to believe not only that the best is yet to be but that the blessedness that awaits us is beyond all comparison preferable to any thing we have ever known. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." As individuals it becomes us to say, "Now are we the children of God but it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him." In the perfect manhood of Jesus Christ we see that which we are to be. The hour is coming when evil shall have been wholly eliminated from our lives; when every weakness and deficiency of character shall be but a memory; when we shall exercise to the full "our God-like power to do, our God-like aim to know"—to doubt that is to doubt the word of Him who "gave himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works." Moreover, as we turn our thoughts toward mankind as a whole, it also becomes us to cherish high hopes and expectations. It is true that we are precluded from believing that a desirable future awaits all. There

are those to whom the judge of all will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels." Let us never forget, however, that "where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly." Evil is not to triumph as the pessimist would have us believe. Neither are good and evil to continue in endless conflict as others would have us believe. "For He must reign until He hath put all His enemies under His feet." We may be sure, therefore, that at the end of the years all that is opposed to God will have been brought into subjection and that the petition our Lord taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," will have been fully granted. As Christians we look forward to the full establishment of Christ's kingdom—a kingdom in which none shall hurt or destroy, in which men shall dwell together in peace and harmony, where love shall be the law and happiness the universal condition.

These hopes and expectations should not be accounted among the least of our assets as we face the future. They are an important part of our Christian inheritance. They are not only a source of encouragement, they powerfully influence conduct. Because we shall reap in the future what we sow in the present some so-called practical people would have us believe that our beliefs as to the future are a matter of small moment. Do your duty in the present, they tell us, and let the future take care of itself. Some go even further and say that beliefs about the future are a positive harm on the ground that they foster an otherworldliness that is hostile to a proper appreciation of the life that now is. There is no real warrant for such notions. For though it be true that we reap as we sow it is also true that what we expect to reap determines the kind of seed we sow. And though the choices we make today determine what and where we shall be on the tomorrow, yet those choices themselves are largely determined by what and where we hope to be in the days to come. Hence the importance of these hopes and expectations even from the viewpoint of conduct.

Unquestionably our hopes and expectations as Christians would be a rich source of comfort and encouragement, and so possess large value, even if they exerted no discernible influence over choice and thereby over conduct. Their full

ment of a single scheme of divine grace; claiming to be a message to men from God; speaking in terms of authority concerning duty and destiny—were composed by men who acted under the influence of the Holy Ghost to such an extent that they were preserved from every error of fact, of doctrine, of judgment; and these so influenced in their choice of language that the words they used were the words of

God. This is the doctrine that is known as that of **PLENARY VERBAL INSPIRATION**" (p. 92).

The Bible may or may not be the "Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice," in the sense of the Westminster standards, but certainly **DR. PATTON** is on the side of those of us who believe that it is.

The Peace of God

By the **REV. CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY, D.D.**

"The peace of God . . . The God of peace."

—Phil. 4: 7-9.

TWO ways of saying the same thing; only when we say "The God of peace," we think of God as the Author and Source of Divine Peace; and when we say, "The peace of God," we think more of what that peace is able to do for man; how, as this text puts it, "it shall keep our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ."

When we come to a great utterance like this, a deep and timeless comment on life, it makes a great deal of difference who it is that says it. Who is it that is speaking here, and tells us with the accent of certainty and experience that the peace of God shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus? Is it some man clothed in purple and fine linen, living in kings' houses? Is it someone who has had a life of ease, cushioned with comfort and luxury? Instead of that, it is a voice out of a prison at Rome; it is the voice of a man who has suffered incredible hardships, persecution, stoning, shipwreck, hunger and thirst, sickness and pain, chains and prison. Yet, it is this man, St. Paul, who writes from his prison at Rome to these followers of Christ at Philippi and assures them that the peace of God is able to keep their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Because it is a man like that who is speaking, what he has to say about peace and what it can do is worthy of our interest and our respect.

