Great Shall be the Peace

of thy Children

Isaiah 54:13

**Isa 54:10-13** For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

**Isaiah 54:13**

And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord

Disciples of Jehovah

The expression is probably suggested by what the Servant of Jehovah says of Himself in Isa\_50:4; the idea being that the citizens of the New Jerusalem shall be the spiritual seed of the Servant.
(Prof. J. Skinner, D. D.)

Inward illumination the spiritual glory of the Church

The outward glory of the city (Isa\_54:11-12) is but the sense-representation of the spiritual glory of t-he Church that dwells therein (Isa\_54:13). (F. Delitzsch, D. D.)

The school of the highest culture

I. THE NATURE OF THIS CULTURE. True culture is threefold—physical, intellectual, and moral. Our text relates to the highest form, and implies all the rest. It is complete culture, the development of the whole man.

1. The text presupposes man’s ignorance. Man needs teaching, the imparting of truth.

(1) There is man’s ignorance of self.

(2) Of duty.

(3) Of God.

(4) Of destiny.

2. The statement of the text implies the Divine intention. It is not God’s will that man remain in ignorance.

3. The statement of the text announces the Divine plan. “All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.”

(1) The student—“Thy children.”

(2) The Teacher—“The Lord.” He is an omniscient Teacher, knowing the truths to be taught, and the temperament and disposition of the students. He is a patient Teacher. He is an omnipresent Teacher.

(3) The subjects taught. Language (Zep\_3:9). The language of faith, of prayer, of love. Mathematics (Mar\_8:36; 2Pe\_1:5; Act\_12:24; Isa\_53:12; Php\_3:8). Political science. The kingdom of God. Our citizenship is in Heaven: citizens of the commonwealth of Israel. Natural and spiritual science. Of Origins Joh\_1:1-3). Of preservation (Col\_1:17; Heb\_1:3). Of the Divine (Joh\_17:3). Of the human (Gen\_1:26). God, man, sin, salvation, duty and destiny are all studied.

(4) The methods of teaching. The “Word” method (.Joh\_5:39; 2Ti\_3:15). The object method (Psa\_19:1-6). The Holy Spirit method (Joh\_16:13). The conscience method (Rom\_2:15). The corrective method (Proverbs ill 12).

II. THE GREAT RESULT. “And great shall be the peace of thy children.”

1. This teaching shall result in enlightenment. Culture means light.

2. In elevation. All true culture leads that way.

3. In spiritual strength (Heb\_5:12-14).

4. In peace. There is a threefold peace, peace with God, peace with conscience, peace with fellow-men. This school appeals for students. Will you enter The condition of entrance is given in Joh\_1:11-12. The completion of a life course in this school develops the soul for promotion to the University of the New Jerusalem. Every graduate receives the degree of “Sinner saved, and then begins the higher course in the University where boundless prospects and boundless possibilities lie before the student. What other school offers attractions such as these? (W. C. Kantner, D. D.)

The teaching unction and common knowledge

1. In the writings of all the apostles, as well as in the anticipations of evangelical prophets, this place of the Spirit as instructor and guide of the elect individual is ungrudgingiy recognized. James speaks of a wisdom that comes to every believing suppliant direct from the Father of lights. Paul speaks of an enlightenment and revelation that are gifts of the Spirit, and says that “no man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” And John speaks of “the anointing of the Holy one through which all doubts may be resolved, and the lowly disciple made safe against current sophistry and error. Peter asserts that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. Such testimony coming from leading and honoured apostles has a peculiar emphasis and impressiveness about it. The best barrier against heresy which could be raised up was that which consisted in the common knowledge possessed by all who had received the Spirit, and none of the apostles shows the slightest jealousy of the growing insight of their converts. They were quite content that the Church official should be abased and even superseded, so that the work of the teaching Spirit should be magnified.

