

J. N. Darby

## HOW TO GET PEACE\*

{\*I have had some little difficulty in putting this in the form of a dialogue, as being fictitious, which I dislike in divine things; but it is a real summing up of many conversations, so that I have given it in this form, as presenting more clearly the common difficulties of a soul.}

**How can I get peace with God? He has "made peace by the blood of the cross." I do not deny that; I believe it; but I have not peace; and how can I have that peace myself?**

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God."

**Well, I know it is so written, but I have not peace; that I know: I wish I had, and I sometimes think I do not believe at all. I see you happy; and how is that happiness of soul to be had?**

You do not then think it presumptuous to be at peace with God in the assurance of His favour, and thus of our own salvation?

**I think it would be in me; but I see it in scripture, and therefore it must be right; and I see a few who enjoy the divine favour, in whom one sees it is real. But I do not know how to get this. It leaves me distressed if I think of it, though I get on from day to day as other Christians do; but when this question is raised, I know I am not at peace, nor assured of divine favour resting upon me, as I see you and others enjoying it. And it is a serious thing, because if "being justified by faith, we have peace with God," as you say, and as I know scripture says, I have not peace with God; and how, then, can I be justified?**

You have not the true knowledge of justification by faith. I do not say you are not justified in God's sight, but your conscience has not possession of it. The Reformers, all of them, went further than I do. They all held that if a man had not the assurance of his own salvation he was not justified at all. Now, whoever believes in the Son of God is, in God's sight, justified from all things. But till he sees this as taught of God, till he apprehends the value of Christ's work, he has no consciousness of it in his own soul, and, of course, if in earnest, as you are, he has not peace; nor is his peace solidly established till he knows he is in Christ, as well as that Christ died for him; and the Christian's getting on, as you say, day by day, is a false and hollow thing, which must some time or other be broken up. It is that which often causes distress on death-beds. And the character of Christian activity is sadly deteriorated and made a business of, a kind of means of getting happy, not work in the power of the Spirit, by a soul at peace.

If a person is really serious, and walks before God, he cannot rest in spirit till he be at peace with Him, and the deeper all these exercises are the better. But He has made peace by the blood of the cross. All these exercises are merely bringing up the weeds to the surface, as ploughing and harrowing a field. They are useful in this way, and necessary; but they are not the crop which faith in the finished work of Christ produces. His work is finished. He "appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and He "finished the work which his Father gave him to do." That work, which puts away our sin, is complete and accepted of God. If you come to

God by Him, if your sins are not all put away by it, completely and for ever, they never can be, for He cannot die again; and all by the "one sacrifice," or else, as the apostle reasons in Hebrews 9, "he must often have suffered."

**I see this more clearly, and that it is a perfect, finished work, done once for all.**

What do you want, then, still, in order to have peace?

**Well, that is what I want to see clearly.**

I am anxious, before we speak of your state and hindrances, to have the work itself clearly brought before our minds. Who did this work?

**Why, Christ, of course.**

What part had you in completing it?

**None.**

None, surely, unless we say your sins. And to what state of your soul does it apply—a godly or an ungodly state?

**Well, must not I be holy?**

Surely, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." But do you see how quickly, and with the instinct of self-righteousness, you turn from Christ's work to your own holiness—to what you are? It is curious—the quicksightedness of man to what makes nothing of him and his self-approbation. Your desire of holiness, however, is the desire of the new man. Were you indifferent to it, one's work would be to seek to awaken your conscience, not to talk of peace: rather, perhaps, to break up false peace. But we are now inquiring how an anxious soul can find peace.

**Quite so. I am sadly indifferent sometimes, and that is one thing that troubles me; but I have not peace, and I would give anything for it.**

I do not doubt such indifference retards, in a certain sense, your finding it, but we have humbly to learn what we are; the gain of a few dollars would give more earnestness to many a soul. But I repeat my question—Does this work of Christ apply simply to your ungodliness or godliness, or to an improved state at least?

**Why, simply, of course, to my ungodliness.**

Undoubtedly. Consequently not to your holiness, if there were any, nor to an improved state. Yet, what are you looking for to get peace? Is it not an improved state of soul?