The World's Lack of Peace

This is a world of deep unrest. More and more men seem to be conscious of the unrest which invades every territory of our life. The faster the pace of life becomes, the less peace men have. Man looks about him on all his creations and establishments of the external world, and then sadly asks himself, What does it all amount to? What lasting satisfaction or peace do I get out of it? One who came from the East to visit London said that the thing that struck him was the haunted look on the faces of the multitudes who passed up and down the streets of that city. It is frequently said, and no doubt with sound basis of fact, that despite all the increased knowledge of the body and the rules of health, the mental and nervous diseases are constantly on the increase. This is because man has exalted the external world as of greater importance than the internal world. He has left out God, left out the spirit; and faith avenges itself on man by afflicting him with unrest.

Mary Godwin, the wife of Shelley, expressed all this in her famous tale of "Frankenstein." It was the story of a young student of Physiology who created out of things taken from the graveyard and the dissecting room a monster which he was able to galvanize into life. Filled with longings which could not be satisfied, this monster turned upon its creator and perpetrated deeds of cruelty and enormity. It is a profound parable of man and the mechanical world which he has created, but which from time to time turns upon him with fury and destruction.

The consciousness of this fact is reason for the fact that in some quarters the minds of men are turning back to the internal world, realizing that they have made a mistake in the exaltation of the external world. Certain it is that not a few Christians are beginning to think anew and more earnestly about these great Scriptural sayings on the subject of peace. The sigh of the Psalmist is on the lips of not a few: "O that I had the wings of a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest. Lo, then, I would wander far off, I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."

Peace the Great Word of the Bible

It was something of a surprise to me to learn recently, by looking up the use of the word, that after love, peace is the great Christian word in the Bible. Among the great words of the New Testament and the Gospel, such as grace, faith, hope and joy, peace is the word most frequently employed by the inspired writers. It is *the* great word of Christian experience and satisfaction. Almost the first word of Jesus was an invitation to peace: "Come unto Me and I will give you rest"; and His last word was that beautiful promise of His peace, "My peace I leave with you."

What the Peace of God Is

Peace is the gift of the God of peace. Only God can bestow it. The idea of peace is one that the mind easily takes in. When pain, as suddenly as it came, leaves the body which it has attacked, the patient has peace. On an autumn day we go out into the country and see the forests in their radiant colors and the goldenrod in the fields, and the brooks running peacefully towards the river, we say to ourselves that after the noise and confusion and dust and smoke of the city this is peaceful. When a ship that has been tossed with the Atlantic rollers glides at length into some landlocked harbor in France or in England, the traveller is struck with the peace of that bay

or harbor in contrast with the unrest of the sea. When a man has made some important decision, vitally affecting his life, after long weighing of the pros and cons, with uncertainty and unsettlement of mind, the very fact of a decision gives him peace. And when the fitful fever of life is over it is still the custom in many places to put upon the grave "Requiescat in pace—May he rest in peace," and that wish for the dead on the part of the living is a tribute to the preeminence of peace.

But above and beyond all this is the Peace of God. This peace is bestowed by God. You cannot deserve it or win it by your own efforts, but you can put yourself in the way and in the mood to receive it. Because it is the peace which comes from the God of peace, it is not man's peace, not at his creation or imagination, but from God. If the world cannot take it away, as Christ told us, it is simply because the world cannot give it.

This peace, of course, does not mean deliverance from all strife and struggle. It is interesting to see how the word "peace" is often used in the New Testament in connection with some figure of speech of war or strife. Paul says in one place that the God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet, and here he says that the peace of God shall keep our hearts and minds; literally, to garrison, or guard, as a sentinel would watch and guard a fortress. The ones who speak to us the great words about peace have been those whose struggles in life were the greatest; Paul who sends messages of peace out of his dungeon, and Jesus who in what would seem to be the darkest hour of his life, with treason, desertion, and crucifixion facing Him, bequeathed His peace to His disciples. Now all this must mean, not exemption from difficulty and struggle in life, but in the midst of it the peace of God.

How to Secure the Peace of God

This is done by obedience to the will of God in Christ. What is the source of the world's unrest and violence and distress? Only one thing—sin. Just as the wind stirs up the tempest on the sea, so sin causes the storm in man's life. By sin man is separated and alienated from God. In Christ God deals with that separation and alienation. Christ came as the Ambassador of God's peace. That was what the angels meant when they sang at His birth, "Peace on earth," not political or national peace, but the peace of the soul, peace between God and man. That is the meaning of the Cross. "He hath made peace by the blood of the Cross." "Being justified by faith we have peace in God."

