

FIRST KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND AFTER THAT KING OF PEACE.

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“First being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace.” — Hebrews 7:2.

WE will not enlarge upon the story of Melchisedec, nor discuss the question as to who he was. It is near enough for us to believe that he was one who worshipped God after the primitive fashion, a believer in God such as Job was in the land of Uz, one of the world's grey fathers who had kept faithful to the Most High God. He combined in his own person the kingship and the priesthood; a conjunction by no means unusual in the first ages. Of this man we know very little; and it is partly because we know so little of him that he is all the better type of our Lord, of whom we may enquire, “Who shall declare his generation?” The very mystery which hangs about Melchisedec serves to set forth the mystery of the person of our divine Lord. “Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God; he abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.”

Melchisedec seems to have been, first by name, and then by place of office, doubly designated a king. First, his name is *Melekzedek*, which signifies by interpretation, “king of righteousness.” His personal name is “king of righteousness.” As a matter of fact, he was also the monarch of some town

called Salem; it is not at all likely to have been Jerusalem, although that may have been the case. The interpretation of his official name is “king of peace.” A teaching was intended by the Molar Spirit in the names: so the apostle instructs us in the passage before us. I believe in the verbal inspiration of Scripture; hence, I can see how there can be instruction for us even in the proper names of persons and of places. Those who reject verbal inspiration must in effect condemn the great apostle of the Gentiles, whose teaching is so frequently based upon a word. He makes more of words and names than any of us should have thought of doing, and he was guided therein by the Spirit of the Lord, and therefore he was right. For my part, I am far more afraid of making too little of the Word than of seeing too much in it.

This man is, first, named “*Melchi-zedek*“ — ”king of righteousness” by interpretation; and herein he is like our divine Lord, whose name and character can only come to us by interpretation. What he is and who he is and all his character, no angel’s tongue could tell. No human language can ever describe to the full what Jesus is. He is King, but that is a poor word for such royalty as his. He reigns, but that word “reigns” is but a slender description of that supreme empire which he continually exercises. He is said to be King of righteousness, but that is by interpretation, by the toning down of his character to our comprehension. Scripture might have called him King of holiness, for he is “glorious in holiness.” His character, better known to spirits before the throne than to us, is not to be comprehended in that one word “righteousness:” it is but an interpretation, and most things lose by translation, and so the perfect character of the Son of God, as it stands before the Eternal Hind, cannot be fully expressed in human language. In fact, when our faculties are enlarged, and our spirits raised to the highest platform, they can never reach the eternity of our Lord’s sonship, and the glory of his kingdom: the equity of his character, and the loveliness of his mind, both as God and man, must still be far beyond us. But this much is translated to us into our own tongue — that he is a King, and that he is a righteous King — yea, the very King of righteousness — the Sovereign of the realm of equity, the supreme Lord of everything that is good and holy. That, you see, is wrapped up in his name and nature. Jesus is righteousness, and every righteous thing gathers beneath the right scepter of his kingdom.

But the second word, *Salem*, which, brought down to our tongues signifies “peace,” is in reference to a place rather than a person. You see our Lord

Jesus is essentially righteousness, that is interwoven with his name and person; but he gives, bestows, deposits, pours forth peace in a place which he has chosen, and upon a people whom he has ordained, and whom he has brought near unto himself: so that his kingdom of peace little him with his redeemed, to whom he has given the peace of God.

“First, King of righteousness.” How early that “*first*“ is I cannot tell you.” In the beginning was the Word,” but when that beginning was, who knows? — for is he not, indeed, without beginning? First and firstborn, from everlasting thou art God, O mighty Son of Jehovah! First King of righteousness, and then afterwards when men fell, when rebellion, and strife, and war had sprung up — then he came to heal the mischief and become “King of peace.” He comes himself as the divine Ambassador, our Peacemaker and Peace; he comes here into this place even into the midst of his Salem, into the midst of his people, and gives us now, as he has long given, the vision of peace; opening up before the eye of faith the completeness, the sureness, and the delight of perfect peace in himself.

The one matter which I am going to set forth at this time is just this — ”First King of righteousness, and after that also King of peace.” Note well the order of these two, and the dependence of the one upon the other; for there could be no true peace that was not grounded upon, righteousness; and out of righteousness peace is sure to spring up. Righteousness is essential to peace; if it were not first, peace could not be second. If there could be a lying peace apart from righteousness, it would be dank, dark, deadly, a horrible peace, ending in a worse misery than war itself could inflict. It is needful where an unrighteous peace exists that it should be beholden up, that a better peace should be established upon a true foundation which will last for ever.

