

# The Tranquil Life

Dr. Harry E. Jessop

Sometime ago, in a radio panel discussion, three men of high standing in the world of literature and science were discussing this subject. "Is peace of mind possible in a troubled world?" I listened to it with a great deal of interest. Their floundering was pathetic and they closed leaving one very definite conclusion in the minds of the thousands who had listened: "If peace of mind is possible in a world like this, we don't know the secret of it."

Now what these intelligent men were unable to decide lies right open in the Scripture before us. "Its force lies not in the philosophy of speculative discussion, but in the accompanying testimony to the enjoyment of a similar experience. We have it in Philippians 4:11-13.

I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound, everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Now any man with an experience like that, and a testimony of that kind, has a right to a respectful hearing when he talks about the possibility of a tranquil life.

There are two thoughts that I want you to notice. The first is, the experience which is so clearly indicated, and then very simply, the essential conditions that are carefully laid down.

Now that experience is the experience of an undisturbed tranquility, the tranquility of a wholly yielded soul that is securely fortified in God. It is an inward calm; an inward calm that is perpetual, unruffled, deep-down, unmolested and undisturbed. Now of course when all that is going on inside, outside there is a tempest, but inside there are no squalls; there is not even a ruffle. In fact, the soul so fortified in the God of peace, and garrisoned by the peace of God, has a heart and a mind that is perfectly at rest.

Such an experience is best understood as this tranquility is seen in action. A colored, converted pugilist came to a rough district of London to give his testimony. It was the home of the Razor Gang, a group went out night cutting, slashing, and terrifying people. The pugilist had been a prize-fighter and could use his fists to the limit if anyone came near him. In the days before his conversion an antagonist was very quickly knocked out. But the Lord beautifully saved him and he was asked to give his testimony to full salvation. A large number of this rough gang came to the meeting. Before long the auditorium was in an uproar. In the midst of the confusion, a number of these men were ejected from the service, but in getting them out the speaker happened to be among the crowd that was shut outside the door. The men began to attack the pugilist but he just quietly held up his hands and pushed them off.

Ultimately, when his friends rescued him, they said, "Why didn't you use your fists?"

He answered, "I was so concerned about their souls that it never occurred to me."

I like that! He could have knocked out every one of them.

In that same district a man by the name of David Thomas owned a store. He was very wonderfully saved and sanctified, and on one occasion he asked me to give some addresses at the Evangelistic Tabernacle, which he had established. We were leaving the tabernacle after the afternoon service when his son came running up, and said, "the store is on fire!"

The King's Highway

I wondered what was going to happen.

David Thomas said. "Are the firemen there?"

"Yes," answered the son.

Mr. Thomas put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Let's commit it to the Lord," and in the simplest possible way, as simple a prayer as I ever heard, he said, "Lord, that is Thy store. I gave it to Thee when Thou didst sanctify me holy. It was in my consecration. Take care of it and put that fire out, for Jesus' sake." Then he turned and said. "We had better go to tea."

We went to tea and he said no more about the fire

Finally I inquired. "Aren't you going to the store?"

David Thomas answered, "Why should I? I've given it to the Lord. Isn't He taking care of it?" and he never mentioned it again.

In the midst of our meal his son came back and said, "It is a miracle. The fire was just blazing when I ran to tell you, but when I got back it had stopped?"

I profited from that experience. That calm is expressed by Job 34:29. "When he giveth quietness, who can make trouble;" and Isaiah 26:3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee."

It is an experience like that that I am thinking about when I mention a life that is undisturbed and inwardly unruffled. The figure employed in the text is a strange and intriguing paradox. The setting is militant, and yet the emphasis is peace. It is a picture of an armed fortress in which a helpless occupant shelters and rests. At the entrance there is an armed sentry keeping watch and challenging all who would pass. That sentry is the Peace of God with a rifle over his shoulder. He is saying to all who come by, "You keep out. There is a soul here who belongs to God and he is trusting God. He belongs entirely to Him."

Now that fortress is the Christian's abiding place and it is Jesus Christ Himself. This is clearly emphasized in other parts of the Word of God, both in the Old Testament and in the New. For instance, the Psalmist said, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress." (Psalm 18:2). Some corresponding New Testament expressions are found in the words of Jesus. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you," (John 15:7), "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." (11 Cor. 5:17)

Now the occupant of that fortress is your heart and mind. Your heart has to do with the real affection, and your mind has to do with the realm of thought. It is so easy to be lashed into conflicting emotions with regard to our affection, and sometimes with very, very tragic results. It is so easy to have the thought life polluted. I know my own heart and mind, and I know that I have to keep them very, very deeply in Jesus. You need to learn how to let your heart and mind be garrisoned, dwelling deep in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Outside that fortress where your heart and mind is settled there is a sentinel on guard and that sentinel is the Peace of God. By way of contrast, the Peace of God is not the only aspirant for the position of the sentinel of the soul. You remember the Word says. "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind . . ." That doesn't mean the peace of God which nobody can understand. The revised version has it. "And the peace of God which surpasses understanding," or more literally, "the peace of God which is superior to understanding." In order to understand that writing, compare the verse in Proverbs 3:5, 6 which says, "Trust in the Lord

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