That peace is the first and fundamental thing. There would be no purpose in talking to you about peace and recommending to you the peace of God until you have accepted the peace which God offers you in Christ and have been reconciled unto God. But when that has been established, that new relationship, the relationship of reconciliation and forgiveness, there are still new fields and new experiences in the peace of God.

Enemies of the Peace of God

When we listen to great sentences like this of Paul, "The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus," we recognize the deep and almost mystical

beauty of it. And yet we hardly dare to ask ourselves, How much of that peace do I possess? This is because of the ravages of the foes of the Divine Peace. One of these, no matter what, theoretically, we profess, is putting the heart and the emphasis of life on this world, on the external instead of the internal, on things instead of on the spirit, on ourselves instead of on God. When we invest that way in the external world, failure is inevitable.

"The worldly hope men set their hearts upon,
Turns ashes—or it prospers; and anon
Like snow upon the Desert's Dusty Face,
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone."
(Omar Khayam, Rubaiyat).

Another enemy to peace is the habit of useless worry about yesterday, today, and tomorrow. When did such anxious thought ever alter the past, ever change the present, or ever illuminate the path of the future? It is as futile as it is un-Christian. As Christ put it, "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?"

Other foes to divine peace are the exaltation of self, anger, envy, covetousness, and all hatred, and evil thinking and evil speaking of others. By none of these malign spirits is the soul led into the kingdom of peace.

"Hard-heartedness dwells not in souls.
Round whom Thine arms are thrown,
And dark thoughts fade away in grace
Like cloud spots in the dawn.

And often in my deepest thoughts
When they lie nearest Thee,
I feel the worst men that I ever knew*
Are better men than me."

It is only when we sound the trumpet of love that the angels hear us and heed us and hurry down to open the gate for our pilgrim feet.

Helps to the Divine Peace

There are many, of course, that could be mentioned. But I mention only those two which are spoken of by the Apostle just before he utters this great sentence about the Divine Peace. One is trust. "Be careful for nothing." If we will not trust God, how can we expect His peace? This means that we must relate all the events, incidents, duties, trials of life to God and to His will. It was after Christ had done that in His struggle in Gethsemane, and had said, "Thy will be done," that peace and repose and strength for the Cross came to Him. Suppose that every one of us for a single week should make this the rule and practice of life, to face every duty and every problem, and every relationship, and pass through every experience with that thought in our mind, what in this is the will of God for me? How would God have me speak and think and act at this moment? He who does that will know something of the peace of God. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

The other great aid to peace is prayer. "Be careful for nothing," says the Apostle, "but in everything by prayer

* See "Peace of God" R. S. Campbell.

and supplication let your request be made known unto God." The result of that, he says, the result of faith and trust in God and of prayer, is that the peace of God shall keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. You have no right to expect any of the peace of God without trust, without relating all things in life to His will, and without prayer, making known your requests unto God. But if you do that, you will know something of the truth of what the Apostle says, that the peace of God will keep your heart and your mind.

The Peace of God! That is your great inheritance. Remember that every great thing that is said in the Bible by prophet and Psalmist and Apostle and by Christ Himself, every great promise is for you; not for David and Isaiah and Paul and John only, but for *you*. It is as if God when He makes those promises sees you only among all the multitudes of men. Upon *you* has come the end of the ages! Christ said, "My peace I give unto you." There is your inheritance as a Christian! Have you claimed it? Will you claim it now?