**Why, yes.**

Then you are on the wrong road, for that by which Christ "has made peace" applies to your ungodliness. Your desire is right, but you are putting the cart before the horse, as men speak—you are looking for holiness to get Christ, instead of looking to have Christ to get holiness.

**But I do hope for His help in order to get it.**

That I can believe, but you are looking for His help, not to His work or blood-shedding for peace. You want righteousness not help. We need His help every moment when we are justified. He is the Author of every good thought in us before. But that is not peace, nor His blood-shedding, nor righteousness. Yet this search is not without its fruit for all that, because it leads you to see that

you cannot thus find what you seek for. You will neither find holiness thus, nor peace by it. But, finding that you cannot and that when "to will is present" you do not find "how to perform that which is good," will lead you, through grace, knowing that there is no good in you, to that which does give peace —Christ's work— and not your state and the work of grace in you. That work God works; but it is not to lead us to look at it as the way of peace, but through it and out of ourselves, simply and wholly, to Christ's work and His acceptance before God. But come now, where are you before God?

**I do not know. That is just what troubles me.**

Are you lost?

**I hope not. Of course we are lost by nature; but I hope there is a work of grace in me, though I sometimes doubt it.**

Suppose you stood before God now, and your case had to be decided, where would you be, had it, as it must in judgment, to be decided by your works? Have you confidence?

**I hope it would be right: I cannot help thinking there is a work of grace in me; but I cannot think of judgment without fear.**

I trust there is a work of grace in you —do not doubt it; but here is the turning-point of our inquiry: What you want is, to be in God's presence, and know there, if God enters into judgment with you (as it must then be in righteousness and in respect of your state and works), that you are simply lost! Now you are a sinner, and a sinner cannot subsist before God in judgment at all. It is not help you want here; that is, if actually in God's presence, but righteousness, and that you have not got; I mean as to your own faith and conscience, through and in which we possess it. Righteousness can alone suffice before God; and now the righteousness of God, for we have none, and only this is to be found. Nor does the work of grace in us produce this. It is by faith, through the work of Christ, and in Him we possess it; through Him God justifies the ungodly.

The case of the prodigal son will illustrate this. There was a work of God in him; he came to himself, found himself perishing, and set out towards his father. When setting out he acknowledges his sins, adding "make me as one of thy hired servants." There was uprightness, a sense of divine goodness, and a sense of sin, and he was drawing conclusions as to what he might hope for when he met his father; and so are you. He had what the world of Christians call humility and a humble hope; was drawing conclusions just as you are, which proved —what?— that he had never met his father. He could not reason as to how he would be received when he did meet him, if he had met him. It is the position of one who had never met God, though God had wrought in him. When he did meet his father, not a word of making him like "the hired servants" is to be found. There was the confession of sin fully, and his previous experience had brought him in his rags to his father, in his sins (not loving them, but in them and confessing them). The effect of the previous process was that he then met God, as to his conscience, in his sins, and that was all; and had his father on his neck —grace reigned— and had the best robe, Christ, the righteousness of God, which no progress had given him, of which he had nothing before. It was a new thing conferred on him.

When in God's presence, we need Christ, not progress; righteousness and justification through Him, not help or improvement. God has helped us, or we should not have been there. There has been progress, but the progress has been to bring us into God's presence, not to judge of the

progress and hope because of it, but to judge of sin in His sight and know He can have none of it, and to find Christ our perfect acceptance in His sight instead of ourselves —Christ, who has borne our sins— Christ, who is our righteousness, perfect, absolute, and eternal. It is not in looking at our progress that we find peace. Were it so, we should have to say, "Therefore being justified by experience, we have peace with God;" but that the word of God never says. True progress as to this is our being brought into God's presence as mere and wholly lost sinners, confessing our sins, and that "in us, that is, in our flesh, there is no good thing;" and thus the consciousness that we are lost as a present thing.

It is not a question what we shall be, or how we shall be judged to be in the day of judgment, but the discovery of what we are —our actual sins and our sinful nature— which is the real plague of an upright soul, and getting Christ instead of these —"the best robe," instead of our "rags," when in God's presence in them. We have found Christ and believed in Him. He has been the propitiation for our sins, bearing them in His own body on the tree; and, having Christ, He is our righteousness; God condemned sin in the flesh, when He was an offering for it (Rom. 8: 3), and we are not "in the flesh," but "in Christ." Instead of Adam and his sins, that is, ourselves, we have Christ and the value of His work.

