

THE PRINCE OF PEACE
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Some have sought peace in social distinction, but whether they have been within the charmed circle and fearful lest they might fall out, or outside and hopeful that they might get in, they have not found peace. Some have thought—vain thought!

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—to find peace in political prominence; but whether office comes by birth, as in monarchies, or by election, as in republics, it does not bring peace. An office is conspicuous only when few can occupy it. Only when few in a generation can hope to enjoy an honor do we call it a great honor. I am glad that our Heavenly Father did not make the peace of the human heart depend upon the accumulation of wealth, or upon the securing of social or political distinction, for in either case but few could have enjoyed it, but when He made peace the reward of a conscience void of offense toward God and man. He put it within the reach of all. The poor can secure it as easily as the rich, the social outcast as freely as the leader of society, and the

humblest citizen equally with those who wield political power.

To those who have grown gray in the faith I need not speak of the peace to be found in the belief in an overruling Providence. Christ taught that our lives are precious in the sight of God, and poets have taken up the theme and woven it into immortal verse. No uninspired writer has expressed the idea more beautifully than William Cullen Bryant in the Ode to a Waterfowl. After following the wanderings of the bird of passage as it seeks first its northern and then its southern home, he concludes:

Thou art gone; the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form, but
on my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou
hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky
thy certain flight
In the long way that I must tread
alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

Christ promoted peace by giving us assurance that a line of communication can be established between the Father above and the child below. And who will measure the consolation that has been brought to troubled hearts by the hour of prayer?

And immortality! Who will estimate the peace which a belief in a future life has brought to the sorrowing? You may talk to the young about death ending all, for life is full and hope is strong, but preach not this doctrine to the mother who stands by the death-bed of her babe or to one who is within the shadow of a great affliction. When I was a young man I wrote to Colonel Ingersoll and asked him for his views on God and immortality. His secretary answered that the great infidel was not at home, but inclosed a copy of a speech which covered my question. I scanned it with eagerness and found that he had expressed himself about as follows: "I do not say there is no God, I simply say I do not know. I do not say that there is no life beyond the grave, I simply say I do not know." And from that day to this I have not been able to understand how any one could find pleasure in taking from any human heart a living faith and substituting therefor the cold and cheerless doctrine, "I do not know."

Christ gave us proof of immortality, and yet it would hardly seem necessary that one should rise from the dead to convince us that the grave is not the end. To every created thing God has given a tongue that proclaims a resurrection.

If the Father deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn and to make it burst forth from its prison walls, will He leave neglected in the earth the soul of man, made in the image of his Creator? If He stoops to give to the rose bush, whose withered blossoms float upon the autumn breeze, the sweet assurance of another springtime, will He refuse the words of hope to the sons of men when the frosts of winter come? If matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by the forces of nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, will the spirit of man suffer annihilation when it has paid a brief visit like a royal guest to this tenement of clay? No, I am as sure that there is another life as I am that I live today!

In Cairo I secured a few grains of wheat that had slumbered for more than three thousand years in an Egyptian tomb. As I looked at them this thought came into my mind: If one of those grains had been planted on the banks of the Nile the

year after it grew, and all its lineal descendants planted and replanted from that time until now, its progeny would today be sufficiently numerous to feed the teeming millions of the world. There is in the grain of wheat an invisible something which has power to discard the body that we see, and from earth and air fashion a new body so much like the old one that we can not tell the one from the other. If this invisible germ of life in the grain of wheat can thus pass unimpaired through three thousand resurrections, I shall not doubt that my soul has power to clothe itself with a body suited to its new existence when this earthly frame has crumbled into dust.

A belief in immortality not only consoles the individual, but it exerts a powerful influence in bringing peace between individuals. If one really thinks that man dies as the brute dies, he may yield to the temptation to do injustice to his neighbor when the circumstances are such as to promise security from detection. But if one really expects to meet again and live eternally with those whom he knows today, he is restrained from evil deeds by the fear of endless remorse. We do not know what rewards are in store for us or what punishments may be reserved, but if there were no other punishment it would be enough for one who deliberately and consciously wrongs another to have to live forever in the company of the person wronged and have his littleness and selfishness laid bare. I repeat, a belief in immortality must exert a powerful influence in establishing justice between men and thus laying the foundation for peace.

Again, Christ deserves to be called The Prince of Peace because He has given us a measure of greatness which promotes peace. When His disciples disputed among themselves as to which should be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, He rebuked them and said: "Let him who would be chiefest among you be the servant of all." Service is the measure of greatness; it always has been true; it is true today, and it always will be true, that he is greatest who does the most good. And yet, what a revolution it will work in this old world when this standard becomes the standard of life. Nearly all of our controversies and combats arise from the fact that we are trying to get something from each other—there will be peace when our aim is to do something for each other. Our enmities and animosities arise from our efforts to get as much as possible out of the world—there will be peace when our endeavor is to put as much as possible into the world. Society will take an immeasurable step toward peace when it estimates a citizen by his output rather than by his income and gives the crown of its approval to the one who makes the largest contribution to the welfare of all. It is the glory of the Christian ideal that, while it is within sight of the weakest and the lowliest, it is yet so high that the best and the noblest are kept with their faces turned ever upward.

Christ has also led the way to peace by giving us a formula for the propagation of good. Not all of those who have really desired to do good have employed the Christian method—not all Christians even. In all the history of the human race but two methods have been employed. The first is the forcible method. A man

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