I shall ask you — and may the Spirit of God help us to do it — first, *to admire the King*, and, secondly, *to enjoy him* — to enter with holy delight into the full meaning of his name and character as King of Righteousness and King of peace.

I. First, I ask you to ADMIRE THIS KING.

This Melchisedec, whom we exhibit as a type, *is such a king as God is*. He is according to divine model. He is priest of the Most High God, and he is like the Most High God, for the Lord Jehovah himself is, first, King of righteousness, and after that also King of peace. The great Creator entered

the garden of Eden in that sorrowful hour when our parents had rebelled, and were hiding among the trees to escape his call, and he bade them answer for their fault. When they stood trembling before him in the nakedness of their conscious guilt, they knew him as their King and their Judge. At that moment he was not first the King of peace to them, but first the King of righteousness. He pronounced sentence upon the serpent, upon the woman, and upon the man, gently making much of the punishment to fall aslant upon the ground; but yet vindicating justice before he spake a word of peace. After that discourse, yea, in the midst of his sentences, he spake of peace when he mentioned the woman's seed that should bruise the serpent's head. Then also there happened the slaying of a victim, for the Lord God made unto them coats of skins, of beasts which had, no doubt, been slain in sacrifice, and with these they were covered. In beginning to deal with an apostate race the Lord observed the fitting order of our text: he began faith righteousness, and afterwards went on to peace. At the gate of the garden commenced the dispensation of mercy and peace, but first of all there was the pronouncing of the sentence that man should eat bread in the sweat of his face, and that unto dust he should return. Substantial righteousness was dealt out to the guilty, and then peace was provided for the troubled. At the fall God first set up a Judgment-seat, and right speedily a Mercy-seat. Righteousness must ever lead the van.

Well, the times went on, and men began to sin with a high hand. There were giants in those days, and the people of God were mixed up with the men of the world. This is the worst sign of the world's depravity when there ceases to be a division between the people of God and the sons of men. There was an unholy alliance between sin and righteousness; and then the King came forth again, and displayed his countenance, and began to judge, and correct, and call to repentance. Men perceived that the countenance of God towards them was the face of one who is first King of righteousness. Noah's teaching taught men to return unto the Lord, or he would surely deal with them in righteousness, and make a full end. Space most ample was given for repentance, but men were mad upon their follies. He is first King of righteousness, and afterwards King of peace; and so he dealt with that guilty world. He pulled up the sluices of the great deep which lieth under; he let loose all the cataracts of heaven from above, and he swept men from off the face of the earth. Then afterwards he hung the rainbow in the sky, and he smelled a sweet savor of rest; and there was peace once more between God and a race that had to begin again with

father Noah instead of father Adam. Righteousness ruled first, and washed out with a flood the traces of Ungodliness, and then peace set up her gentle reign upon a new world.

All along, in the history of God's dealings with men, he kept to this unvarying rule. God has never forsaken righteousness, not even for the sake of love. He selected a people for himself; he called his son out of Egypt; he brought his chosen people through the Red Sea into the wilderness, and there he communed with them. But they went astray after graven images; they defiled themselves with the vices of the surrounding heathen. They became degraded and polluted, and then he came again among them as the King of righteousness, setting Sinai on a blaze, making even Moses to fear and quake, compelling the earth to open and swallow up rebels, causing the fire to break out among them, or fiery serpents to inflame their veins with death: for, though to them he was a King of peace, and walked among them in tenderness, and by the fiery cloudy pillar led their band, and in the midst of the tabernacle by his Shekiush unveiled his glory, yet it was then true, as it is now true, "The Lord thy God is a jealous God." He would not bear iniquity. He could not look upon sin without indignation. His anger smoked against it, for he is and ever must be "first King of righteousness, and after that also King of peace." That wonderful wilderness journey is bright with mercy, but it is equally dark with justice. Remember the graves of lusting and the burnings. Israel's God was ever sternly righteous though glorious in grace. It is a high but terrible privilege to dwell near to God, for his holiness burns like a consuming fire, and will not endure evil.