This is true of every one that believes in Him, comes to God by Him. Were we as simple as scripture, it would be seen in a moment. But we are not, and we have to be cured of the self-righteousness of our hearts, and, as mere sinners before God, find that God in love has taken up the question of our sins and our evil nature, has anticipated the day of judgment, and settled the question for every one that comes to God by Him, "once for all," and for ever, on the cross, has dealt with the sins which I should have had to answer for in the day of judgment; and dealt with them in putting them away according to His own righteousness, and that there our fullest form of sin in flesh against God, that is, enmity against God, met with God dealing with sin, in grace to us, but in judgment against it. Sin and God met on the cross, when Christ was made sin for us, and by His death we have died to it, and are the fruit of the travail of His soul before God. He has borne the sins of many, and appeared to put away sin —has glorified God about it in righteousness in that momentous hour. He took what I had earned; I get the fruit of what He has done.

Practically speaking, I come to God like Abel, with that sacrifice in my hand; God must own its value; I have the testimony that I am righteous: the witness is borne to my gifts; my acceptance is according to the value of Christ's sacrifice in God's sight; coming with that is confession of righteous exclusion in myself, not of improvement in state; I come with Christ in my hand, so to speak, my slain Lamb, and the testimony is to my gift. God looks at that when I thus come by it, not at my state, which, so coming, is confessedly that of a sinner, and only a sinner, as to his own title, shut out from God.

**But must I not accept Christ?**

Ah, how "I" gets through the blessedest testimonies of God's ways towards us in grace. I say, here is Christ on God's part for you —God's Lamb. You answer —"But must not I?" I am not surprised. It is no reproach I make; it is human nature, my nature in the flesh; but know that in "I" there is no good thing. But tell me, would you not be glad to have Him?

**Surely I should.**

Then your real question is, not about accepting Him, but whether God has really presented Him to you, and eternal life in Him. A simple soul would say, "Accept! I am only too thankful to have Him!" but as all are not simple, one word on this also. If you have offended some one grievously, and a friend seeks to offer him satisfaction, who is to accept it?

**Why, the offended person, of course.**

Surely. And who was offended by your sins?

**Why, God, of course.**

And who must accept the satisfaction?

**Why, God must.**

That is it. Do you believe He has accepted it?

**Undoubtedly I do.**

And is—

**Satisfied.**

And are not you?

**Oh! I see it now. Christ has done the whole work, and God has accepted it, and there can be no more question as to my guilt or righteousness. He is the latter for me before God. It is wonderful! and yet so simple! But why did I not see it? how very stupid!**

That is faith in Christ's work, not our accepting it, gladly as we do, not believing God has. You have no need to enquire now whether you believe. The object is before your soul, seen by it: what God has revealed is known in seeing it thus by faith. You are assured of that, not of your own state. As you see the lamp before you and know it, not by knowing the state of your eye; you know the state of your eye by seeing it. But you say, How stupid I was. It is ever so. But allow me to ask you what you were looking for? —Christ, or holiness in yourself and a better state of soul?

**Well, holiness and a better state of soul.**

No wonder you did not see Christ then. Now this is what God calls submitting to God's righteousness, finding a righteousness which is neither of nor in ourselves, but finding Christ before God, and the proud will, through grace, submitting to be saved by that which is not of or in ourselves. It is Christ instead of self, instead of our place in the flesh. Had you obtained peace in the way you sought it, you would have been satisfied with whom?

