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## PEACE IN TRIBULATION.

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“Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide, keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom; for the son dishonoreth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man’s enemies are the men of his own house. Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: My God will hear me.”—Micah 7:5-7.

The beloved and faithful Apostle Paul wisely counselled the church, saying—“*If it be possible*, as much as lieth *in you*, live peaceably with all men.” (Rom. 12:18.) But in the outset he plainly admits that it may not always be possible; and we are taught that to maintain peace under some conditions would be wrong. Paul shows plainly the character of the effort we should make for peace,—that we should cultivate a loving, affectionate disposition toward others, in honour preferring one another; not slothfully casting our cares on others, but diligently bearing our own burdens to the full extent of our ability; providing things honest in the sight of all men for ourselves and those dependent upon us, and kindly sympathising with and helping to bear the burdens of others who are overburdened; putting away vanity and self-conceit; not minding high things, but condescending to men of low estate; and if rewarded with evil, overcoming the evil with good—*if it be possible*.

And yet, strange to say, it is not always possible to secure peace with those about us, even with the most careful manifestation of such a disposition. Peace on such terms is secured with all those who love righteousness, truth, and fair dealing; but it is not so secured with others. With the world in general, peace and harmony is only secured by lowering your principles of truth and righteousness to conform to their ideas. Many do this in whole or in part, and verily they have their reward; for “the world will love its own.” But those who closely adhere to the principles of Christ and faithfully carry them out, must not expect to have peace with the world—“In the world ye shall have tribulation;” “They that will live Godly shall suffer persecution.” It is not possible in this age to have it otherwise. The apostles found it so, and so did the Lord. And he said for our encouragement, “If the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. . . . The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. But now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass that the word might be fulfilled that is written,—They hated me *without a cause*.”

If after the same manner, we find persecution instead of peace in the world, we should not think strange of it, or change our course of action, but should follow on in our Leader’s footsteps, letting our light shine in words and deeds of no uncertain sound, however severely they reprove the works of darkness, and bring hatred and persecution from those who love darkness rather than light. If the Lord and the apostles and all the faithful saints had just kept quiet and said nothing about the truth,—the kingdom to come, and the overthrow of present evil powers civil and religious, in order to its establishment; if they had flattered, approved, and worked in harmony with the Chief-priests and rulers of the synagogues, and conformed to the ideas of the masses of professed religious people; if they had just let them alone to work out their own plans and ideas without interference, doubtless they could have lived at peace with all men and had no persecution. And just as surely as we let the world and worldly religious systems, etc., alone, to do their own will, without warning

or remonstrance against their evil character, and erroneous teaching, we also will escape persecution and live at peace with the world. But as surely as the Lord did not do it, we must not do it; unless we are willing to turn aside from the narrow way and to give up the prize of our high calling.

Although the Prophet had foretold that Messiah should be the Prince of Peace, yet when Messiah came, he said in almost the same words as the Prophet above quoted, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household."—Matt. 10:34-36.

Though this has been true in a measure during the entire age, it is specially true in the harvest or end of the age, when the sickle of truth is doing its work of separation; for in the time of harvest, not only are Christians to be separated from the world, and wheat from tares (the true from the false), but the ripe wheat is also to be separated from the unripe. And so it will probably be true of the faithful now, as it was true of our Lord, that they shall be *left alone*. He said even to his disciples, "Behold the hour cometh, . . . that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone."—John 16:32.

When our Lord first started in his ministry he was glorified (honoured) of all (Luke 4:15), and men "wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth;" yet faithfulness to the truth quickly aroused hatred and opposition. Very soon the great ones in the church began to oppose him bitterly; but still many of the common people heard him gladly. And it seems that persecution from his earthly kindred was not lacking in his case, and that he was unwelcome in the home of his childhood; for he said, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Matt. 8:20.) His brethren did not believe on him, and seemed ashamed of the unpopular notoriety which his course brought upon them as a family. And though Jesus walked no more in Jewry [Judea] because the Jews there sought to kill him, his brethren urged him to go, notwithstanding the danger, and do some of his mighty works there. But Jesus replied to them, "My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth [and they seek my life] because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come"—neither the time for manifesting his power to the world, nor to lay down his life as a sacrifice. (John 7.) His mother was doubtless always in sympathy with him, though she could not fully understand him and with a true mother's love, as well as the love of a disciple, she shared his reproach and followed him to Calvary and the tomb.