Ay, and when he had brought his people into the promised land, and had given them their heritage by lot, we must remember how they sinned against him; and it was not long ere he brought upon them the Midianites, or the Philistines, or foes of one race or another, so that they were grievously oppressed, and Quieted, and brought low. When they cried to him, then he delivered them; but he took vengeance upon their inventions. He would not bear their sin: he took it exceedingly ill from them that a people so highly favored should so constantly rebel. He said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." He was to his own elect nation, first, King of righteousness, and then King of peace.

And so it went on until, at last, Israel provoked the Lord beyond measure, and the chosen people went astray to their own confusion, and then with the bosom of destruction he swept them off from the face of their land. He scattered them as a man scattereth dung upon the field. Are they not divided to this day among all the people, a by-word and a proverb still, for men everywhere say, “These are the people that forgot their God, and he banished them from their own land, and will keep them in banishment till they return unto their God in spirit and in truth”? Every Jew whom we see pacing our streets, far off from the city of his fathers, is a proof that the Lord of heaven is, first, King of righteousness.

All over the world, and everywhere, this is God’s way of dealing with men. Do not imagine that God will ever lay aside his righteousness for the sake of saving a sinner — that he will ever deal with men unrighteously in order that they may escape the penalty due to their transgression. He has never done so, and he never will. Glorious in holiness is he for ever and ever. That blazing throne must consume iniquity, transgression cannot stand before it; there can be no exception to this rule. The Judge of all the earth must do right. Whatever things may change, the law of God cannot alter, and the character of God cannot deteriorate. High as the great mountains, deep as the abyss, eternal as his being, is the righteousness of the Most High. Peace can never come to men from the Lord God Almighty except by righteousness. The two can never be separated without the most fearful consequences. Peace without righteousness is like the smooth surface of the stream ere it takes its awful Niagara plunge. If there is to be peace between God and man, God must still be a righteous God, and by some means or other the transgression of man must be *justly* put away, for God cannot wink at it, or permit it to go unpunished. Salvation must first of all provide for righteousness, or peace will never lodge within its chambers. The Lord of heaven is first King of righteousness, and then King of peace, so that Melchisedec was such a king as God is.

And now, next, the type is especially meant to teach us that he was *such a king as Christ is*; for when the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, he came with this everlasting and unchangeable rule girt about him — that, though he should be a King, yet he would be first King of righteousness and after that also King of peace. Why did he not set up a kingdom here below among the Jews? Many spirits would have welcomed him. If he had only set himself up to be a king, promising them sure conquest and abundant plunder, the zealots of the Jewish nation would have fought like

tigers at his side. But, no, he came first to be a King of righteousness, and that was a topic for which they cared nothing. He went into his own Father's house like a king into his palace; but it was with a scourge of small cords, crying, "Take these things hence!" The temple was no abode for him while greed, and self, and mammon defiled its courts. In that temple he looked round about him with indignation, for he saw no trace of righteousness there, but every indication that up to the very veil of the temple all was given over to human unrighteousness.

They wanted an unrighteous kingdom, but he would not have it. His fan was in his hand, and he would thoroughly purge his floor. His laws were not to be like those of Caesar; his soldiers were not to fight with carnal weapons. He came not to set up a kingdom of power and force, but a kingdom of love and truth and righteousness; and hence his own people knew him not, and rendered him no homage. His holiness stood in the way of such a kingdom as the Jews desired, and hence they turned upon him and cried, "Let him be crucified." Though they would not acknowledge his sovereignty, he was their King; and at his death he bore above his head the superscription, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." He would not set up a carnal kingdom of their sort. Church and State, truth and force united in some form or other, must have been suggested to him; but no; he must be first King of righteousness, and then King of peace. He preached no peace apart from purity. He never made little of vice or error; he was the deadly foe of all evil. He said, "I came not to bring peace, but a sword." Until there is righteousness there must be conflict, and peace can only enter when righteousness has won the field. Oh, my brethren, I wish I had power to describe to you how our divine Master in all his lowliness began to be the king of righteousness by his superlative, unrivalled character. Here among us there was never such righteousness as his — such royal righteousness throughout all his career in all the details of life. I see an imperial righteousness in the character of my divine Lord — righteousness that is master and superior of all other. Even those that hate Jesus cannot find fault with him. Books written to disprove his divine mission are nevertheless full of almost fulsome adulation of him: I call it by no better word, because I think that the praises which infidels have given to our Lord are no more acceptable to him than were the praises of devils when they said, "This is the Son of God!" Then he bade them hold their peace, and I think he has the same wish at this moment touching his Unitarian and Infidel admirers. All sorts of men have been compelled to do homage to

this kingly One who has passed across the page of history, the very sovereign of all that is right and good.