**Myself.**

Just so. And what would that have been? Nothing real indeed, and shutting out Christ if it were, save as a help; shutting Him out as righteousness and peace. And as an upright soul taught really of God cannot be satisfied with itself, it remains, though confidingly in love if walking with God, yet without peace for years perhaps, till it does submit to God's righteousness. And now note another point: for the soul at peace with God can now contemplate Christ to learn. He has not only borne our sins, and died to sin, and closed the whole history of the old man in death for those who believe, they having been crucified with Him; but He has glorified God in this work (John 12: 31, 33; 17: 4, 5), and so obtained a place for man in the glory of God, and a place of present positive

acceptance, according to the nature and favour of God whom He has glorified; and that is our place before God. It is not only that the old man and his sins are all put out of God's sight, but we are in Christ before God; and this we have the consciousness of by the Holy Ghost given to us (John 14: 20), accepted in the Beloved, divine favour resting on us as on Him. And thus too He dwells in us; and this leads unto true practical holiness. We are sanctified, set apart, to God by His blood; but we are so in possessing His life, or Him as our life, and the Holy Ghost; and these, or, if you please, He Himself becomes the measure of our walk and relationship with God. We are not our own, but bought with a price, and nothing inconsistent with His blood, and the price of it, and its power in our hearts, becomes a Christian.

This was beautifully expressed in the Old Testament in figures. When a leper was cleansed, besides the sacrifice, the blood was put on the tips of his ear, his thumb, and his great toe. Every thought, every act, all in our walk which cannot pass the test of that blood, is excluded from the Christian's thoughts and walk. And how glad he is to be freed from this world and the body of sin practically, and have that precious blood as the motive, measure, and security for it; that whatever grieves the Holy Spirit of God, by which we are sealed when thus sprinkled, is unsuited to a Christian, seeing he dwells in Him. And that precious blood and the love Christ shewed in shedding it become the motive, and the Holy Ghost the power of, devotedness and love in walking as Christ walked. If we are in Christ, Christ is in us; and we know it by the Comforter given (John 14); and we are the epistle of Christ in this world: the life of Jesus is to be manifested in our mortal body.

**But your standard is very high.**

It is simply what scripture gives. "He that saith he abideth in him ought to . . . walk even as he walked." God Himself is set before us as the model, Christ being the expression of what is divine in a man. "Be ye followers of God as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ has loved us and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." Nor is there any limit. "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." "Now are ye light in the Lord, walk as children of light." But you may remark here that there is nothing legal, nothing by which we are seeking to make our case good with God. Many would say that complete grace and assurance leaves liberty to do as we like; that, if we are completely saved, what are the motives or need of any works? It is a dreadful principle. As if we have no motive but "getting saved" to work by, none but legal bondage and obligations; and if we are saved, all motive is gone. Have the angels no motive? It is an utter blundering mistake, such as we could not make in human things. What should we think of the sense of one who told us, that a man's children were exempt from obligation because they were certainly and always his children? I should say that they were always and certainly under obligation, because they were always and certainly his children, and that if they were not, the obligation ceased.

**That is clear enough, though I never thought of it. But you do not mean to say that we were under no obligation before we were children of God?**

I do not, but we were not under that obligation. You cannot be under the obligation of living as a Christian till you are one. We were under the obligation of living as men ought to live, as men in the flesh before God; and of that the law was the perfect measure. But upon that ground we were wholly lost, as we have seen. Now we are completely saved, who through grace believe, and are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. And our duties are the duties of God's children. Duties

always flow, and right affections too, from the relationships we are in, and the consciousness of the relationship is the spring and character of the duty; though our forgetting it does not alter the obligation. And so scripture always speaks, "Be ye followers of God as dear children." "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy." Right affections and duties flow from the place we are already in, and are never the means of getting into it. We enjoy it when we walk in it; rather we enjoy the light and favour of God, communion with Him in it. But, note, failure in faithfulness does not lead to doubt the relationship, but, because we are in it, to blame ourselves for inconsistency with it. Here the advocacy of Christ comes in and other truths, which I cannot enter into now, though most precious in their place. Only remark that that advocacy is not the means of our obtaining righteousness, but is founded on it and Christ's having made the propitiation for our sins. Nor do we go to Him that He may advocate, but He goes for us because we have sinned. Christ had prayed for Peter before he had even committed the sin, and just for what was needed; not that he might not be sifted; he wanted that; but that his faith might not fail when he was sifted. Ah, if we knew how to trust Him! See how, in the midst of His enemies, He looked at Peter at the very right moment to break his heart!