The Abrahamic Covenant and the Baptism of Infants

By the REV. E. E. BIGGER

The Perpetuity of This Covenant



HE very essence for the authority for the baptism of infants, as well as the origin and existence of the Christian Church is centered and grounded in the covenant which God made with Abraham, an "everlasting covenant," and so repeated, declaring that His covenant with Abraham would go down the ages, as His special covenant with His church (Genesis 17: 1-14). This covenant will continue in force as long as there remains any of Abraham's seed unsaved, until "All Israel shall be saved." Rom. 11: 25, 26. "O ye seed of Israel his servant, his chosen ones. . . . Be ye mindful always of his covenant, the word which he commanded to a *thousand generations; even the covenant which he made with Abraham. . . . and to Israel for an everlasting covenant.*" I Chron. 16: 13, 14, 15-17. B. C. 1042. "This is my covenant, saith the Lord. . . . It shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, *from henceforth and forever.*" Is. 59: 21. B. C. 698. Nor does the seed of Abraham after the flesh, exhaust God's covenant with Abraham. All the nations of the earth are included in this covenant. "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22: 15-18. "Know ye therefore that *they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.* And the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed. . . . For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, *there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*" Gal. 3: 6-8, 26-29. The condition limiting God's blessings and promises, in his covenant with Abraham, in time or place, in race or sex, is the *limitation of sinners baptized into Christ.* It would be difficult, if not impossible, to frame stronger language to show and prove that God's covenant with Abraham is in full force in the Christian Church, absolutely without restriction or limitation in Christ. Furthermore it is clear that it was Christ who established the covenant with Abraham. "The Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him, I am the Almighty God." Gen. 17: 1. Christ had to tell Abraham who He was, because He was in human form, *a man.* He appeared to Abraham as a *man* "in the plains of Mamre." Gen. 18: 1-4, 16-22. And Christ says, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." Jno. 8: 56. Dr. Shedd, in his commentary on Rom. 10: 9, says, The word *Kurios* (Greek) is the Septuagint rendering of *Jehovah* (Hebrew), and *Lord* is the English rendering of the Greek *Kurios*. But '*Lord*' is the English rendering of *Jehovah* (Hebrew) in Gen. 17: 1. *Therefore it was Christ who made the covenant with Abraham in*

Gen. 17: 1. Manifestly, in His covenant with Abraham, Christ laid the foundation of His church, "which he purchased with his own blood." Acts 20: 18. Christ now having paid on the cross the debt of the nations, commanded His disciples: "*Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*" Matt. 28: 19. Therefore Christ's covenant with Abraham must continue in force at least until His great commission is accomplished. Rom. 11: 25, 26. The virgin Mary, in her magnificat, exultingly exclaimed, "From henceforth *all generations* shall call me blessed. . . . As he spake to our fathers, *to Abraham and to his seed for ever.*" Luke 1: 48, 58; Gen. 22: 16, 18; Gal. 3: 16. Zacharias, at the birth of his son, John the Baptist, broke into another paean of praise, "He hath raised up an Horn of salvation for us. . . . And to remember his holy covenant, *the oath which he sware unto Abraham, our father.*" Luke 1: 69, 72, 73. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ . . . *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off*"—the nations, the Gentiles. Acts 2: 38, 39. "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, *saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall the families of the earth be blessed.*" Acts 3: 25. "*Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*" Gal. 3: 7. But believers in Christ constitute the Church. Eph. 5: 25-27. Therefore the Christian Church is the same and the perpetuation of the church established by Christ in the family of Abraham, and *brings with it all the blessings of that covenant* to the infant seed of believers in Christ. Thus we see how down the ages, the Abrahamic covenant was not suffered to lapse, but has been kept to the fore in all its fulness, and will be so kept until all the elect Jews and Gentiles are saved. Rom. 11: 25, 26.

The Change of the Seal of the Covenant

The perpetuity and active existence of the Abrahamic covenant in the Christian Church being indisputably established, let us consider the change of the seal of the covenant. That baptism, as the seal of the covenant, was substituted for circumcision, at the coming of Christ, is a fact of history. Christ gave notice that He would change the seal of the covenant *from blood to water* at His coming. He said, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." Ezek. 36: 25, 26. Accordingly, with the knowledge of this prophecy, the Jews expected Christ to come baptizing: And they asked John, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not the Christ? Jno. 1: 25. And John the Baptist said, Christ was his authority for baptizing with water. Jno. 1: 31, 33. The change of the seal of the Abrahamic covenant from circumcision to baptism, was a change of *form* and not of substance, for they both symbolize