

WHAT IS THE PEACE OF GOD?

^{20:1} It has been said that there is a kind of peace that is not of this world. How is it recognized? How is it found? And being found, how can it be retained? Let us consider each of these questions separately, for each reflects a different step along the way.

² First, how can the peace of God be recognized? God's peace is recognized at first by just one thing; in every way it is totally unlike all previous experiences. It calls to mind nothing that went before. It brings with it no past associations. It is a new thing entirely. There is a contrast, yes, between this thing and all the past. But strangely, it is not a contrast of true differences. The past just slips away, and in its place is everlasting quiet. Only that. The contrast first perceived has merely gone. Quiet has reached to cover everything.

³ How is this quiet found? No one can fail to find it who but seeks out its conditions. God's peace can never come where anger is, for anger must deny that peace exists. Who sees anger as justified in any way or any circumstance proclaims that peace is meaningless, and must believe that it cannot exist. In this condition, peace cannot be found. Therefore, forgiveness is the necessary condition for finding the peace of God. More than this, given forgiveness there *must* be peace. For what except attack will lead to war? And what but peace is opposite to war? Here the initial contrast stands out clear and apparent. Yet when peace is found, the war is meaningless. And it is conflict now that is perceived as nonexistent and unreal.

⁴ How is the peace of God retained, once it is found? Returning anger, in whatever form, will drop the heavy curtain once again, and the belief that peace cannot exist will certainly return. War is again accepted as the one reality. Now must you once again lay down your sword, although you do not recognize that you have picked it up again. But you will learn, as you remember even faintly now what happiness was yours without it, that you must have taken it again as your defense. Stop for a moment now and think of this: Is conflict what you want, or is God's peace the better choice? Which gives you more? A tranquil mind is not a little gift. Would you not rather live than choose to die?

⁵ Living is joy, but death can only weep. You see in death escape from what you made. But this you do not see; that you made death, and it is but illusion of an end. Death cannot be escape, because it is not life in which the problem lies. Life has no opposite, for it is God. Life and death seem to be opposites because you have decided death ends life. Forgive the world, and you will understand that everything that God created cannot have an end, and nothing He did not create is real. In this one sentence is our course explained. In this one sentence is our practicing given its one direction. And in this one sentence is the Holy Spirit's whole curriculum specified exactly as it is.

⁶ What is the peace of God? No more than this; the simple understanding that His Will is wholly without opposite.

There is no thought that contradicts His Will, yet can be true. The contrast between His Will and yours but seemed to be reality. In truth there was no conflict, for His Will is yours. Now is the mighty Will of God Himself His gift to you. He does not seek to keep it for Himself. Why would you seek to keep your tiny frail imaginings apart from Him? The Will of God is one and all there is. This is your heritage. The universe beyond the sun and stars, and all the thoughts of which you can conceive, belong to you. God's peace is the condition for His Will. Attain His peace, and you remember Him.