**How simple things are when we take the word; and how it changes all your thoughts of God. One is altogether in a new state!**

True indeed, and this leads to two other points I wished to advert to. We have looked at Christ's work as satisfying, yea, glorifying God, because we had to see how righteousness was to be had. But we must remember it was God's sovereign love which gave Christ, and the same love in which He offered Himself for us. It is not for us righteousness reigns; that will indeed be true hereafter, when judgment returns to righteousness, when God will come and judge the earth. But for us grace reigns, sovereign goodness, God Himself, through righteousness, a divine righteousness, as we have seen, which gives us a place in glory in God's presence according to the acceptance of Christ, and like Him. It is sovereign grace which gives a sinner a place with the Son of God, conformed to His image. Yet it is righteous; for His blood and work fully and necessarily claim such a place, as we have seen in John 13 and 17. And now "we joy in God himself through our Lord Jesus Christ." We know Him as love (and this love as the sum of all our joy and blessing), yet in righteousness in Christ, for we are made the righteousness of God in Him. We know God in love, and are reconciled to Him. It is a blessed place, a place of holy affections and peaceful rest. We have communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. What is communion?

**Why, common thoughts and joys and feelings.**

Think of that —with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ!

**That is wonderful. I hardly get into that.**

Well, we have to seek that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, being rooted and grounded in love, that we may comprehend. Yet if the Holy Ghost who dwells in us is the source of our thoughts and joys and feelings, they cannot be discordant, though we may be poor feeble creatures, with those of the Father and the Son. Does not the Christian's heart delight in Christ, in His words, His obedience, His holiness, His sacrifice of Himself to the Father's will? and does not the Father delight in it? we indeed most poorly and feebly, He infinitely; but the object is one. He is chosen of God and precious, and to them that believe He is precious. I go no farther than to cite this as an

illustration. This is a matter of your daily life and diligence of heart; but you can understand that what comes from the Holy Ghost must conform to the mind of the Father and the Son.

**That is evident, but it is so new to me; I am brought into such a different world! If this be true, where are we all?**

I leave you to ponder over this, and to search the word whether these things are so; whether scripture, which fully recognizes our passing through exercises of soul as coming to it, ever looks at the Christian otherwise than as forgiven, and accepted in the Beloved, and knowing it as one who has "not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

**But if I receive this, there is a passage which I don't understand. We are told to "examine ourselves whether we are in the faith," and what you have said, it seems to me, sets this aside.**

We are told no such thing. Many a sincere soul is honestly doing it, and we all pass naturally through it.

**But it is there in scripture.**

The words are part of a sentence in 2 Corinthians 13: 3, 5. But the beginning of the sentence is this: "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me," . . . then a parenthesis . . . "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." It is a taunt. The Corinthians had called in question Christ's speaking in Paul, and the reality of his apostleship, as you may see all through both epistles. And he says, as a final argument, "You had better examine yourselves; how came you to be Christians?" for he had been the means of their conversion. Hence he adds, "Know ye not your own selves that Christ dwells in you, except ye be reprobates?" How came He there? He appeals to their certainty to prove his apostleship to their shame: but this is no direction to examine whether one is in the faith. It is all well to examine whether we are walking up to it; but that is a very different thing. A child does right to do that as to his conduct as such; it would be sad work for him to do the other and examine if he were a child. The consciousness, and the never failing consciousness of a relationship, is a different thing from consistency with it; and we must not confound the two. The loss of the consciousness of the relationship (which, however, I do not think takes place when once really possessed, unless in cases of divine discipline for sins) destroys the grounds of duty and the possibility of affections according to it. Look at the passage.

**I see it plain enough. There is nothing to complete the passage, "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me," if we do not connect this with it. And, in any case, the force of the apostle's reasoning is clear, and he appeals to their certainty —"Know ye not?" This last would have no sense, if they were to examine as a duty if it was so. But where had we got to with scripture?**

Rather, where had we got to without it? You don't read and search as you ought. Do so, and the truth will be clear to you: only, surely, we need God's grace and looking to Him, that we may receive the "sincere milk of the word as new born babes."