But ah, methinks he was most king of righteousness when he said unto himself, "My Father's law has been beholden: I will restore its honor. Men have defied it and trampled on it: I will pay to it the highest homage." With this strong desire upon him he went up to the cross, and gave his hands and feet to the nails, and his side to the spear, and with a thorn crown upon his dying brow he became in very deed the King of righteousness. As the Son of God, he rendered unto the divine majesty all the honor due to the law by reason of the many insults which sin had heaped thereon. The transgressions of his people were laid upon their Great Shepherd, they were made to meet upon him in one dreadful storm, and that hurricane spent itself upon him. Our Great Substitute endured the consequences of human guilt on our behalf, and thus he is able to pacify the troubled conscience. He is, first, King of righteousness. He knew that he could not be King of peace to us till, first of all, he had woven a perfect righteousness in the loom of his life, and dyed it in his own heart's blood in his death: but when he had achieved this, then he became King of righteousness, demonstrated to be so before the eyes of all, and then to you and to me he became henceforth the King of peace. How glorious is his name! Oh, for a voice of thunder with which to praise him!

To-day our Lord and Master has gone his way up to the eternal hills where he reigns; but his kingdom, for which we daily pray, is coming; and, mark you, it will come by righteousness. I say no word against those who endeavor to bring peace to the nations by the extension of commerce, facilities for travel, and so forth; but it is not thus that the sword of war shall be broken. Would God the sword of the Lord were quiet in its scabbard for ever; but I never anticipate the reign of universal peace on earth till first the King of righteousness is acknowledged in every place. I do not think that we shall ever see the fruits without the tree, or the stream without the source, or peace without the enthronement of the principle of righteousness from which it springs. There shall come a day when the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the wolf shall lie down with the lamb — when they shall hang the useless helmet in the hall, and study war no more; but that reign of the joyous King, that era of plenty, love, and joy, can only commence as a reign of righteousness. It cannot be anything else; and until sin is dethroned, till iniquity is banished, we shall not see the divine fruit of

peace upon the face of the earth. Wherever Jesus is King he must be first King of righteousness, and after that King of peace.

So, then, Melchisedec is such a king as God is, and such a king as Jesus is.

Note, next, that *he is such a king as right-hearted minds desire*. I say “right-hearted minds.” I mean not only those who are saved, but those in whom there is some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel. There is an honest and good ground not yet sown, and we know what that soil waiteth for. I remember what my thoughts used to be when I was seeking the Lord, I longed to be saved, I desired to escape from, my sin, but with it there always went this thought — “God must be just.” I had ever a certain trembling sense of guilt, but at the same time a deep reverence for righteousness. In my heart of hearts I said, “Let not the Lord even for my sake do an unrighteous thing. I am nothing; but God and his righteousness are all in all. It were a greater calamity for God to be unjust than for me to be lost. It were a dark day for all the aspirations of noble minds if it were possible for God to swerve from the strict rule of his integrity. Though he slay me, yet let his name be honored, and let his righteousness remain untarnished.” I remember distinctly being the subject of that feeling. Sinner as I was I had a care for the perfect law of the Lord, and would by no means have agreed to its being dishonored in order to my own personal salvation. I wanted this question answered — “How can God be just and yet the Justifier of him that believeth?” I did not know at that time the sweet secret of substitution; but when I did know it, no music ever sounded so sweetly in the human ear as that sounded in my heart. When I saw that, by the interposition of the Son of God, and his bearing my guilt, God could be sternly, strictly, severely just, to the letter, in every jot and little, and yet could put all my sin away, and take me to his bosom, and let me be his child, then I said, “This must be of God. This divine secret bears upon its own face its own warranty of truthfulness, for no man could have invented a system at once so just to God, so safe to man.” To be able to look for mercy as just, and receive pardon on the ground of righteousness, is certainly a high ground to reach; and yet every believer stands there before God. I say that every right-minded man feels a deep concern for the righteousness of God, when he is soberly in his senses, and thinking the matter over. He longs to be saved, that is more than natural; but he does not wish to be saved in a way that would derogate from the supreme splendor of the righteousness of God. Let the Lord God be glorious in justice, and then, if I can be saved, well and good. Blessed be God, we can

be thus saved. Our entrance to heaven can be as justly secured as our banishment to hell was righteously deserved. How justice and peace have kissed each other is now made known. That secret is told us in the Word of God. Is it not written on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ?