But while the world, and the nominal church, and they of his own house, were arrayed in opposition to the Lord, he turned to his disciples and said, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? He that doeth the will of my Father, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matt. 12:50.) And yet the hour came when even these were scattered, and he was *left alone*. The persecution became so severe that they all fled.

And so it will probably be in the end of this age with the body of Christ. The separation must come closer and closer; friend after friend will depart; and foes will become more numerous and bitter in their opposition, until the reproach will rest so heavily upon the faithful, that all not like-minded will depart and leave them alone—alone in their fearless defence of the truth, alone in their bold declarations of the presence of Messiah and the setting up of his kingdom which shall overturn and destroy all opposing powers; and alone in bearing whatever of reproach or persecution such a course may bring.

If such is to be the stormy pathway of the saints in this day of harvest separation, how necessary is the counsel of the Prophet at the head of this article—"Trust ye not in a friend; put ye not confidence in a guide, etc." To trust in and take counsel of former friends, however dear, with reference to our present course of action, is dangerous. Unless they join us in the same narrow way of sacrifice, we must generally keep our thoughts and purposes to ourselves, with a resolute determination to accomplish our Father's will at any cost; for their very love for us will often cause them to bitterly oppose us. And in the end even that love will sometimes turn to hatred.

We may not put confidence now in former guides however much we had esteemed and revered them—whether they were the ministers of the nominal church, or parents, or husbands, or Christians of considerable advancement, highly esteemed for their work's sake. None of these must be looked to as guides now; for the tests are now being applied to all.—Every man's work is being and shall be yet more thoroughly tested—so as by fire—and only those who can stand the tests themselves can be helpful to others. And even the wife (or husband) who hitherto shared your joys and sorrows, and entered into all your plans, will not now be able to sympathise with, or comfort, or help you in this way, unless of the same consecrated class. Hence the counsel of the Prophet, "Keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom." If not of the fully consecrated class, she cannot understand or appreciate the prize for which you run. She can see only the thorns in your way, and her share in bearing some of the reproach with you, and her efforts will, in kindness to you and in the desire to reach her own ambitions, etc., be directed toward dissuading you from your course.

To whom then shall we look? Must we walk the thorny path-way alone—with foes and dangers all about us? If we should, as individuals, be left entirely alone, so far as human sympathy is concerned, we should be willing; for the disciple is not greater than his Lord, and he was left alone; yet not alone as he said, "because the Father is with me." But we are not, and probably shall not be so alone as he was; for other members of the body are now in existence, and their hearts are *one* in love and sympathy. The Prophet speaking for this class directs us where to look for help, for comfort and consolation, saying, "Therefore [though all other helps and comforts fail] *I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: My God will hear me.*"

This must be the attitude of the saints. They must look to the Lord—through his Word—to learn his will, his plan, and the part he would have them take in the execution of that plan, and then go about their Father's business with an eye single to his glory, taking comfort and rejoicing in his words of encouragement, and his exceeding great and precious promises. In him, through his Word, we must find our friend, our comforter and guide. But we must wait patiently for the grand outworking of his plan—Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him. Commit thy way unto the Lord, and he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light and thy judgment as the noonday.—Psa. 37:5-7.

During all this time of patient waiting under affliction we rejoice in the full assurance that God is causing all things to so work together as, in his own best time, to establish universal peace on a sure and permanent basis. But before that peace, must come the lash, the tumult, and the storm. Before Christ can reign as "Prince of Peace", he must rule with the rod of iron, subduing all things unto himself and establishing his own righteous authority. Peace on any other basis than that of righteousness is not a proper peace, nor is it the peace which God wants. In its very nature such a peace cannot last, and while it lasts it is injurious.

If a parent would have peace in the home circle, it should be established on the recognition in the family of the righteous principle of parental authority over children who have not attained their majority, and respectful consideration for their wise and loving counsel from those who have

come to that age. If the adult child would live at peace under the paternal roof, it should be on his part with a cheerful concession of the rights and privileges of every other member of the family, and a careful attention to filial and fraternal duties; and with the recognition on the part of parents and brothers and sisters of the righteous principles of his individual rights, and liberty of conscience, to serve God and his fellow-men, or himself, or them, according to the dictates of his conscience. When we were children, we were wisely placed by God under parental authority, but when we become men, we are subject to God only, though he directs that we still be subject to the civil powers that be, as long as he permits them. If we would have peace with our neighbours, it should also be with a recognition on the part of each of the natural and inalienable rights of each other as individuals, and a proper respect and regard for those rights, whether esteemed as wise or unwise. To seek peace on any other ground is merely to cry, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

If we are saints, our individual liberties and right will not only be exercised in the interests of peace, but for that *lasting peace* which is founded on the firm principles of righteousness—the recognition of God as the rightful sovereign of earth; and of the common brotherhood and equal rights of all men. And while we boldly assert these principles, and rule ourselves and those under our authority and care accordingly, we must *wait patiently* for the grand result.