I have yet one point I wish very briefly to notice, to dear up our minds on the subject we are enquiring into. In receiving Christ we receive life. "This is the record," says John, "that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life." Between this life and the flesh there is no common thought. If we do not realize redemption, our being quickened (not taking us from under the law and the sense of our own responsibility) puts us in misery of



heart at finding sin in us, as in Romans 7. If we do know redemption, and have been sealed by the Spirit, still "the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh;" they are contrary as ever one to the other. But if led of the Spirit, we are not under the law. Now you have been trying to draw hopeful conclusions from finding signs of life in yourself; having only a general apprehension, which always accompanies true conversion, of the goodness of God, strengthened by the knowledge that Christ died. But all this reasoning about yourself was in no way faith in redemption. It left you still, though with better hope, in view of judgment; or, at least, if when looking at the cross you saw that there was there what you needed as a sinner, you still looked for something better in yourself, you could not say you possessed what you needed in the cross —yea, were the fruit of it, as to your state before God; and when you turned to the judgment, your state would stand you in no good stead there. Life is not redemption. Both belong to the believer, but they are different things. You were looking for proofs of life, concluding that, if they were there, you could pass in the judgment; and then perhaps in a vague way you brought in Christ to boot!

**I think you have described my case pretty nearly.**

Now when persons live close with God in simplicity of heart, the sense of goodness in God predominates, and there is the savour of piety; but when they do not, there is uneasiness and restlessness; the accusing conscience predominates, and they are unhappy, if not dismally afraid. But in neither case is redemption really known; it is not known that Christ has taken our place in judgment, and given us His in glory: only we must wait for the adoption itself, the redemption of the body. The way in which scripture unites these two truths is in the resurrection of Christ. This is the power of life, and the seal of the acceptance of His work —His coming fully up out of the consequences of our sin into another state. So we in Him. We were dead in sin, exposed to judgment, and under death; Christ comes down from heaven, accomplishing in dying the work of putting our sins away; and we are dead with Him; and then He and we with Him are raised, consequent on the completed work, and God's acceptance of it. He has quickened us together with Him, having forgiven us all trespasses. It is life, whose full divine power is shewn in resurrection; it is not only eternal life communicated, but deliverance out of the state we were in, and our entrance into another; not outwardly of course yet, but really by the possession of this life. Redemption means, though by price, a deliverance out of the state I was in, and bringing me into another and a free one. Hence we talk of the redemption of the body, which we have not yet. Life does not by itself give this: through it we feel the burden of the old state we are in; but when we find that we are redeemed also, we know that we have been brought, at the cost of Christ's death, out of the old Adam state we were in, into Christ. Hence we have "boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world."

**I cannot follow quite the course of scripture thoughts you give. I must learn these things; but I see the difference between redemption and life, though we have both in Christ now. He has died and is risen. I suppose I had life before; but I have, in a measure, now understood redemption too.**

Yes, you were of course redeemed. And surely God had wrought in you in grace, as you said; but, as already said, you were looking at this in view of a God of judgment, with glimpses of divine love, but had not faith in accomplished redemption. See how the reasoning of the apostle applies to this in Romans 5: 19: "By one man's obedience many shall be made (constituted) righteous." "Then," says the flesh, "I may live in sin." What is the answer? No, you ought not! This would be

to put you back under the claims of law, and so destroy again what is taught of Christ's obedience. In no wise: "How can we that are dead to sin live in it?" You have been baptized to Christ's death, and are a Christian by having part in His death. How, if you have died with Him to sin, can you live in it? We are now free to give ourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead.

**Well, while the old foundations remain, it makes a new thing of the whole matter. It is not the same way of putting Christianity at all. I have to realize it, though I am quite different as to my ground of peace already; or, rather, I have one, and had not before. But I see it is in scripture, and I must search that out.**

The truth is, the great body of true sincere Christians are as those without, hoping it will be all right when they get in; instead of being within and shewing what is there to the world, as the epistle of Christ.

