

The Resting Place of Faith

Unknown

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Christ is the great and proper object of faith. My faith, therefore, should rest on *Him*—not on myself nor anything in myself. He that trusts in himself, or in his righteousness or holiness, is a Pharisee, not a Christian.

If I look at myself, what do I see? Imperfection, shortcomings, defilement, sin. "In me," that is, *in my flesh*, "dwelleth no good thing." Looking at myself, therefore, can never give me comfort, confidence, or peace; but must and ought to be a constant ground of self-humiliation. The Spirit of God would thus keep me humble and watchful, making me sensible how little I am like Christ, my perfect pattern.

But the constant sense of my shortcomings is not to hinder my peace, because I trust in *Christ* for acceptance, not in *myself*. I believe the testimony of God, who cannot lie, that Christ "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." I believe that he took—not some of my sins, but all my sins upon himself, and endured the wrath of God—the righteous judgment, which my sins deserved. Seeing, then, that God, in his wondrous grace, has dealt with *him* as *my substitute*, and has accepted *his* work in my behalf, and, therefore, views *his* death and the judgment which he endured as *my death and judgment*—my soul *enjoys perfect peace* with God in resting on *a perfectly finished work*.

Christ is my surety—my righteousness—my only ground of confidence before God; and knowing his all-sufficiency, and his acceptableness to God, I dare not doubt. He "appears in the presence of God FOR US."

(Heb. ix. 24) *His* acceptance with God is therefore *my* acceptance, for I am in him "*As he is, so are we,*" even while in this world, for we are "*one with him.*" We are viewed as in him. There is, therefore, no room for doubt in the soul that really believes God's testimony respecting those who are in Christ. "Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment."

Now, what is commonly substituted for this peace-giving faith in Christ, is the estimated amount of the Spirit's work within. *The effects of regeneration* are made the ground of rest to the soul, in *place of redemption*. The natural result of this error is, that at times I hope when I see those effects, and at times I despond when I see the flesh working; and thus, having put my *imperfect* experience of the Spirit's work in the place of the *perfect* work of Christ, the confidence which I am commanded to hold fast, never exists, and, in the end, I doubt whether I am in the faith all. All this proceeds from substituting the work of the Spirit of God in me, for the work, atonement, and resurrection of Christ actually accomplished : the *sure* resting-place of faith, which never varies—never changes its value before God.

If it be said, "Yes, but I fear to indulge this confidence as to my perfect acceptance with God, because I often find my faith weak, and my evil nature working. [*sic*]" Well, this does not alter the great fact of your acceptance with God, if indeed you are a Christian; and to whatever extent these doubts and this dimness of spiritual perception proceed, they should be treated as unbelief and sin—not as the proper or normal experience of a Christian.

Whenever the question of our acceptance remains unsettled, the standard of genuine practical holiness is necessarily lowered. Instead of continually seeking to "walk worthy of God" in the joy of present salvation, our minds become engaged in self-examination as to whether the fruit of the Spirit has been sufficiently manifested to satisfy us that we are Christians; and when satisfied on this point, we become well pleased and contented with ourselves, and are in danger, from dwelling on our graces and our own attainments, of falling into self-righteousness and spiritual pride.

The discovery of indwelling sin in the Christian, hateful and detestable as it is, is no ground for his doubting; because it was by reason of sin—it was to atone for sin—it was because we were sinners, that Christ died. The Spirit of God, indeed, leads me to judge sin in myself, and to hate it; but it also gives me to know that I shall not be judged for it; for Christ has borne the judgment of sin for me, and he, being

raised from the dead as a divine attestation that the sins which he bore had been put away, there is an end of that question.

But it will, perhaps, be said, "I fully believe that Christ is truly the Son of God—one with the Father: I believe in all his work and grace; but I do not know that I have an interest in him. This is the question, and this is quite a different question." Not so: it is the subtlety of Satan, and bad teaching, which would still throw you back off Christ. God, for our comfort, has identified the two things, by stating "that by him ALL that BELIEVE, ARE JUSTIFIED from all things." In a word, to say, "I believe in Christ, but I do not know whether I have an interest in him, "is a delusion of the devil; for God says, it is those who believe, who have the interest:—that is God's way of dealing. I have no more right, on Scriptural grounds, to believe that I am regarded by God as a sinner *in myself*, than that I am righteous *in Christ*, for God has irreversibly settled both these questions. The same divine testimony which declares that "there is none righteous," declares also, that believers "are justified."