And I am sure, again, that no right-hearted man wants Christ to come and be to him the King of peace, and then to let him live in sin. Brothers, I want no peace in my heart concerning any fault. If I know myself before God, my heart's inmost prayer is that I may never be able to rest till I am rid of every relic of evil. I do not want to make myself happy and yet to live in a single known sin. If I could have the offer of heaven, and be a drunkard, I wish not for a drunkard's heaven. What could it be but a scene of riot, strife, and obscenity? If I could have heaven and be a liar, I want not a liar's heaven. What could the heaven of falsehood be but hell in truth? Nay, I would not wish for a heaven in which I might freely indulge some minor sin, or be jovial in the commission of some unconsidered transgression. Nay, there can be no heaven for me till evil in every form is expelled from my nature. My God, my longing is not for happiness first, but for purity first, and happiness afterwards; and hence it is my delight to read that my King is first the King of righteousness, and then the King of peace. By heart rejoices in a sin-killing King, and then a peace-bestowing King, sweeping out the buyers and the sellers from the temple, and then manifesting himself there in all his majesty to his waiting people.

Melchisedec, therefore, sets forth such a king as all right-minded people desire.

Again, this wonderful Melchisedec *is such a king as Jesus must be to every one of you who have not yet known him, if you are ever to receive him as your Savior*. Let me not sew pillows to all arm-holes by preaching salvation to those who do not repent of their evil ways. I do not come here to chant in dulcet tones sweet lullabies to men who sleep in unrighteousness. If you would have peace with God, you must repent of sin. If you love evil you cannot love God. There must be a divorce between you and sin, or there can be no marriage between you and Christ. When Jesus comes to a soul, he comes as King of righteousness first, and after that as King of peace. We must have a positive righteousness of life, a cleanness of heart and hand, or we shall not be found at the right hand of the Judge. Let no man deceive himself. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." He that comes to Christ, and takes Christ to be his

Savior, must take Christ also to be his Ruler; and, Christ ruling him, there must be in that man's heart an active, energetic pursuit of everything that is good and holy, for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." He that liveth in sin is dead while he liveth, and knows nothing of the life of God in his soul. Righteousness must hold the scepter, or peace will not attend the court.

I know that I speak to many who long to be saved; but will you give up your sin? for Christ has come to save his people from their sins. If you do not wish to be saved from sinning, you will never be saved from damning. Do you hug your Delilah? Then shall you lose your eyes like Samson. Do you hold to the viper, and press the asp to your bosom? Then shall the poison boil within your veins. Christ cannot save you while sin is loved and followed after, and has a reigning power in you, for it is an essential of his salvation that he should deliver you from the mastery of evil. I would to God that many here would cry, "That is the very thing I want. I long for it. Can I be helped to renounce sin?" O poor heart, if thou hungerest after righteousness thou shalt be filled! Thou shalt be helped to conquer evil: thou art being helped by the fiery desire which has been breathed into thee. "Oh," says one, "can I break off the iron yoke, and come out of the Egyptian bondage of my lust?" Thou canst; for Christ has come to set thee free. Trust thou in him, the great Emancipator. But if thou safest, "I will live in sin, and yet go to heaven," thou shalt never do so. There shall by no means enter into the celestial city anything that defileth. He that takes men to heaven is first King of righteousness, and after that he is King of peace.

I have closed this first head when I have noticed that *that is the kind of king that God would have every one of us to be*. We ought all to be first, kings of righteousness, and then kings of peace. The Lord has appointed each man his kingdom: let us see to it that we reign for good and not for evil. On all sides we hear voices inviting us to peace apart from righteousness. "Oh," they say to us, "a confederacy, a confederacy." What mean you? You are to preach a lie, and we are to preach the truth, and yet we are to call each other brothers. We are no brothers, and we will not by our silence aid the fraud. "Oh, but," say they, "be charitable." Charitable with what? Charitable with God's truth, flinging it down into the mire of error? Charitable by deceiving our fellowmen? That we cannot be. Brethren, we must so hold and love the truth as to hate every false way, for the way of error is ruinous to the souls of men, and it will go hard with us if even by our silence we lead men to run therein. If any man shall say to

you, “Come and let us sin together,” reply to him, “I cannot enter into association with you, for I must first be pure and then peaceable, since I serve a Lord who is first King of righteousness, and after that King of peace.” “Hold your tongue,” says the world. “Do not fight against error. Why need you speak so fondly against a wrong thing?” We must speak, and speak sharply too, for souls are in danger. We must uplift the banner of truth, or we shall be meanest of all cowards. God has made us kings, and we must be first kings of righteousness, and after that kings of peace.

