

# Peace in Four Phases

**Christopher Knapp**

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I AM going to speak of peace in four phases or aspects. And to help our memory let us notice that each aspect begins with “p.”

1. Peace procured. “Having made peace through the blood of His cross.” (Col 1:20.)
2. Peace preached. “Preaching peace by Jesus Christ: He is Lord of all.” (Acts 10:36.)
3. Peace possessed. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” (Rom 5:1.)
4. Peace perpetuated. “He is our peace.” (Eph 2:14.)

## I. Peace Procured

Jesus has made peace. Sinners need not set about to make their peace with God. All has been done. A friend of mine once visited a dying man in Lancashire. While there a “Bible woman” called. “Has he made his peace with God?” she asked. “No,” replied my friend; “it is too late now for that.” “But,” said she, “there is hope even at the eleventh hour.” “I know that,” said my friend, “but it is too late now for him to make his peace with God. Jesus, by His sufferings and death, made peace eighteen hundred years ago.” She did not like such doctrine, so she left. The dying man was soon in the happy enjoyment of the peace the Saviour once procured for him.

Peace has been procured. “Having made peace.” You need not seek to make it, anxious sinner. Jesus made it. He made the world beneath your feet. You could not make a world. And though you lived and laboured, worried and wept ten thousand lives away, you could not contribute one iota towards making that which has been already made – peace with God.

Towards the close of the War of the Rebellion a great many southern soldiers saw their cause was waning. So they left the south and came north to join the Union forces. But they came in such numbers that it was necessary to issue a proclamation stating that no more deserting southern soldiers would be received. One poor fellow, who knew nothing of this, deserted and came north. He was taken for a spy at once and his life threatened. What to do he did not know. He could not return south, for there they would hang him as a traitor. In his dilemma he took to the woods. Here for three long months he lived like a bear on nuts and berries. At last he could endure it no longer, and a fearful resolve took hold of him. He concealed himself, musket in hand, in a clump of bushes by the wayside. Presently a traveller appeared on horseback. Pointing his gun straight at the man’s heart, he called out, “Halt! your money or your life.” The gentleman looked upon the highwayman. His strange appearance touched him. His hair was matted. His cheeks were hollow with starvation, and his eyes were sunken in their sockets. “Why,” he kindly asked, “do you threaten my life for a little gold?” Affected by the sound of a tender human voice, the soldier wept like a child. His story was soon told. “And,” he concluded, “I wanted your money to help me to see my wife and darling child.” The traveller smiled. Why? To mock him? Nay! he had good news for that starving and sorrowing soldier. “Why,” said he, “the war is over. Peace was declared a month ago, and you might have been home enjoying that peace with the loved ones.”

Weary, worried soul, I have good news for you. Peace is made.

“No wrath God’s heart retaineth.”

Won't you just believe it? Leave the dark and dreary woods of unbelief to-day. Enjoy the peace once made for sinners. Come and walk in the sunshine of that peace towards God's home of love and glory.

The fugitive soldier believed the news he heard, and left the woods for home. He might have said, "I don't believe you," and returned to the woods to die beside some tree of the forest. If you do not believe the gospel of peace you must perish, and that for ever. Or he might have said, "It cannot be true that peace is made. I must go to Richmond and Washington, and do what I can to bring about a settlement." Would not the gentleman on horseback have said, "The man is mad. He is surely some escaped lunatic"? And you are morally mad to think of making peace by prayer and penance, works and human merit. "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

## II. Peace Preached

God is "preaching peace by Jesus Christ." He is not preaching judgment now. Judgment awaits the finally impenitent; wrath is coming. "Give them warning from Me," His charge to His servants. He warns, and when awakened sinners ask, "What shall I do?" He tells of something done – peace made. Thus He preaches peace.

It is marvellous preaching. People sometimes ask, "Have you ever heard the Rev. Dr. Silvertongue? He is simply grand. His gestures are all so graceful and absolutely perfect in the most minute detail. His diction is beautiful, and the intonations of his voice are those of the most studied eloquence and accomplished oratory. His enunciation is the very standard of accuracy. It is a treat to hear him." I ask you, sinner, "Have you ever heard God preaching peace by Jesus Christ?" Oh! it is the sweetest preaching ever heard by mortal ears. It is charming, and God means it so. I know that careless worldlings stop their ears. Like the deaf adder, they will not listen and be charmed. But smitten sinners hear and are entranced. All the golden harps of heaven could not make music half so sweet to the ears of a sin-sick soul. Oh! "Hear, and your soul shall live."

And it is "peace by Jesus Christ." It is not peace by baptism, nor peace by joining the Church, nor peace by sacraments and ceremonies, works, prayers, penance, nor any or all of the thousand and one things which men are ready enough to substitute for Christ.

Neither is it peace by Moses. "Moses," as of old, "hath in every city them that preach him." "This do and thou shalt live" is the sum and substance of their doleful discourse. And their hearers fail to "do," and die.

