Romans - Commentaries by George Cutting

Incidents and Illustrations of the Gospel: Sought and Brought, Peace.

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Romans 4:25; 5:1.

(From a Gospel Address.)

I DESIRE to speak of this scripture in such a way that the very youngest may be able to take it in. And if there is one here today who has not found rest in Christ, I trust some word may drop into your heart that will bring you into peace.

The last thing we get in chapter 4, is the first thing that troubles an awakened soul, namely, what he has done—the question of his offenses. He has a history he cannot get rid of; he has sinned against God and sees Himself condemned.

How is he to get clear? Many have tried to do so by making a fresh start; they promise to alter their ways, and falsely fancy that if they could only keep their promise they would get the desired blessing. Others feel that they could not keep it up if they did try, and are consequently afraid to take the position of a Christian at all.

Let me tell you plainly that reformation is not the way to meet your past offenses. This precious verse tells me of One “who was delivered for our offenses,” and who rose again from the dead. This is something outside us altogether. The death of Christ, the proof of God’s love, is outside us; the comfort of it is within.

Even with human love you must have some outside proof of a friend’s love before you can have the comfort of it in your heart. The proof must come first. It may be by a look, by a word, or by a gift, but in some way or other the outward proof of the love must precede the inward comfort of it. I believe God loves me. How do I know? Oh, by what I hear, by what I see.

So in this scripture God first gives an unmistakable proof of His love. “He was delivered,” i.e. He suffered for us. Then we have the comfort of it. The Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. God’s Son has come down. Oh, mystery of mysteries I wonder of eternal ages! He has come down to save us, mere specks of dust, as polluted as sin could make us, as hard as Satan could harden us; unclean, foul, loathsome, desperately wicked; as degraded in our lusts as we were determined in our rebellion; filthy, yea, so bad that nothing could meet our case but the death of God’s beloved Son. But He gave Him. He was delivered for our offenses. Is not that a wonderful proof? When there was no hope, when we could only look forward to condemnation, and dread the time when we must stand before the great white throne, and thence descend into a gaping hell, oh, we saw that the Son of God had come down that we might be saved, that we might be able to stand in the presence of that glory without a fear, without a cloud!

He was delivered for my offenses. What is the consequence of that? I am delivered from my offenses. If He came down to bear the judgment, am I not to be delivered from it? Was His work without avail? No! If He was delivered and rose again, I am set free.

Is that difficult? It is simplicity itself. I wish so to speak that the youngest boy over there may understand. That is what I earnestly desire, for when people get old and hard it is so difficult to reach them. I am always charmed when I see a little boy set free. Do you ask, Why? I will tell you. Because such are not only saved from the dishonor into which older ones have been plunged, but they have a whole lifetime to give to God; they are privileged to serve Him before their hearts become hardened, and before they learn the crooked ways of this poor world. Some who are saved when old seem to spend half their time unlearning what had been wrongly taught all their life through before. Oh, how I long for your conversion, you who are young in years! God give me grace to be simple, and you to take the message in.

You know you have sinned. It was because of what you have done that, if He would save you, He must come down and die for you. But He came: He took what we deserved for our sins—took it all, and said, “It is finished.” Blessed Saviour! He was raised again for our justification.

The next thing to consider is what results from this for those who believe on Him.

Look at verse 1 of chapter 5. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” What does peace with God mean? I will tell you first what it does not mean. It does not mean peace with yourself. It does not mean that I can now say, Though I was bad before, now I am good. It does not mean being satisfied with myself in any way. I have had peace a long time, but I am not satisfied with myself yet.

Peace with God! Weigh the words. The first step towards it is a quarrel with yourself. I know a man I have had a standing quarrel with for many a long year. Do you understand? The more I know what I am naturally, the more I have occasion to quarrel with myself.

But there is a Man at God’s right hand who is all that I could wish for. He it is who has put all my sins away. Through Him I see that God is for me. In God’s presence I am at rest. I have peace with Him. All that was between God and me is settled. I can look up to His throne and be at peace. I remember much of my guilty history, but all that has been settled, and there is not a charge against me. God, on the very throne of His holiness, has not a charge against me. Why? Because He who once suffered for my sins is on that very throne.

I cannot think of that throne without thinking of Him who is there. WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD! Yes, and Christ made it. We could neither make it ourselves nor purchase by future merit that which He made.

I knew a village doctor so miserable about his sins that he promised God that, if He would give him peace, he would preach at the village pump! It was no easy thing to stand at the village pump, where everyone could see him, and publicly confess Christ. What would his friends, the gentlemen of the neighborhood, think of such a thing? He thought that was a big price to pay for it, so he promised God that if He would

only give him peace he would do this humiliating thing.

But, dear friends, he did not get it on that ground. He has preached there, and the writer has preached there with him; but he did not get peace on that ground. He got it through believing in Christ. It is because He was “delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification,” that, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Do you say, “I do believe, but I have not found peace”? I really can hardly believe such a statement. For a person to believe the gospel which I have believed and not have peace is more than I can understand.

I will tell you what I mean. By way of illustration, suppose that a friend of yours owes a large sum of money. He is in great trouble about it. At last you hear that someone has come forward and offered to pay the money and relieve him. One morning you go and call upon him. You say, “I have heard some good news about you, but I am afraid it cannot be true, or you would not still be looking so very unhappy. I have heard that Mr. So-and-so has been to your creditor, and paid all you owed.”

“Yes, I have heard the same.”

“But I heard,” you continue, “that he has sent you a letter telling you what he has done. But I see from your face that it cannot possibly be true.”

“Oh, but he did send me a letter.”

“And did he say he had paid the money?”

“He did.”

“But you did not believe the letter?”

“Oh, yes, I believed it was his letter.”

“But you did not believe the news it contained, for if you had believed it you would have peace.” “Oh, yes, I believed it.”

“No, you did not. I see by your face that you did not believe it, for you are still disturbed about the meeting of the debt.”

If light comes into a dark room the darkness goes out. If I believe that the Son of God actually took my place and bore all my sins, if I have reliable evidence that the God I have sinned against is satisfied with the righteous settlement on the cross, and that He has declared it by raising Christ from the dead, I must have peace. If, by the death of Christ, God has removed the disturbance for Himself, He has removed it for me.

But you say, “What about tomorrow’s sins?” That is another matter. Do you intend to sin again? You say, “God knows my weakness better than I do, though I know a little of it; but, as far as I know my own heart, I wish not to sin.” That is right. The truly converted man has no wish to sin, but if he does sin God has made provision for it. “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

I am speaking now of the whole question of my sin. It was gone into and settled on the cross; yea, even before I was born: —

Suppose you are on the sea and a storm is raging. The waves are foaming and dashing mountains high. You say, “How can I get peace?” I will tell you how, if you could manage it. Take away the disturbing thing—the wind, and the consequence of it—the waves, and you have a calm. Now with conscience—storms the disturbing thing is sin, and the consequence of it righteous judgment. If God takes away the sin and the consequence of it, there is nothing left but calm, nothing but peace. Well, Jesus came on purpose to put away my sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He has borne God’s judgment, He has made peace, so that, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

When we see that, what effect has it on us? We are afraid of grieving Him, we “stand in awe and sin not.” “There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.” We fear to grieve Him, not because of the judicial consequence to us, but the consequence to Him. We know His love now, and we become very jealous lest we should either dishonor His name or grieve His heart.

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