2. The spirit of man has been degraded by evil, warped by prejudice and mistaken training, distracted and torn in opposite directions by the fickle and contradictory movements of a flesh inflated with egotisms and bubbling self-sufficiencies. It must undergo some radical transformation before it can become the test of what is true. One might as well call in a boiler-riveter organically deaf with the din of his occupation to settle conflicting criticisms respecting a quarter tone in music, or some spirit-drinker with burnt-up tongue and palate to do the work of an accomplished tea-taster, as appeal subtle spiritual questions to such a court as that. It is only after the Spirit has come to possess the nature of a man, and to make the undefiled conscience rule the life, that the nature can become in any sense a test of religious truth. The heart of man must be disengaged from its old embarrassments and distractions, redeemed from the bias of its passion and wilfulness, chastened into docility and meekness and humility, quickened, purified, exalted, before it can discern. It is this specific anointing with the Spirit which confers upon the conscience its new prerogative as a competent judge of truth. (T. G. Selby.)

Truth developed in the life by the action of the Spirit of God

When a strip of wood or forest has been destroyed by fire, it will sometimes happen that new and better species of trees grow up and take the place of those which have been burned. The seed had been long buried within the ground, but all to no purpose, because it was forestalled and overshadowed by the growths which first got possession of the soil. The earlier species were like feudal lords, who had seized the land and monopolized all the mists and the dews and the rains that came to moisten the sunburnt earth. But in their downfall hidden and worthier seeds had a chance of light and life and dominion. And is it not thus with human nature? The seed of every truth is within us, although there may often be little outward sign of that significant fact. The proud growths of the flesh overshadow, stifle, and choke down the inner growths of the conscience and the moral life. But at last the Spirit of God comes to us like a consuming fire, and then the superficial growths of passion and prejudice are burnt away, and seeds of sublime truth that had been slumbering from the time of man’s creation in the image of God flower out into strange life, splendour, and fruitfulness. (

T. G. Selby.)

The Holy Spirit in relation to the Bible, the Church and thy religious teacher

If we accept this idea of the common knowledge possessed by believers in Christ who receive the promised Spirit, what will be our attitude towards the Bible, the Church, the Christian teacher, and all those forms of religious authority so jealously upheld in the past? Does not this idea of common knowledge introduce a competing authority, and bid fair to prove a solvent of ecclesiastical rule and prerogative, and produce a new confusion of tongues? The Churches of the Reformation rightly make the Bible a test of faith, and bring all teaching to the tribunal of its impartial balances. The New Testament is mainly a statement of historical facts from the lips or pens of eye-witnesses, to which there can be no addition by subsequent revelation. In so far as it is a statement of the doctrinal interpretations identified with those facts, it furnishes a permanent record of what was taught by the Spirit to the first generation of believers, and of what was approved and attested in their own experiences by those representatives of the early Churches who received the component parts of the New Testament into the canon. It gives absolutely trustworthy notes of the work of the Spirit in saving and instructing and sanctifying men. The unchanging Spirit is not likely to contradict Himself now, and teach divergent doctrines to a docile recipient of His ministries; and the Church whose members are inwardly led to the acceptance of the truths which accord with the original standards of the Bible proves itself so far a recipient of the same inspiration. The Bible is the seal by which we are to measure our own inspiration and spiritual insight; but it will not do our seeing for us, and each man must perceive for himself and acquire by the use of his spiritual senses this common knowledge.

2. But some tell us that the Church is the assay-house of religious thought, and that all statements of doctrine must be weighed in the scale of ecclesiastical balances. What have the early councils said? What does the congregation of cardinals or the House of Convocation say to-day? Our reply is that the spiritual discernment of the rulers of a Church must be tested by the scale or standard presented in the Bible and handed down from those who were themselves both personal followers of Christ and the first recipients of Pentecostal gifts. A Church may fall and grope in darkness as woefully as an individual, and then its authority ceases. The mere shell of a Church corporation cannot possibly be a centre of authority, for its directing personnel is ever changing, and if it be found in conflict with the primitive revelations of the Spirit, the very sanctity of the Church is lost and its right to teach forfeited.