God did once preach by Moses, but it was not "peace." He preached by Moses death and judgment with a voice of thunder that shook the very earth. And sinners could only cry in terror, "I exceedingly fear and quake."

How does God preach "peace by Jesus Christ"? He points you to Him. "Behold the Lamb of God!" He is not now upon the cross, but on the throne. See His wounds – the nail-prints and the spear-mark. Behold His brow adorned with radiant crowns! He is "the Prince of peace."

Trust Him as your Saviour now, and peace is yours. This brings us to another phase of peace.

### III. Peace Possessed

Sinners who believe enjoy the peace that Jesus made. "We have peace with God." Those who simply trust are the happy possessors of peace. "Being justified by faith, we have peace."

I know the unsaved have a sort of peace. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace." (Luke 11:21.) Who is the "strong man armed"? Satan. Who are "his goods"? The unconverted – you, if in your sins. Your state and sins do not concern you. The thought of death does not alarm you in the least; the judgment has no terrors to your mind. You are "in peace," but oh! it is the peace the devil gives his own. He has them sound asleep and unconcerned, and means to keep them so.

Sinner, your peace is like the awful calm that reigns before the storm. In the Western States they often have what are called cyclones. A death-like stillness precedes the advent of the storm. Soon it bursts in all its frightful fury, and sweeps everything before its track. The calm is followed by calamity.

Your peace, sleeping sinner, will be broken some day just like that. God's storm of wrath is coming. You will wake up then too late! May God shake you from your slumbers now.

No tongue can tell the blessedness of peace with God. At night I calmly lay my weary head upon my pillow. If my heart at midnight stops its throbings, all is well. Ere friends find my poor cold body I shall be with Christ. The once-dreaded thunderbolt has lost its terrors for me. Should God direct one at my heart, producing instant death, my spirit would ascend to glory ere the flash had disappeared and the thunder's echo died away. My sins are gone for ever in the death of Christ. In Him, risen from the dead, I stand perfectly justified and accepted before God. Knowing this, though all unworthy, I have peace with God. You have heard of that officer of the British Army. In an engagement his lower jaw was shot away and his jugular vein torn open. He was dying. Motioning for a pen and paper (for he could not speak), he wrote in the tremors of death, "I have peace, peace like a river." His pen dropped from his stiffening fingers, he fell back in his seat and was gone – "to be with Christ." Would, sinner, you had peace with God to-day! You may die before to-morrow.

Let me tell you of another soldier's death – a private this time. (God saves from every class.) On the field of Waterloo he lay, his life's blood ebbing fast. Just before he breathed his last he was heard repeating John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Soon his spirit went to be with Him whose words he knew so well – the One who made the peace for him at Calvary.

The world can offer nothing for a dying hour. Even now we sing –

*"Filled with this sweet peace for ever,  
On we go through strife and care,  
Till we find that peace around us,*

*In the Lamb's high glory there."*

The world with its "pleasures of sin" and its sham religion has nothing to compare with this. The peace possessed by simple faith is never broken; it can never be disturbed. This is peace in its fourth aspect.

## IV. Peace Perpetuated

Christ is the believer's peace, and He never changes. "Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." We change, we fail, and sometimes fall. Still we sing –

*"My love is oft-times low,  
My joy still ebbs and flows,  
But peace with God remains the same,  
No change my Saviour knows."*

Frames and feelings are not peace. They vary like the vane upon the steeple. I shall have them till I find myself in glory. Peace is different. Let me illustrate.

I owe a debt that I cannot possibly pay. My creditor demands his money. A kind friend pays the debt. He calls and tells me what is done. I believe his word and thank him. As he leaves he hands me the receipt, signed by the man to whom I owed the money. I am happy now. That is "feeling." But I know my debt is paid because my friend has told me so, and should I say, "I must have dreamed. It cannot be that my debts are paid"? I just take out that precious paper – the receipt. It is enough; the man is satisfied; so am I.

The risen Christ is our receipt. The dark, condemning list of our unnumbered sins has been blotted out for ever. Our debts are paid. The price was Jesus' "precious blood." "Christ died for our sins." God tells us so, and He raised up Jesus from the dead. By that He showed that He was satisfied. So I look to Christ in glory. "He is my peace," I say. Is He yours? Can you say, "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me"? Then peace is yours.

"The peace of God" is another thing. You must walk dependent and obedient to have that. "Peace of heart" it might be called.

"Peace with God" does not depend upon ourselves at all. It is peace of conscience. The dying Saviour made it; the living Saviour is it.

*"Our conscience has peace that can never fail,  
'Tis the Lamb on high on the throne."*

I have done. May false peace be disturbed in sham professors and the unconcerned. May true peace be enjoyed by those who feel their need and guilt. God bless His Word. Amen.