God’s people are tempted sometimes to be a little too peaceable. Remember that our Lord Jesus has not come to make us live at peace with sin. He has come to set a man against his brother — to divide a household where iniquity holds sway. There can be no peace between the child of God and wrong doing or wrong thinking of any kind. We must have “war to the knife” with that which would rob God of his glory and men of their salvation. Our peace is on the footing of righteousness, and on no other ground. We are for all that is good and right, but we dare not cry “Peace, peace, where there is no peace.”

II. Now my time has fled, but I must occupy a little upon the best part of my subject. I have asked you to admire the King. I now beg you to ENJOY HIM.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is first King of *righteousness*. You know what it means. Shall I tell you what it includes? You who are in him, and one with him in his kingdom, are righteous in his righteousness. His is a righteous kingdom, and those who obey it will be found to have done rightly. If we follow Christ’s rule we need never be afraid that it will mislead us. We are righteous, certainly, when we are doing his bidding. If any cavil and say, “Why doest thou this?” quote the King’s authority. Do not thou be afraid if thou doest the King’s bidding. He is a King of righteousness, and thou art righteous in obeying his righteous ordinances. He who religiously obeys Mahomet may yet be doing grievous moral wrong, but it is never so with the disciple of Jesus: obedience to Jesus is holiness.

Notice, next, that if we trust this King of righteousness we are righteous in his merit. I want you to believe this. If you had always kept God’s law and had never sinned, you would have been conscious of righteousness. Now, by faith, as many of you as believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are as righteous as he is righteous in the sight of God — as righteous as if you had never sinned. Oh, I want you to feel this. “Being justified by faith we have peace

with God;” but there must first be this justifying righteousness before there can be peace. What Christ did he did for his people. I say not that what Christ did is imputed to his people, though I believe that it is so; but it belongs to his people, for they are part and parcel of him, and so are partakers with him. They are in him as in their Federal Head, and whatsoever Christ is, or has, or does, belongs in itself, in the very nature of things, to all that are in him and in that covenant whereof he is the Head. Stand up straight, then, before thy God, and though in thyself the publican’s humble demeanour suits thee well, yet in thy Lord thou mayest take another stand and say, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again.” The Lord Jesus is “made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness.” “This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness;” for “as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners,” as you and I know to our cost, “so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.” “By his knowledge” — by the knowledge of him — “shall my righteous Servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.”

Now, then, dost thou believe in Christ? Then thou hast no sin. Thy sin was laid upon Christ of old, and he bore the punishment of it, and thou canst not be punished for it. Divine righteousness cannot exact a double penalty for the same offense. Dost thou believe in Jesus? Then he hath made an end of all the sin which was once written against thee. He has buried thy transgressions for ever in his own sepulcher. If thou art in Christ, his perfect righteousness is wrapped about thy loins, and thou standest this day “accepted in the Beloved.” Oh, it is a glorious standing, Jesus the King of righteousness, and we in our King made righteous. We are comely through the comeliness of Christ which is put upon us.

Now this I want you to think of. Whenever you are enjoying the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, please to recollect that he never gives you any part of salvation without giving it to you righteously; and if he gives it to you righteously you are possessed of it righteously. My sins are pardoned. Yes, and righteously pardoned. Oh, is not this a wonder Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. If I pray, I have naturally no right to be heard as a sinner; but, using the name of Christ, I expect to be heard as righteously as if I were the new-created Adam fresh from the hand of Deity. When I come before God and ask his protection, I look for it as righteously as Christ looked for it when he was here below, for he has put

upon me, a poor unworthy believer, all his regal rights; and all his righteousness is mine, so that I may use his name at the foot of my prayers, and stamp my petitions with his Christly authority. I may take the blessings of the covenant as freely as he may take them who bought them with his blood; for he bought them for all his people, and he has made transfer of all the covenant estate to all who are in him. Oh, brothers, it is a dreadful thing to be under a sense of sin, but it is an equally blessed thing to be under a sense of righteousness. We are righteous even as he is righteous. Let us never forget this.

