

1 "Peace in Believing"
2 *Parochial and Plain Sermons* vol. VI sermon 25
3 Saint John Henry Newman
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5

6 "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts." Isaiah vi.
7 3.

8 EVERY Lord's day is a day of rest, but this, perhaps, more than any. It commemorates,
9 not an act of God, however gracious and glorious, but His own unspeakable perfections
10 and adorable mysteriousness. It is a day especially sacred to peace. Our Lord left His
11 peace with us when He went away; "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you:
12 not as the world giveth, give I unto you;" [John xiv. 27.] and He said He would send
13 them a Comforter, who should give them peace. Last week we commemorated that
14 Comforter's coming; and today, we commemorate in an especial way the gift He
15 brought with Him, in that great doctrine which is its emblem and its means. "These
16 things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace: in the world ye shall
17 have tribulation." [John xvi. 33.] Christ here says, that instead of this world's troubles,
18 He gives His disciples peace; and, accordingly, in today's Collect, we pray that we may
19 be kept in the faith of the Eternal Trinity in Unity, *and* be "defended from all adversities,"
20 for in keeping that faith we are kept from trouble.

21 Hence, too, in the blessing which Moses told the priests to pronounce over the children
22 of Israel, God's Name is put upon them, and that three times, in order to bless and keep
23 them, to make His face shine on them, and to give them peace. And hence again, in our
24 own solemn form of blessing, with which we end our public service, we impart to the
25 people "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," and "the blessing of the
26 Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

27 God is the God of peace, and in giving us peace He does but give Himself, He does but
28 manifest Himself to us; for His presence is peace. Hence our Lord, in the same
29 discourse in which He promised His disciples peace, promised also, that "He would
30 come and manifest Himself unto them," that "He and His Father would come to them,
31 and make Their abode with them." [John xiv. 21, 23.] Peace is His everlasting state; in
32 this world of space and time He has wrought and acted; but from everlasting it was not
33 so. For six days He wrought, and then He rested according to that rest which was His
34 eternal state; yet not so rested, as not in one sense to "work hitherto," in mercy and in
35 judgment, towards that world which He had created. And more especially, when He sent
36 His Only-begotten Son into the world, and that most Gracious and All-pitiful Son, our
37 Lord, condescended to come to us, both He and His Father wrought with a mighty hand;
38 and They vouchsafed the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and He also wrought wonderfully,
39 and works hitherto. Certainly the whole economy of redemption is a series of great and
40 continued works; but still they all tend to rest and peace, as at the first. They began out
41 of rest, and they end in rest. They end in that eternal state out of which they began. The
42 Son was from eternity in the bosom of the Father, as His dearly-beloved and Only-

43 begotten. He loved Him before the foundation of the world. He had glory with Him
44 before the world was. He was in the Father, and the Father in Him. None knew the Son
45 but the Father, nor the Father but the Son. "In the beginning was the Word, and the
46 Word was with God, and the Word was God." He was "the Brightness of God's glory
47 and the express Image of His Person;" and in this unspeakable Unity of Father and Son,
48 was the Spirit also, as being the Spirit of the Father, and the Spirit of the Son; the Spirit
49 of Both at once, not separate from them, yet distinct, so that they were Three Persons,
50 One God, from everlasting.