**But you would make us all out-and-out Christians, dead, as you say, to the world and everything.**

Surely. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." It is the single eye which causes the whole body to be full of light. We are not our own. The new man cannot have his objects here; his service he has: so had Christ; in nothing did He have His objects. We are crucified to the world, and the world to us; and so we have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. Only remember, that the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and that this needs vigilance, "working out," as to the passage of the wilderness, "your salvation with fear and trembling:" not because your place is uncertain, but because God does "work in you to will and to do:" and it is a serious thing to maintain God's cause when the flesh is in us, and Satan disposes of the world to hinder and deceive us. But do not be discouraged, for God works in you; greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. You cannot be in wilderness difficulties unless you have been redeemed out of Egypt. "My grace is sufficient for thee," says Christ. "My strength is made perfect in weakness." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The secret is lowliness of heart and the sense of dependence and looking to Christ with confidence, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling. You cannot mistrust yourself, nor trust God, too much. By redemption you are brought to God, and are in the place of His people, and now (we can say of His children and church, as such) set to make good His glory there. The true knowledge of redemption brings one into perfect peace, into true and constant dependence on the Redeemer. But if you have not the first, you cannot have the second; nor can you walk with God, if you are not reconciled to Him.

**It is true. Do not suppose I want to make difficulties: but there is still a question I have to ask; I wish to get clear on these points. We have been taught to rely on God's promises and trust them for our salvation; it is the language we constantly hear, and I do not see, if your view be right, how exactly to connect it with trusting in the promises for salvation; and surely we should do that.**

The answer is very simple, and I am glad you put the question. It is just these points we have to inquire into. Trusting God's promises is clearly right: that is certain; and there are most precious promises too. But tell me, is it a promise that Christ shall come and die and rise again?

**No: He is come, and has died, and is risen, and is at God's right hand.**

This then cannot be a promise, because it is an accomplished fact. For Abraham it was a promise, and he did right to believe it as such. To us it is an accomplished fact, and we must believe it as such. And so scripture speaks. He believed that that which God had promised He was

able also to perform. But we believe that what by its efficacy saves us He has performed. It would be unbelief to treat it yet as a promise; and so it is written —"You to whom it shall be imputed, believing on him who hath raised up Jesus Christ from the dead." You will find both passages together, speaking of this very point, at the end of Romans 4. As to help on our journey onward, there are many and cherished promises. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear." "No man shall pluck his sheep out of his hand." "Who will also confirm you to the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." I might cite many others of the greatest comfort and value to us in our difficulties on the way. But the work in which I have to believe as justifying me and reconciling me to God, as alone and perfectly putting away my sins and redeeming me to God, is not a promise; nor can it be looked at as such. It is an accomplished fact, a work already accepted of God.

**I see it clearly; indeed, nothing can be simpler and plainer the moment it is before you. What justifies before God is not a promise at all, but an accomplished fact. I had never noticed that passage in Romans 4. It is very plain. How carelessly one reads scripture. But indeed, the truth of what you say is evident on the face of it.**

Allow me, as we have touched this point, to draw your attention to another thing in the form in which the work and testimony of grace is put. You may remark that in the passage in Romans 4 it is said, not "believe on Christ," however true that remains, but "on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." So Peter, "who by him do believe in God who raised him up from the dead and gave him glory." So the Lord Himself as to His coming into the world, "He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me." We know God Himself only really, by knowing Him through Christ. If I know Him thus, I know Him as God our Saviour; as one who has not spared His Son for me: as one who, when Christ was dead as having taken our sins, raised Him from the dead. In a word, I not only believe in Christ, but in Him who has given Christ and owned His work; who has given glory to man in Him; as a God who has come to save, not as one who is waiting to judge me. I believe in Him by Christ. When Israel had passed the Red Sea, they believed in a God who had delivered them and brought them to Himself; and so do I. I know no other God but that. If I believe in Him by Christ, I do wait for a promise, for the redemption of the body, for the full results of His work. Thus Christianity gives us present affections, in peace, in a known relationship, and the energizing power of hope; the two things that give blessing and energy to man as to his position; for love is the spring of all. Love, because He first loved us; and finding our joy in Him; love to others, as partaking of His nature, and Christ's dwelling in our hearts, so that love constrains us.

**You make a Christian a wonderful person in the world; but we are very weak for such a place.**

I could never make him in my words what God has made him in His. As to weakness, the more we feel it, the better. Christ's strength is made perfect in our weakness.