And then, next, he is after that King of *peace*. I want you to try tonight — nay, I do not want you to try, I want the Holy Spirit to do it for you — I want you to enjoy the King of Salem, the King of peace. Do you know that at this moment, if you are a believer, you have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord? There is no quarrel between you and God to-night. You are one with him, your delight is in him. I know not now in my own soul of aught that I could say against the Lord's dealings with me throughout the whole of my life; nor, let him deal with me as he wills, do I feel any repugnance to putting myself entirely into his hands. For weal or woe, for wealth or poverty, for life or death, I am content to hand myself over to the Lord absolutely. And now, there being peace on the poor creature's side, it is such a joy to think that there is peace from God's side, only still more perfect and enduring. He looks at you through his dear Son, and he sees no sin in you — no iniquity in you. He loves you with a perfect love at this moment, and he knows of no just cause or impediment why he should not love you. "Why," says one, "I have not been a believer more than a week." I do not care if you have not been a believer more than ten minutes: he that believeth hath everlasting life and everlasting love. As soon as the prodigal son was home, what did his father do? Upbraid him? No, he kissed him. Had his father no fault to find? No, not any. He said, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him. Put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. Let us eat and be merry." Why did he not say, "Come, my dear son, I must have a little sharp talk with you, for your good. You know you have behaved very badly to me. I must chide with you and upbraid you"? No, no. Not a word of the sort. Not a syllable or even a look after that fashion. He giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. He puts his dear child at perfect ease with himself, and says, "Be at home. Be happy. Eat, drink, and be merry with me; for you are my child, and though you

were lost, you are found. You were dead, but you are alive again. Let us rejoice together in this blessed salvation which glorifies my Son.”

I want you to sit in those pews — you that really believe in Jesus, and receive this bread and wine in perfect contentment, saying within yourselves, “It is well. It is all well. It is well from beginning to end — from top to bottom. Being justified by faith, I have peace with God. The peace of God that passeth all understanding doth keep my heart and soul by Jesus Christ.” Come. If you have never enjoyed it before, enjoy it to-night, and do not be afraid. If you go to the devil’s feasts, put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite, for you may soon eat and drink and be drunken. Solomon is the author of this prudent advice. But when you come to the feasts of love, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. There never was a Christian man that was too happy in God. There never was a believer that was too peaceful, too serene, too confident, too hopeful. You cannot drink too much of this heavenly nectar. Oh, that you would but have grace to take in all that you *may* have! I know what you will do. You will come to-night into my Lord’s treasury, and he will say, “Take what you will.” There will be mints of gold and silver before you, and you will look all round and take up some brass farthing or other and say, “Bless the Lord for this!” Such gratitude is right enough. Bless the Lord for anything. At the same time, why not take something better? “Oh, I have been a mourner,” you say, “all my days.” Whose fault is that? “Oh, but I have never had any great light or any great joy.” Whose fault is that? Is it not your own? The Lord seems to me to say to-night even to the elder brothers here, “Rejoice and be glad.” I do not think that many grumblers come to the Tabernacle, but there are certain grumpy elder brothers that are apt to say, “Neither at any time transgressed I thy commandments, and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. I never have any joy. I am a regular seat-holder and a member. I go to the communion I do all I can; but I never get any of these holy raptures and spiritual delights. These reformed thieves and converted rascals when they are converted seem to monopolize all the music and the dancing. I never have a dance to myself at all.” But the father was in such a blessed humor that night that he did not even upbraid the elder brother; but he said, “Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. If you have had no kid wherewith to make a supper for your friends, why did you not take it? All that I have is thine.” Come in, dear elder brother, as well as you younger ones, and let us eat and drink and be

merry this night in the name of him who, having been the King of righteousness upon the bloody tree, is now to-night the King of peace upon his glorious throne; who upon this table shows you how he wrought out perfect righteousness, breaking his body and pouring out his blood for you, and now bids you come and see how all this is wrought for your peace, for his flesh and blood are now your bread and wine to make you glad. Wherefore, rejoice in the Lord! and again I say, Rejoice! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON — Hebrews 7.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK” — 397, 393.