3. It is sometimes argued that the teacher duly certified by the Christian Church is a specialist, and that we must give ourselves implicitly into his hands, just as we give ourselves into the hands of any other professional man who has the technical Knowledge we lack. Well, we may recognize that within certain limits he who has not yet received the Spirit must be indebted for such second-hand knowledge as he possesses to the Church and its ministries. But, after all, there is no specialism in connection with the truths which concern the daily life and experience of believers. All specialism is in non-essentials, and the cry for the specialist not only reflects on the impartiality of the Spirit, and implies that His illumination is particular rather than universal, but assumes that religion is a thing of intermittent rites and functions rather than a daily life in which the humblest is schooled to knowledge and insight. (T. G. Selby.)

Religious education the safeguard of the nation

There are three radical defects in the theory of a secular education.

I. IT IGNORES THE EXISTENCE AND THE FUNCTIONS OF CONSCIENCE. Whatever conscience may be, all agree that it is that which is educable. That it is a moral something in man, that may be trained to be in him a monitor and a guide—something that will respond to every voice of truth and of justice. While it is true that some well-informed or enlightened consciences may go astray, yet the rule is, that, as is the conscience so is the virtue of the individual. What are the prime factors in an educated conscience?

1. Belief in a personal God—the Author and Creator of the human mind—He who is, in Himself, the supreme reason of virtue.

2. Reverence for God’s laws.

3. The dread of the Divine displeasure. By what force would you deter man from vice and crime? By the displeasure of good citizens? But that displeasure is the creation of a religious education. By the beneficence of public morals? But that beneficence is written all over the constitution of nature, whose author is God. Without this recognition of a personal God—whose laws are to be revered, whose displeasure is to be dreaded—without such an educated conscience there can be no authority, as there can be no standard, either for private or public virtue.

II. IT OVERLOOKS THE FACT THAT SECULAR EDUCATION CONTAINS NO ELEMENT TO PURIFY AND REFORM. Science enlightens, but it cannot renew and elevate human nature which is depraved in principle and sinful in practice. Knowledge is power; but it is a power for good or evil, according to the controlling motives.

III. IT OVERLOOKS THE FACTS THAT THE STABILITY OF OUR GOVERNMENT IS IN THE MORAL CONVICTIONS OF THE PEOPLE. (J. P. Newman, D. D.)

Great shall be the peace of thy children

The great peace of God’s pupils

“Thy children”—whose? To answer this question is to get at the true key to the whole of this part of the prophecy. The words were spoken to the exiled Jews in Babylon, but were plainly meant to cover more than their needs. They are words which picture and promise the condition which should one day embrace the whole earth.

I. They are men who have got over the great difficulty in all teaching; THEY ARE WILLING TO LEARN. They are eager. They come cheerfully to that which has grown to be a pleasure. They are on the outlook for knowledge. Now, if any man is really on the outlook for knowledge he will be sure to get it; perhaps not all at once, but little by little. There has already been some progress made in learning where this is the temper of the pupil. How much, only those various and manifold testings of their knowledge which come up in every man’s life, can really reveal.

II. If this be the character of the learners, WHAT SHALL WE SAY OF THE TEACHER? The pupil learns what is the character of the Teacher in the lessons he gives. The lessons He gives are according to the wants and capacities of His pupils. And if only we will, we may learn this about the Teacher, from the lessons He gives us, how great is His interest in each of us; how accurate His knowledge of us; how constant His regard for us; how completely fitted His wise treatment; how full His whole conduct is of care and love; how, in a word, God is as loving as He is wise, as tender as He is strong, and as constant in His affection towards us as He is persistent in bringing the same lesson before our eye, until we have learnt it by heart. Again; the pupil learns what is the character of the Teacher from the bearing of the Teacher toward him after He has given him his lessons. Does He turn away and leave the pupil to himself? Does He set the task, and then vanish out of sight? Does He leave the lesson with the pupil, and the pupil with the lesson, and make no further sign? We know that, in regard to God, this is not so. It is true, that when God wishes us to work out some great lesson of our life, He withdraws from us, as it were, that we may put forth all our strength, that we may grapple with it, and, if we can, master it. But it is also true that God never leaves His pupils altogether. His eye is still resting upon them when they think Him a great way off. His very presence is with them when they think that they are utterly alone. And when He sees that the right moment has come He speaks the cheery word; He parts asunder the thick storm cloud, and lets the light of His countenance shine upon us and illumine our path. Nay, still more; how many hard and soul-searching questions has God helped us to spell out; how frequently the guiding and sustaining hand has been over our own, when, with painfulness and much sorrow, we have been trying to write out in our lives some fair copy of a simple command! Even after the lesson is given, how patient God is, how ready to help, how gentle, how loving, how merciful. The pupil also learns what the Teacher is, from the great example of His own lessons which He, the Teacher, shows Himself.