51 Thus was it, we are told, from everlasting;—before the heavens and the earth were
52 made, before man fell or Angels rebelled, before the sons of God were formed in the
53 morning of creation, yea, before there were Seraphim to veil their faces before Him and
54 cry "Holy," He existed without ministers, without attendants, without court and kingdom,
55 without manifested glory, without any thing but Himself; He His own Temple, His own
56 infinite rest, His own supreme bliss, from eternity. O wonderful mystery! O the depth of
57 His majesty! O deep things which the Spirit only knoweth! Wonderful and strange to
58 creatures who grovel on this earth, as we, that He, the All-powerful, the All-wise, the All-
59 good, the All-glorious, should for an eternity, for years without end, or rather, apart from
60 time, which is but one of His creatures, that He should have dwelt without those through
61 whom He might be powerful, in whom He might be wise, towards whom He might be
62 good, by whom He might be glorified. O wonderful, that all His deep and infinite
63 attributes should have been without manifestation! O wonderful thought! and withal, O
64 thought comfortable to us worms of the earth, as often as we feel in ourselves and see
65 in others gifts which have no exercise, and powers which are quiescent! He, the All-
66 powerful God, rested from eternity, and did not work; and yet, why *not* rest, wonderful
67 though it be, seeing He was so blessed in Himself? why should *He* seek external
68 objects to know, to love, and to commune with, who was all-sufficient in Himself? How
69 could He need fellows, as though He were a man, when He was not solitary, but had
70 ever with Him His Only-begotten Word in whom He delighted, whom He loved ineffably,
71 and the Eternal Spirit, the very bond of love and peace, dwelling in and dwelt in by
72 Father and Son? Rather how was it that He ever began to create, who had a Son
73 without beginning and without imperfection, whom He could love with a perfect love?
74 What exceeding exuberance of goodness was it that *He* should deign at length to
75 surround Himself with creation, who had need of nothing, and to change His everlasting
76 silence for the course of Providence and the conflict of good and evil! I say nothing of
77 the apostasies against Him, the rebellions and blasphemies which men and devils have
78 committed. I say nothing of that unutterable region of woe, the prison of the impenitent,
79 which is to last for eternity, coeval with Himself henceforth, as if in rivalry of His blissful
80 heaven. I say nothing of this, for God cannot be touched with evil; and all the sins of
81 those reprobate souls cannot impair His everlasting felicity. But, I ask, how was it that
82 He who needed nothing, who was all in all, who had infinite Equals in the Son and the
83 Spirit, who were One with Him, how was it that He created His Saints, but from simple
84 love of them from eternity? Why should He make man in the Image of God, whose
85 Image already was the Son, All-perfect, All-exact, without variableness, without defect,
86 by a natural propriety and unity of substance? And when man fell, why did He not
87 abandon or annihilate the whole race, and create others? why did He go so far as to

88 begin a fresh and more wonderful dispensation towards us, and, as He had wrought
89 marvellously in Providence, work marvellously also in grace, even sending His Eternal
90 Son to take on Him our fallen nature, and to purify and renew it by His union with it, but
91 that, Infinite as was His own blessedness, and the Son's perfection, and man's
92 unprofitableness, yet, in His loving-kindness, He determined that unprofitable man
93 should be a partaker of the Son's perfection and His own blessedness?

94 And thus it was that, as He had made man in the beginning, so also He redeemed him;
95 and the history of this redemption we have been tracing for the last six months in our
96 sacred Services. We have gone through in our memory the whole course of that
97 Dispensation of active providences, which God, in order to our redemption, has
98 superinduced upon His eternal and infinite repose. First, we commemorated the
99 approach of Christ, in the weeks of Advent; then His birth, of the Blessed Mary, after a
100 miraculous conception, at Christmas; then His circumcision; His manifestation to the
101 wise men; His baptism and beginning of miracles; His presentation in the Temple; His
102 fasting and temptation in the wilderness, in Lent; His agony in the garden; His betrayal;
103 His mocking and scourging; His cross and passion; His burial; His resurrection; His forty
104 days, converse with His disciples after it; then His Ascension; and, lastly, the coming of
105 the Holy Ghost in His stead to remain with the Church unto the end,—unto the end of
106 the world; for so long is the Almighty Comforter to remain with us. And thus, in
107 commemorating the Spirit's gracious office during the past week, we were brought, in
108 our series of representations, to the end of all things; and now what is left but to
109 commemorate what will follow after the end?—the return of the everlasting reign of God,
110 the infinite peace and blissful perfection of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,
111 differing indeed from what it once was by the fruits of creation and redemption, but not
112 differing in the supreme blessedness, the ineffable mutual love, the abyss of holiness in
113 which the Three Persons of the Eternal Trinity dwell. He, then, is the subject of this
114 day's celebration,—the God of love, of holiness, of blessedness; in whose presence is
115 fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore; who is what He ever was, and has brought
116 us sinners to that which He ever was. He did not bring into being peace and love as part
117 of His creation, but He was Himself peace and love from eternity, and He blesses us by
118 making us partakers of Himself, through the Son, by the Spirit, and He so works in His
119 temporal dispensations that He may bring us to that which is eternal.

120 And hence, in Scripture, the promises of eternity and security go together; for where
121 time is not, there vicissitude also is away. "The Eternal God is thy refuge," says Moses,
122 before his death, "and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the
123 enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them; Israel then shall dwell in safety
124 alone." And again, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee,
125 because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is
126 everlasting strength." And again, "Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth
127 eternity ... I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and
128 humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite
129 ones ... I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that
130 is near." And, in like manner, our Lord and Saviour is prophesied of as being
131 "the *Everlasting* Father, the Prince of *peace*." And again, speaking more especially of

132 what He has done for us, "The work of righteousness shall be *peace*; and the effect of
133 righteousness, quietness and *assurance for ever*." [Deut. xxxiii. 27, 28. Isa. xxvi. 3, 4;
134 lvii. 15, 19; ix. 6; xxxii. 17.]