The Prophet adds another word of encouragement saying, "Rejoice not against me O mine enemy: when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me." (Micah 7:8.) How like our Lord's expression, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of"; and Paul's triumph in affliction, and rejoicing under persecution. However dark our way may grow, the Lord will always be our light if we walk in close harmony with him. And though we fall in death, our power and strength will be renewed, and glory, honour and immortality will be granted when we rise in the likeness of our Lord, as his bride and joint-heir, to carry on to completion the grand work of establishing peace on earth and good will among men.

But let us not forget our Lord's words—"A man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me."—Matt. 10:36-38.

There is still another thought to which we would call attention before leaving the subject. It is that precious promise recorded by the Prophet Isaiah (26:3), "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee."

Well says one, I do not see how this can be true in view of the scriptures above quoted. It seems to me the Christian's experience if he is faithful, is very far from peaceful. Look at Paul and all the martyred saints of the past: and look at the Lord's sufferings.

True, from the world's standpoint, such experiences look to be far from peaceful; but if it were not for the deep under current, the gentle steady flow of communion and harmony with God, the Christian character could not stand amid the surging billows that disturb the surface. Like an iceberg, towed by a powerful under current, the Christian is upheld and borne onward by the strong under current of peaceful communion with God, and thus moves grandly on in opposition to the counter-surface-currents, steady and tranquil even in the midst of the wildest storms. Men of the world look on and wonder because they know nothing of this grand, silent motive power.

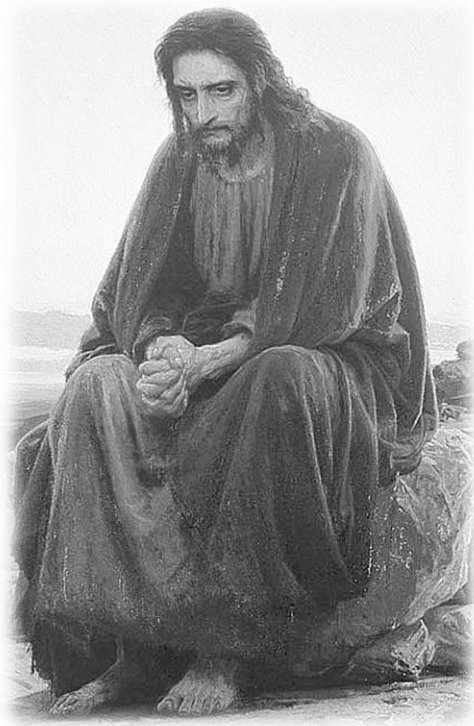
The mind thus stayed on God is kept in perfect peace even in the midst of persecution, just as the depth of ocean is calm and quiet while the surface is lashed with storm and tempest. Peace is not enthusiastic, ecstatic joy, but real joy can never be experienced without the firm foundation of peace. Peace is calm, quiet, restful tranquillity. When our Lord said to the raging winds and

waves, "Peace be still", "there was a great calm". The sun may or may not have shone out brightly, but no matter, the peace, the calm quiet rest, had come.

It is not continuous, delightful, ecstatic joy, that is promised to the Christian, but this calm, quiet, restfulness, which comes from acquaintance with God and his great plan of salvation, and implicit confidence in his love, and power, and wisdom, which in due time will cause all things to work together for the accomplishment of his grand designs. You may be troubled on every side, but you will not be in distress; you may be greatly perplexed, but you will not be in despair, unless you throw away your confidence in God, and cease to consider and meditate upon his word.

Those who abide in him by faith, will never know the feeling of despair. They may see every earthly tie severed, and realise to the full that in following Christ, their bitterest foes are those of their own household, and those whom they once regarded as members of the household of faith; yea, they may realise the loss of all things earthly, yet their peace will never be disturbed, if their minds are stayed on God, trusting in the sure outworking of his marvellous plan, and patiently awaiting and working in harmony with him for its development.—MRS. C. T. R.

—ZION'S WATCH TOWER, September, 1888.—



*Christ in the Desert,*  
Ivan Kramskoi, 1872.