III. WHAT WILL COME OF THE PUPIL’S LEARNING THESE LESSONS. He may not learn any one of them thoroughly. He may feel, in regard to much of his knowledge of God, for example, that it needs revision, correction, enlargement. He may be conscious that some of the most elemental truths in Divine wisdom have to be learned and relearned. There does, however, come a result from all his application which will be all the more pronounced when the education itself is perfected. And what is this result? “Great peace.”

1. The peace comes after she learning, not before. The peace is after the victory, not before the battle.

2. Another thing is also to be noted: this “great peace” does not come to us by mastering every lesson at once, however hard and difficult it may be, but in patiently resting in Him who has sent it. (J. J. Goadby.)

The Gospel of the children

In every age the children were included in the promise and in the Church.

I. THE PERIOD.

1. It is impressible. The photographer’s plate is very sensitive. When he removes the covering which keeps off the light from the sun, the image of the object directly opposite is instantaneously impressed on the plate. So is the child’s mind. Whatever is the object of its observation—good or bad—the image is made. What care should be taken lest that sensitive plateshould be exposed to that which is sinful!

2. It expands its impressions. When any one cuts the initials of his name on the bark of a young tree, as the tree grows so the letters will become larger. The child receives impressions to grow with its being.

3. It is a period when correction is possible. Evil impressions may cling to a child, but we can stop their influence by admonition and warning.

II. THE LEARNING. Instruction is the birthright of every child; national prosperity depends on the early training of its families. Spiritual instruction is the best gift that parents can give to their children. The prophet saw a vision in this chapter which was far removed from his own time—the Gospel period. Let us look at the adaptation.

1. It is the Gospel of childhood. Some look on the Gospel as only comprehensible by men of mature age. This is an error. The child can learn the alphabet of the language, although it cannot pronounce its long words. Timothy from a child knew the Scriptures.

2. It is the Gospel of growth. The story of Bethlehem grows into a fact. Accounts of miraculous cures, which only appear to a child wonderful, become the evidences of divinity. The great fact of the Crucifixion, which only creates pity in a child’s heart, grows to the importance of life itself. The prayer repeated by infant lips becomes the “fervent prayer of the righteous man.’

3. It is the Gospel of maturity. Generally the things of childhood are unfit for youth, and those of youth are unsuitable for manhood; but the Gospel expands, and is abreast of every experience.

III. THE BLESSING. It will be a great peace. This is the fruit of Divine instruction.

1. God’s Word brings peace to the heart. The child as well as the man needs that peace.

2. God’s Word brings peace to the home.

3. Peace in death. The tranquil spirit which the child knew sixty years before is the sheet-anchor which stays the soul in every trying hour. We appeal to the children and say that if they are to be taught of the Lord, they must be willing to learn. Then we further urge the children to obedience and prayer in respect of their teachers. (J. Daveis, M. A.)

Spiritual teaching

I. DIVINE TEACHING.

1. We all need Divine teaching.

2. We are all by nature opposed to it.

3. Divine teaching is promised.

II. ITS EFFECT. Peace, great peace. Learn—

1. Our relationship to God. “The children of Zion” are also children of God.

2. Our rightful privileges. Spiritual instruction and abiding peace. (C. Clayton, M. A.)