135 As then we have for many weeks commemorated the economy by which righteousness
136 was restored to us, which took place in time, so from this day forth do we bring before
137 our minds the infinite perfections of Almighty God, and our hope hereafter of seeing and
138 enjoying them. Hitherto we have celebrated His great works; henceforth we magnify
139 Himself. Now, for twenty-five weeks we represent in figure what is to be hereafter. We
140 enter into our rest, by entering in with Him who, having wrought and suffered, has
141 opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. For half a year we stand still, as if
142 occupied solely in adoring Him, and, with the Seraphim in the text, crying, "Holy, Holy,
143 Holy," continually. All God's providences, all God's dealings with us, all His judgments,
144 mercies, warnings, deliverances, tend to peace and repose as their ultimate issue. All
145 our troubles and pleasures here, all our anxieties, fears, doubts, difficulties, hopes,
146 encouragements, afflictions, losses, attainments, tend this one way. After Christmas,
147 Easter, and Whitsuntide, comes Trinity Sunday, and the weeks that follow; and in like
148 manner, after our Soul's anxious travail; after the birth of the Spirit; after trial and
149 temptation; after sorrow and pain; after daily dyings to the world; after daily risings unto
150 holiness; at length comes that "rest which remaineth unto the people of God." After the
151 fever of life; after wearinesses and sicknesses; fightings and despondings; languor and
152 fretfulness; struggling and failing, struggling and succeeding; after all the changes and
153 chances of this troubled unhealthy state, at length comes death, at length the White
154 Throne of God, at length the Beatific Vision. After restlessness comes rest, peace,
155 joy;—our eternal portion, if we be worthy; —the sight of the Blessed Three, the Holy
156 One; the Three that bear witness in heaven; in light unapproachable; in glory without
157 spot or blemish; in power without "variableness, or shadow of turning." The Father God,
158 the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God; the Father Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy
159 Ghost Lord; the Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate; the
160 Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost
161 incomprehensible. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and
162 another of the Holy Ghost; and such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the
163 Holy Ghost; and yet there are not three Gods, nor three Lords, nor three
164 incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated; but one God, one Lord, one uncreated, and
165 one incomprehensible.

166 Let us, then, use with thankfulness the subject of this day's Festival, and the Creed of
167 St. Athanasius, as a means of peace, till it is given us, if we attain thereto, to see the
168 face of God in heaven. What the Beatific Vision will then impart, the contemplation of
169 revealed mysteries gives us as in a figure. The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity has been
170 made the subject of especial contention among the professed followers of Christ. It has
171 brought a sword upon earth, but it was intended to bring peace. And it does bring peace
172 to those who humbly receive it in faith. Let us beg of God to bless it to us to its right
173 uses, that it may not be an occasion of strife, but of worship; not of division, but of unity;
174 not of jealousy, but of love. Let us devoutly approach Him of whom it speaks, with the
175 confession of our lips and of our hearts. Let us look forward to the time when this world

176 will have passed away and all its delusions; and when we, when every one born of
177 woman, must either be in heaven or in hell. Let us desire to hide ourselves under the
178 shadow of His wings. Let us beg Him to give us an understanding heart, and that love of
179 Him which is the instinct of the new creature, and the breath of spiritual life. Let us pray
180 Him to give us the spirit of obedience, of true dutifulness; an honest spirit, earnestly set
181 to do His will, with no secret ends, no selfish designs of our own, no preferences of the
182 creature to the Creator, but open, clear, conscientious, and loyal. So will He vouchsafe,
183 as time goes on, to take up His abode in us; the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot
184 receive, will dwell in us, and be in us, and Christ "will love us, and will manifest Himself
185 to us," and "the Father will love us, and They will come unto us, and make Their abode
186 with us." And when at length the inevitable hour comes, we shall be able meekly to
187 surrender our souls, our sinful yet redeemed souls, in much weakness and trembling,
188 with much self-reproach and deep confession, yet in firm faith, and in cheerful hope,
189 and in calm love, to God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost; the Blessed
190 Three, the Holy One; Three Persons, One God; our Creator, our Redeemer, our
191 Sanctifier, our Judge.
192
193 END OF VOL. VI.
194 Trinity Sunday.